

# Improving Reading Comprehension of Grade 7 Students from UST Education High School Using Critical Reading Strategies on Learner-Chosen Texts

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## ABSTRACT

The study assessed the impact of applying critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned text versus learner-chosen text in improving the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students. Quasi-experimental design was utilized in the study with a quantitative approach being recognized to analyze the data wherein arithmetic mean was used to analyze the reading comprehension levels of the students from each identified group. Additionally, the researchers used paired t-test to determine if there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Moreover, independent samples t-test was used to determine the existence of significant differences between the test results of the participants taught using critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned text (control group) vis-a-vis learner-chosen text (experimental group). The results reveal that there is no significant difference between the overall mean of the control and experimental groups. Therefore, the findings implied the effectiveness of applying critical reading strategies on teacher assigned text vis-a-vis learner-chosen text is approximately identical. Hence, teacher-assigned texts and learner-chosen texts are both applicable methods to help improve the reading comprehension skills of students.

**Keywords:** remedial instruction, pedagogical interventions, reading literacy, assessments, and schema

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Reading comprehension is one of the essential macro skills that serves as the foundation of language learning. According to Caraig and Quimbo (2022), reading comprehension refers to the ability to scrutinize word by word and create a profound idea based on the texts given or read, making it one of the pillars of reading. Wilhelm (2018), as cited in Caraig and Quimbo (2022), added that one aspect of reading comprehension is when a person can relate his life experiences to the text written they have read. It also includes the ability of a reader to have an insight or predict what will happen to the story they are reading (National Institute for Literacy, 2013, as cited in Caraig and Quimbo, 2022). Therefore, these thinking processes define the complexities of reading comprehension (Elleman & Oslund, 2018). As such, the K to 12 Curriculum Guide for English emphasized that through engaging in reading comprehension, learners can productively and meaningfully use their thinking skills, such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and metacognition, allowing them to make meaning through language.

In recent years, the poor reading proficiency of students has been a significant concern in education, especially in the Philippines. In 2018, the research conducted by the Program for International Assessment (PISA) found that the Philippines ranked the lowest in terms of reading comprehension (Caraig & Quimbo, 2022). Additionally, the World Bank released a report in 2022 showing learning poverty in the Philippines, which is the inability to read and understand a short and age-appropriate text by age 10. The data showed that 91 percent of children in the Philippines at a late primary age today are not proficient in reading (World Bank, 2022). With

these occurring challenges in literacy, specifically in reading proficiency, the data proving the occurrence of learning poverty calls for educators and the education sector to address the problem in the education system and provide pedagogical interventions to enhance reading comprehension among Filipino students.

Several studies have investigated some interventions and strategies to enhance the reading skills of students and develop comprehension. Caraig and Quimbo (2022) state that learners need the opportunity to use and learn from a motivating method. Jeffs and Castellani (2001), as cited in Caraig and Quimbo (2022), discussed how teachers can help students practice their reading skills by allowing them to select their chosen reading materials and platforms, such as available technology resources. The first teaching intervention is learner-chosen text wherein Mishra (2020) found that when students select their texts, there is a sense of ownership and sincerity where reading and articulation are taken with enthusiasm, willingness, and productivity. Regarding this, Friese et al. (2008) mentioned that selecting texts to teach the content area of literature has brought varied concerns and criteria to the selection process, such as teachers selecting texts to expose students to a wide range of genres or select individual texts that they think will appeal to students based on their own experiences, which can refer to teachers assigning text to the students. With these considerations, Friese et al. (2008) stated that textbooks remain the central text in many classrooms, in which most English language arts teachers select materials to supplement the book where the most common literature found in the classrooms is narrative, often award-winning, and fiction.

On the other hand, Rasinsiki (1988), as cited in Bonyadi and Zeinalpur (2014), emphasized that the interest and choice of students must be an integral part of a reading program to help them become lifelong readers. However, a varied review of the literature indicates that the issue of self-selection has been traditionally discussed mainly in teaching reading skills. Hence, learner-chosen text and teacher-assigned text have been discussed by scholars regarding their implications for teaching reading skills among learners. In line with the second teaching intervention, Nasrollahi et al. (2014) found that implementing critical reading strategies increased students' critical thinking skills and acquired reading comprehension in their reading text. Thus, implementing critical reading strategies helps students improve their understanding to find the concepts behind the lines, and comprehension is facilitated through instructional attention to teaching reading according to the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy (Nasrollahi et al., 2014). The utilization of critical reading strategies and critical thinking skills in reading classes has been a focus of several studies in improving students' reading comprehension (Nasrollahi et al., 2014; Larking, 2017; Lestari, 2021; Al Roomy, 2022). While these studies have found each strategy effective, the simultaneous application of approaches on learner-chosen texts and critical reading strategies that will highly improve students' reading comprehension, especially those in remedial classes, still needs to be explored. The current study views these pedagogical interventions as a light on improving students' reading comprehension in remedial classes. Khabiri and Pakzad (2012) and Al Roomy (2022) have advocated for further research to investigate the impact of critical reading skills in reading comprehension on diverse demographic factors such as gender, age, proficiency levels, learning styles, and fields of study. Considering this, further investigation shall determine whether applying these strategies to students with poor reading comprehension under remediation would efficiently and promptly improve their reading skills. Furthermore, the researchers seek to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on pedagogical approaches aimed at bolstering reading comprehension skills (Nasrollahi et al., 2014; Larking, 2017; Lestari, 2021; Al Roomy, 2022) and address the specific gap highlighted by Khabiri and Pakzad (2012) and Al Roomy (2022).

## Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to examine the impact of using critical reading strategies on learners' chosen texts to improve the students' reading comprehension. The focus of the study is to examine the significant improvement of the interventions on the reading comprehension level of Grade 7 students from the University of Santo Tomas Education High School (UST-EHS) taking up opportunity classes, also known as remedial classes, who display low academic performances in the English subject. Implementing critical reading strategies as a reading process and giving students the chance to choose their reading material are the action strategies proposed. The pre-test and post-test analyses, and quantitative evaluation will be conducted to examine the success of the intervention and the learners' significantly improved reading comprehension.

## Theoretical Background

### Schema Theory

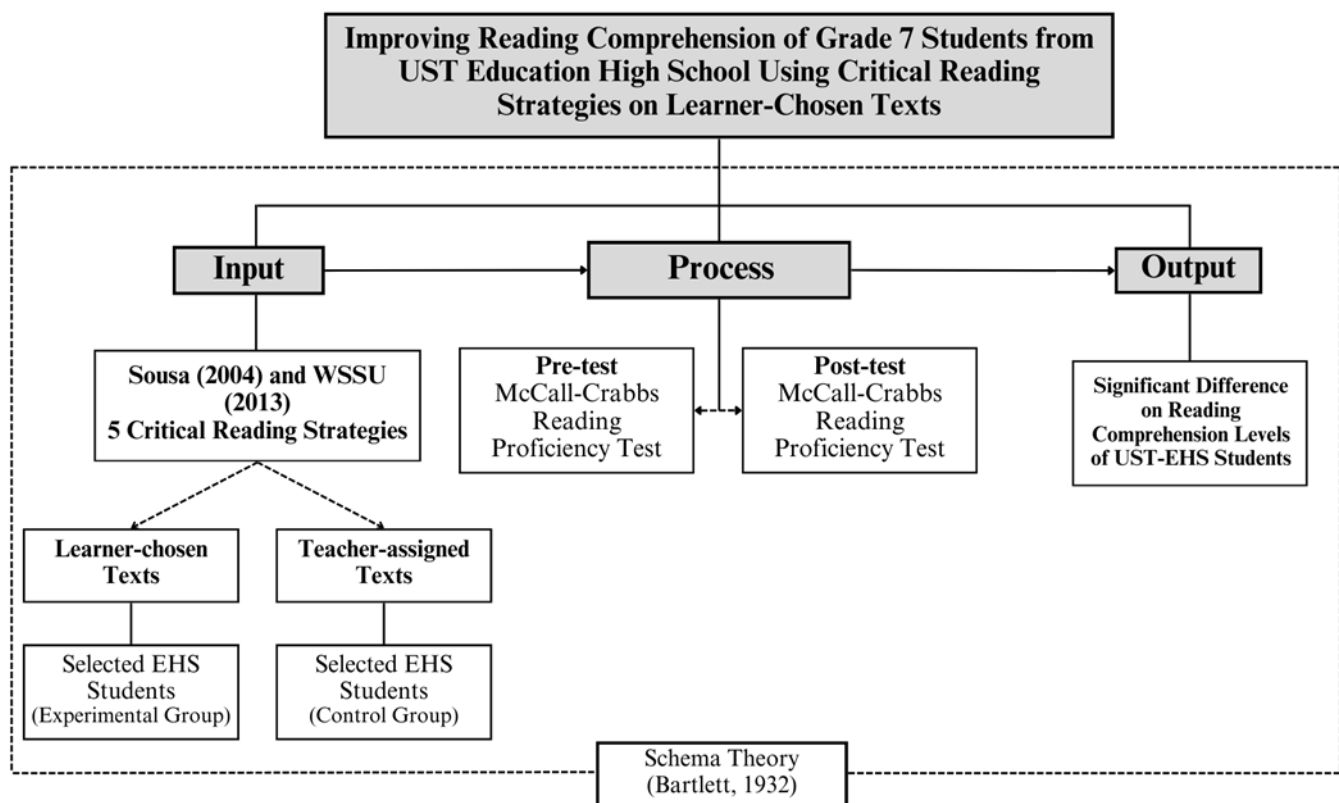
The Schema theory emphasizes on the essentiality of the concept of the schemata towards reading (McAlpine, 2019). According to Liu (2015), schema is conceptualized to be a structure of knowledge composed of ideas that creates opportunities for an individual to connect existing knowledge towards the comprehension of new pieces of information.

McAlpine (2019) highlights the importance of Schema Theory to the intricacies of the process of comprehending texts. An (2013), as cited in McAlpine (2019), focuses on the idea of content schema in which the research forwarded the essentiality of the existing knowledge of a person towards understanding new reading materials.

The whole process wherein the schema is being utilized during a reading activity was explicitly explained by Anderson and Pearson (1984), as cited in McAlpine (2019). The researchers suggest that humans usually only engage in selected schema while making certain inferences while reading. This indicated process implies that there will be underlying differences in the comprehended pieces of information that are dependent upon the schema that will be recognized. The procedure on how the schema is being used can be described as a complex process. With this, this undertaking should undergo proper strategies in order to be guided in the achievement of a specific connection between existing knowledge to more abstract details.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study



The framework represents the overall flow of the study in which five (5) critical reading strategies (Sousa, 2004; WSSU, 2013) were utilized in both the learner-chosen text group (experimental) and teacher-assigned text group (control).

The input involves applying critical reading strategies to the two groups mentioned during their opportunity classes, also known as remedial classes. Furthermore, the framework follows a method or process wherein the researchers determined the students' reading comprehension levels through a pre-test and post-test before and

after applying the strategies. The researchers used a pre-test and post-test from test numbers 19, 35, 45, and 60 of the McCall Crabbs Book F Reading Proficiency Test. With this, the expected output of the study focuses on the analysis of the significant difference in the subjects' reading comprehension levels. Additionally, the framework of the study anchors on Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932), in which the five (5) critical reading strategies implemented aim to tap into the learners' schema to strengthen reading comprehension and proficiency as they utilize the five (5) critical reading strategies one by one throughout the entire course of their opportunity classes.

Therefore, the results of this study will yield an analysis and interpretation of the significant difference in the student's reading comprehension through the application of critical reading strategies on both teacher-assigned and learner-chosen text.

### General Objectives

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of critical reading strategies applied to learner-chosen texts and teacher-assigned texts to the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify the reading comprehension level of Grade 7 opportunity class students;
2. identify the reading comprehension level of the control and experimental groups after using critical reading strategies;
3. identify the significant difference in the reading comprehension level of students taught using critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned texts and learner-chosen texts; and
4. identify the significant difference between the reading comprehension level of the control and experimental groups.

### Statement of the Problem

The present study aims to answer the four (4) research questions:

1. What is the reading comprehension level of students from both groups?
2. What is the reading comprehension level of the two groups after using critical reading strategies?
3. Is there a significant difference in the reading comprehension level of the students taught using critical reading strategies on
  - a. teacher-assigned texts
  - b. learner-chosen texts
4. Is there a significant difference between the reading comprehension level of the control and experimental groups?

### Null Hypothesis

A null hypothesis that states that “there is no significant difference in the reading comprehension level of subjects of the study in the control group (teacher-assigned text) and experimental (learner-chosen text) group” can be rejected if there is a significant difference between the results of the two groups.

### Scope and Limitations

This action research focused on improving reading comprehension of Grade 7 students from the University of Santo Tomas Education High School taking up opportunity classes who are classified for low performance in English, specifically in their mastery test. The pedagogical interventions applied by the researchers are using

learner-chosen texts and five (5) critical reading strategies suggested by Sousa (2004) and WSSU (2013). To examine the significance of the two teaching strategies in improving students' reading comprehension, such as learner-chosen and critical reading strategies, the researchers conducted purposive sampling to identify the qualifications of students taking opportunity classes that have low performance in the mastery test of English subject. The subjects are specifically divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. Both groups applied five (5) critical reading strategies as teaching intervention. The difference is that the control group utilizes teacher-assigned text using the curriculum textbook of the Department of Education while the experimental group uses learner-chosen text to investigate how the students significantly improved in their reading comprehension.

Several limitations were specified, such as the limited number of critical reading strategies due to time constraints of the academic year, which is based solely on the suggestion of five (5) critical reading strategies by Sousa (2004) and WSSU (2013). Moreover, the gap between students and teachers in choosing the text, particularly teacher-assigned text, is limited since the text must be selected according to the curriculum of the Department of Education, such as the use of provided English textbooks. The number of subjects is also limited due to the number of students recommended to take opportunity classes based on their performance in the mastery test of English. Due to time constraints and changes in the schedule of the classes, the teaching strategies interventions shifted to an Enhanced Virtual Mode (EVM) setup. Pre-tests and post-tests were also conducted online using Canvas, the learning management system used by the students and teachers. The limitations encountered while interventions were implemented during the EVM setup were internet problems and technical difficulties. Moreover, the reading selections from the McCall Crabbs were selected by choosing questions that had a G score with Grade 7 to Grade 10. Lastly, there were limited responses from the participants regarding their experiences with the use of critical reading strategies and their insights and thoughts as they involved themselves with the implementation of LCT and TAT.

### Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be beneficial to the following:

**Students.** This study will be of benefit to the learners in terms of allowing students to have the awareness of the importance of exploring preferred reading materials to reinforce the usage of critical reading strategies. The information from this study aims to give enough data to promote confidence in reading diverse materials while still targeting the improvement of certain academic skills such as reading comprehension.

**Teachers.** This study will be beneficial to the teachers as a means to improve overall strategies that will be implemented during English language and literary classes. The information from this study can provide certain implications that having flexibility using different literary materials may contribute to the effectiveness of critical reading strategies that will be employed. The implementation of the proposed strategies shall give an avenue for a more effective and inclusive learning experience.

**Curriculum.** The findings of this study will be beneficial to the possible considerations of the continuous improvement of the curriculum. The curriculum may use the information gathered from this study as a basis to consider the reading preferences of students in relation to the prescribed literary contents and materials established.

**Future Researchers.** The information collated from this study may serve as one of contributory data to supplement succeeding researches to improve the effectivity of critical reading strategies.

### Definition of Terms

Key concepts in this study are operationally defined as follows:

**Critical Reading Strategies (CRS)** - It refers to the five (5) critical reading strategies suggested by Sousa (2004) and WSSU (2013) as one of the proposed teaching interventions when reading a text to improve the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students. These are implemented by the researchers during opportunity classes.

**Intervention** - An act that refers to teaching new skills to students especially those who are low-performing. This is to address the gap that needs to fill in and it can be done individually or delivered as a group.

**Learner-chosen Text (LCT)** - A proposed teaching intervention in which students have the opportunity to choose their preferred literary text in relation to the guidelines given by the researchers.

**Mastery Test** - A test that is used to determine whether the students have achieved or understood the lessons covered during the first three (3) weeks of every quarter.

**Opportunity Classes (OC)** - This refers to the classes that are given to students with low performances in mastery tests to catch-up with their requirements and have their remedial lessons. The researchers aimed to implement the proposed teaching interventions during the OC in the third quarter of the academic year.

**Post-test** - A standard McCall-Crabbs Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test that is re-applied at the end of the application of the teaching intervention.

**Pre-service Teachers** - It refers to the students who were enrolled in a teacher education course who are preparing to become a teacher. The Pre-service teachers are the ones who are teaching the students in the University of Santo Tomas' laboratory school which is the Education High School.

**Pre-test** - A standard McCall-Crabbs Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test that is given before the proposed teaching intervention applies.

**Reading Comprehension** - The ability of Grade 7 students to read, process, and understand a text.

**Students** - This refers to the person enrolled in UST Education High School. Specifically, the subjects of the study are Grade 7 students from both sections who were part of the opportunity class.

**Teacher-assigned Text (TAT)** - A proposed teaching intervention in which the literary texts assigned by the researchers are in accordance with the English Curriculum Guide of the Department of Education.

**UST Education High School (UST-EHS)** - It serves as a laboratory school for the training of Fourth-year Secondary Education students of UST College of Education. It also seeks to extend opportunities for gifted and talented students who belong to financially challenged families.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDY

### Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of the essential skills a student should have. Through reading, students can engage in learning and gain knowledge, which is critical for moving up to a higher level of education. According to Dadzie (2002), as cited in Idulog et al. (2023), reading is the backbone of most learning. Furthermore, it is a prerequisite of all learning areas since reading does not only occur in English subjects but also in Mathematics, Science, or even home economics, where the learners' lack of capability in basic reading and comprehension can also be associated (Dadzie, 2002, as cited in Idulog et al., 2023).

Through reading comprehension, the reading process takes place. According to Suson et al. (2020), the ability of a person to read and comprehend texts is associated with their daily behaviors and practices. Moreover, reading and comprehension are more crucial in the educational setup because it is the setting where learning occurs. If the students need help reading and understanding what they read, they may also experience difficulties understanding other subject areas. Thus, it is pivotal for students to develop the ability to comprehend and have the opportunity to become eloquent and skilled readers.

Although reading is crucial in learning, some Filipinos only consider it a practice (Luz, 2007). As such, having this perspective toward reading is why the Philippines is weak in the global economy (Idulog et al., 2023). The study of Miciano (2007), as cited in Idulog et al. (2023), showed that in reading, there were two (2) primary

problems for Filipino learners. The first one is that the learners were able to read. However, they need assistance in comprehending the text they have read. Second, the learners try to understand the text's details but get the wrong paper. As such, the study emphasized that Filipino students' reading skills have often been a long-standing and general challenge for educators and policymakers. The study of Estremera and Estremera (2018) furthered that one of the significant problems in reading among Filipino learners is the reading comprehension which resulted in the poor ability to understand printed symbols. Thus, this should serve as an indication for the whole department to focus on enriching and increasing the reading policy of learners. Reading comprehension levels such as critical reading strategies must be presented to learners for further understanding and greater utilization of suitable texts (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

### **Critical Reading Strategies**

Caraig and Quimbo (2022) state that the five (5) major components of reading comprehension, namely phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, are needed to be an efficient reader. These components work together for the readers to develop critical thinking and are essential components that reading materials should maintain (Learning Point Associates, 2014). According to Haghparast et al. (2013), as cited in Mahanal et al. (2019), critical thinking skills engage individuals in analyzing, evaluating, and reconstructing information. These processes of engaging with critical thinking allow learners to develop their reading skills and situations that require higher-order thinking. Furthermore, critical thinking skills are employed in the learning process to enhance students' knowledge, comprehension, and awareness (Hazaymeh & Alomery, 2021). Therefore, the role of critical thinking skills in learning plays a tremendous importance in the academic performance and development of the learners.

According to Al Roomy (2022), critical reading engages students in texts where they process, understand, and analyze texts deeply. Hence, critical reading is an active process where readers understand a text and engage themselves in the reading process using different levels and various higher-order thinking skills (Al Roomy, 2022). DiYanni (2017), as cited in Al Roomy (2022), stated that in achieving the objectives of critical reading, the students must learn how to understand, decode, and convey the meaning of a text by evaluating the tone, purpose, and point of view of the author. Therefore, critical reading enables the student to profoundly immerse in an extensive thinking process to evaluate a text.

As proposed by Hughes (2014), as cited in Fadhilah (2017), the five (5) critical thinking skills in reading are reasoning, questioning, recognizing context, and predicting the content of the text. Larking (2017) furthered this by providing the criteria for critical reading, which includes sifting through various forms of rhetoric, recognizing power relations, questioning assumptions, engaging with the world, and constructing new possibilities. Moreover, the findings of Johnson (2002), as cited in Mozafari (2016), indicate that the critical approach guides the person to achieve the most comprehensive understanding of literary texts. Fadhilah (2022) and Larking (2017) support this by stating that the purpose of critical reading is to create judgments on how a text works and to use it to achieve social goals. Therefore, the following strategies for implementing critical reading strategies suggested by Tovani (2000) are as follows:

Before reading a text

Set a purpose for reading.

Preview the text for reading.

When reading a text

Pay attention to print features and text structures.

Mark the text while reading.

Make connections between the text and the reader's personal experience and knowledge.

Monitor the comprehension of the text.

After reading a text

Summarized the key points after reading the text.

The mentioned strategies give learners a fundamental understanding of texts and how to think about texts (Nasrollahi et al., 2014). Furthermore, Tovani (2000) and Kuta (2008) classified ten (10) critical reading strategies that are considered most significant by scholars in the field of critical reading, such as (1) annotating, (2) reviewing, (3) scanning and skimming, (4) facts vs. opinions, (5) drawing conclusions, (6) monitoring, (7) summarizing, (8), paraphrasing, (9) synthesizing, and (10) questioning. However, this study will only focus on five (5) critical reading strategies as suggested in Sousa (2003) and WSSU (2013). The five (5) strategies are as follows: (1) previewing, (2) outlining and summarizing, (3) questioning, (4) reflecting, and (5) evaluating. In light of this, Nasrollahi et al. (2014) supported that teaching critical reading strategies to struggling readers helps them improve critical thinking and higher-order thinking ability. Hence, mastering critical reading strategies enables learners to think beyond their text, relate their experiences, ask questions, predict a situation, and create new ideas.

### **Learner-chosen Texts**

Related research commonly claims the essential value of allowing the students to have the capability to recognize preferences when adhering to standardized academic tasks. The pivotal nature of letting the learners have active choices in their learning process provides a sense of autonomy that encourages heightened sense of intrinsic motivation to learn (Patall, 2013, as cited in Barbeg, 2022). Grabe (2009), as cited in Ha (2021), states that it is important for learners to have enough motivation wherein students may be able to actively decide that they want to be involved in a reading activity. Grabe (2009), as cited in Ha (2021), mentioned various strategies on how to properly supplement reading motivation, and this includes supporting autonomous learning and allowing for interesting texts to be used as a factor of classroom discussion.

There are various strategies being explored to capitalize on motivation in the improvement of reading habits and comprehension. One of the main strategies that is being used to allow the learners to have a certain level of inclination towards reading is called Extensive Reading. Undergoing this strategy pertains to letting the students experience the process of pleasure reading. In this strategy, students will be able to manage their own goals and learn at their own pace. Hilmi and Addinna (2020) suggested that the strategy of extensive reading is allowing students to choose their own texts. The Reading to Tell the Story Activity became the main exercise of the practice of extensive reading. Hilmi and Addinna (2020) recognized the following process:

### **Selecting the Reading Materials**

The proponents allowed the students to choose the texts that they prefer. To ensure an alignment with the standardized objectives, the teachers encouraged the subjects of the study to explore different literary genres. The proponents were also able to consider that some students may not be familiar with the different genres. With this, the researchers made an effort to gather literary materials with which the students may choose from the given library pieces.

### **Students' Reading Report**

The subjects have to accomplish a journal report regarding the content of the book that they are reading. This is to supplement their overall learning progress in terms of their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills.

### **Students Telling the Story**

The subjects will share what they have read. The main topic of sharing should be about the important parts of the story. Elaboration of opinions and other insights are also being exercised in the activity.

Based on the findings of the research of Hilmi and Addinna (2020) greatly emphasizes the positive impact in terms of developing vocabulary and reading various texts. A related study from Mishra (2020) relayed similar

results wherein learner-chosen texts provided significant contributions in terms of helping students develop their lexicon and syntax development.

### **Remedial and Opportunity Classes**

Maawa and Ortega-Dela Cruz (2019) define remedial instruction as a spiral or cyclical process of assessing, instructing, and re-assessing low-performing students. Remedial instruction is done for the overall improvement of students in various competencies (Ganga et al., 2018, as cited in Yolak et al., 2019). Consequently, the design of a remedial course depends on the student's needs and performance (Maawa & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2019).

In an evaluation conducted by Glewee et al. (2020), it was found that in multiple studies (Banerjee et al., 2007; Banerjee et al., 2010; Banerjee et al., 2016), remedial instruction has been proven effective in increasing student learning. In a study conducted by Yolak et al. (2019), subjects who attended remedial classes also found it successful and helped them in their academic, social, psychological, and career development endeavors. However, one study evaluated by Glewee et al. (2020) revealed that there are teachers who are paid to conduct remedial instruction who reduce the quality of teaching and learning inside class hours to have more students who need to attend remedial classes, thus having an extra income.

In the Philippines, according to a report from Cabrera (2022), schools offer end-of-school-year classes, which cover both remedial (to help those who did not perform well to understand the previous lesson better) and enrichment (to help those who performed well to understand future lessons better) classes. From the same report, remedial classes are offered to learners who failed in not more than two subjects from Grades 1 to 10. This intention to provide end-of-year remedial classes shows a dedication to meeting the various learning requirements of pupils. The objective is to offer high-achieving pupils enrichment opportunities in addition to support for individuals who may have had difficulty with prior lessons. It is crucial to consider evidence-based intervention tactics to guarantee the program's effectiveness. The goals of the remedial classes project are aligned with the intervention strategy described in this proposal, which is supported by research.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The present study employs a quasi-experimental method in which gathered data are analyzed through quantitative method. According to Campbell (1968), the quasi-experimental design is to identify and analyze those plausible equivalent explanations of the results from the uncontrolled variables. The quasi-experimental method does not depend on the random assignment (Thomas, 2020). Moreover, according to Creswell (1980), as cited from Sukamolson (2007), quantitative method explain the phenomena by gathering numerical data that are interpreted utilizing mathematically based methods. Using the quantitative method measures the numerical data collected in the present study. The use of pre-tests in the study serves as a starting point in assessing reading comprehension development. On the other hand, the post-test is given during the final assessment period. The data collected in the students' post-test were compared to the existing scores during the pre-test.

### **Research Locale**

The study was held in the University of Santo Tomas Education High School, a private Catholic institution in Sampaloc, Manila. Education High School is a laboratory school of the UST College of Education that consists of secondary levels from Grades 7 to 10. Pre-service teachers, as guided by the English Supervising Teacher, were able to spearhead the implementation of the interventions that will be employed. The UST-EHS provided an ideal setting for the quasi-experimental research designed to investigate the impact of critical reading strategies on Grade 7 students' reading comprehension.

### **Subject of the Study**

In choosing the subject of the study, the researchers utilized purposive sampling technique. Hence, this study's target subjects were Grade 7 students from UST Education High School who were part of the opportunity classes, also known as remedial classes. The study was conducted among students who display low academic

performances in English, specifically on their mastery test. The subjects of the study were divided into two groups: the control and experimental group. The subjects are also formed using the purposive sampling technique. Moreover, two pre-service teachers from the English Learning Area served as the main teachers, one for each group.

## Research Instruments

The data were collected through a pre-test and post-test in examining the application of critical reading strategies to both learner-chosen and teacher-assigned texts. As a pre-test, the subjects answered the McCall-Crabbs Book F (Grades 7-12) Reading Proficiency Test to identify the students' initial reading comprehension level. The same reading proficiency test was administered as the post-test after the implementation of the proposed strategies. The following test numbers were used to determine the reading comprehension level of the students: 19, 35, 45, and 60, in which eight items were answered by the students for each of the test numbers. The researchers followed the prescribed test-taking procedure from the McCall-Crabbs Reading Proficiency Test. The subjects were given three (3) minutes to accomplish each test number. All other general directions from the McCall-Crabbs book were also followed in the administration of pre-test and post-test.

**Data Gathering:** The researchers classified the subjects according to their qualifications for recommendations of opportunity classes. Selected students taking opportunity classes from Grade 7 undergo a pre-test to determine students' reading comprehension level using the McCall-Crabbs Book F (Grades 7-12) Reading Proficiency Test. The researchers administered the test online using Canvas, the Learning Management System of UST Education High School.

Guided by the quasi-experimental method, the participants were divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. Learner-chosen text and five (5) critical reading strategies suggested by Sousa (2004) and WSSU (2013) are the teaching interventions to improve students' reading comprehension. In this regard, the researchers investigated the significance of using five (5) critical reading strategies on learner-chosen text to enhance the student's reading comprehension by applying these teaching interventions to students from the experimental group. On the other hand, the students from the control group undergo critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned text using textbooks aligned to the curriculum of the Department of Education.

Moreover, since participants are classified as a control group and an experimental group, the students are divided using purposive sampling, showing varied comprehension levels of students to ensure fairness and avoid biases in the results. Specific students were designated to cohort A, or the experimental group, consisting of students undergoing learner-chosen text. Meanwhile, cohort B, the control group, comprises students undergoing teacher-assigned text. Both groups are given pre-tests and post-tests using the McCall Crabbs proficiency test, which was administered during an online meeting via Google Meet and was answered in Canvas, to get the data on how much students significantly improved on learner-chosen text using critical reading strategies.

## Statistical Treatment of Data

Using the raw score and G scores from the pre-test and post-test results, the reading comprehension levels of the participants were analyzed using the arithmetic mean (ungrouped data). The mean was used in the analysis to identify the results in the control and experimental groups: the teacher-assigned text and the learner-chosen text.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{x_1 + x_2 + \dots + x_n}{n}$$

Where:

$x$  = midpoint of each class

$n$  = total number of scores

Then, the normality distribution of the data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics, specifically the Shapiro-Wilk test. Based on the results, the data appears to be normally distributed. As such, the researchers used two

parametric tests of means to interpret the data, specifically the paired t-test and the independent samples t-test.

The paired t-test follows the analysis to identify the difference in the reading comprehension level of the subjects based on their pre-test and post-test results. Additionally, the independent sample t-test was used to determine the significant difference of the control and experimental groups, which are the participants instructed using critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned text vis-a-vis the learner-chosen text respectively.

Therefore, the mentioned statistical treatments identified the statistical summary of the applied interventions and reading comprehension levels and the significant differences between the two samples in the study.

## Ethical Considerations

This study gathered data from UST-EHS Grade 7 students taking opportunity classes. The said students are under the legal age (18). Therefore, the group aims to provide informed consent forms for the students' parents to sign prior to conducting this study. The consent form will be adapted from consent forms from related studies. Koyfman et al., (2009) made a broad list of what a consent form should contain. A consent form must contain at least the following: (1) explanation of terminology, (2) explanation of purpose of the study, (3) explanation of study procedures, (4) enumeration of risks and side effects, (5) benefits of the study, (6) cost of the study, and (7) statement of confidentiality (Koyfman et al., 2009). Informed consent forms are usually purchased from publishers either as physical copies or digital copies, but may also be produced within an institution (Nunnen et al., 2018). Nunnen et al., (2018) stated that the purpose of consent forms is to make subjects understand the procedures and possible effects of participating in the study. Both consent forms from Koyfman et al. (2009) and Nunnen et al. (2018) are made for medical procedures. However, the format of their consent forms in their study can be adapted for an educational setting.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Reading comprehension level of students from control and experimental groups

**Table 1**

Table 1 shows the level of comprehension of the control group participants based on their pre-test results. The overall mean of the pre-test scores of the control group is 4.125, with a G score average of 7.81875. The aforementioned table also shows that students 2 and 3 both have an average raw test score of 4, with student 2 having a 7.75 G score average and student 3 having a 7.6 G score average, which means that both students' reading comprehension level is at par with their current grade level. Student 1, on the other hand, had a raw test score average of 5.25, with a G score average of 8.85, which can be interpreted that the student already has a reading comprehension level of a Grade 8 student in the 8th month of the academic calendar, hence, beyond their grade level reading comprehension. However, Student 4 had a raw test score average of 3.25 with a G score of 6.975, which means that the student's reading comprehension level is of a Grade 6 student in the 9th month of the academic year, which is below their current grade level.

Reading comprehension levels of control group participants from the pre-test results

Control Group			
Student	Pre-test Score Average	G Score Average	Interpretation
Student 1	5.25	8.85	Grade 8
Student 2	4	7.75	Grade 7
Student 3	4	7.7	Grade 7
Student 4	3.25	6.975	Grade 6
Overall Mean	4.125	7.818	

The overall mean of the pre-test of the control group is 4.125 out of 8, with a G score average of 7.818. As a group, the students have a reading comprehension level that is suitable for their current grade level despite having the sample come from those who were part of the opportunity classes. Possibly, the students became part of the opportunity classes due to non-submission of school requirements. Moreover, the participants belong from a population of academic scholars which may also contribute to the students having a G score level appropriate to their current grade level.

**Table 2**

Table 2 shows the level of reading comprehension of participants of the experimental group from their pre-test results. The overall mean of the pre-test scores of the experimental group is 3.625, with a G score average of 7.45. It can also be seen in the table that students 3 and 4 both have an average raw test score of 3.25 and student 2 had an average raw test score of 3.75. With student 3 having a G score average of 7.125, student 4 having a G score average of 7.075 and student 2 having a G score average of 7.6, which signifies that these students' reading comprehension level is aligned with their current grade level. On the other hand, student 1 had a raw test score average of 4.25, with a G score average of 8, which implies that the reading comprehension level of this Grade 7 student from the experimental group is the same as with a Grade 8 student in their 8th month of academic year, therefore, it is beyond their grade level reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension levels of experimental group participants from the pre-test results

Experimental Group			
Student	Pre-test Score Average	G Score Average	Interpretation
Student 1	4.25	8	Grade 8
Student 2	3.75	7.6	Grade 7
Student 3	3.25	7.125	Grade 7
Student 4	3.25	7.075	Grade 7
Overall Mean	3.625	7.45	

Students from the experimental group exhibited a favorable result in the first part of the intervention. From Table 2, it can be seen that the overall mean of the pre-test scores of the experimental group is 3.625 out of 8, with a G score average of 7.45. Overall, even though students were part of the opportunity class, Table 2 reveals that students from the experimental group have an exact reading comprehension level that is appropriate for their current grade level in the 8th month of the academic year.

**Reading comprehension level of the two groups after using critical reading strategies**

**Table 3**

Table 3 shows the level of the reading comprehension of the control group participants from the post-test results. Data shows that the average reading comprehension score is 4.187, with a corresponding G score average of 7.9. This indicates that, on average, the students in the control group scored around a Grade 7 level in reading comprehension. Individual scores vary slightly, with Student 1 scoring at a Grade 8 level, and Students 2, 3, and 4 scoring at Grade 7 levels. It is noteworthy that Student 4 exhibited a positive post-test result, scoring higher than the pre-test. This improvement suggests some degree of progress in reading comprehension skills for this particular student.

Reading comprehension levels of control group participants from the post-test results

Control Group			
Student	Post-test Score Average	G Score Average	Interpretation
Student 1	5	8.65	Grade 8

Student 2	4.25	7.9	Grade 7
Student 3	4.25	7.895	Grade 7
Student 4	3.25	7.175	Grade 7
Overall Mean	4.187	7.9	

These findings align with previous research emphasizing the variability in students' reading comprehension abilities (Cain & Oakhill, 2014). Factors such as prior knowledge, vocabulary skills, and cognitive strategies influence individuals' comprehension levels (Kendeou et al., 2014). Additionally, the use of standardized assessments, like the G score, provides a standardized metric for comparing students' comprehension levels (Kintsch, 1998).

Overall, the data from the control group's post-test results offer valuable insights into the range of reading comprehension abilities among Grade 7 students.

**Table 4**

Table 4 shows the post-test score average and the G score that interpret the reading comprehension level of the experimental group in their post-test results.

Students 1 and 4 have the same reading comprehension level of Grade 7, similar to their current grade level. Student 1 has a post-test score of 3.5 and a g-score average of 7.32 or a reading comprehension level of Grade 7 in their third month. In contrast, student 4 has a post-test score average of 3.75 and a G score of 7.5, indicating that the participant is in the fifth month of Grade 7. Student 3 has a post-test score of 5 and a g-score average of 8.7, indicating that the participant is in their seventh month of Grade 8 advanced to their current grade level. Lastly, student 2 has a post-test score of 4 with a G score average of 6.87, which can be interpreted as their reading comprehension level is behind their current grade level as they were on the eight-month mark of Grade

As an overall mean, the experimental group attained a post-test score average of 4.06 and a G score of 7.6, indicating that the participants are in their exact reading comprehension level as they are in their sixth months of Grade 7.

Reading comprehension levels of experimental group participants from the post-test results

Experimental Group			
Student	Post-test Score Average	G Score Average	Interpretation
Student 1	3.5	7.325	Grade 7
Student 2	4	6.875	Grade 6
Student 3	5	8.7	Grade 8
Student 4	3.75	7.5	Grade 7
Overall Mean	4.062	7.6	

With the given data above, it can be observed that the results between the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group are not aligned to the findings of Nasrollahi et al. (2014) in the effectiveness of critical reading strategies to improve reading comprehension. Two students who had undergone the critical reading strategies using learner-chosen text had a lower score in their post-test. Student 1 had a reading comprehension level of Grade 8 in their pre-test, but after the post-test, the G score average they obtained was interpreted as the level of Grade 7. Similarly, student 2 also got a lower score in their post-test. They were in Grade 7 in their pre-test and attained the reading comprehension level of Grade 6 in their post-test. On the other hand, student 3 got a higher reading comprehension level of Grade 8 in their post-test results, whereas their previous comprehension level was Grade 7. Lastly, student 4 has the same reading comprehension level as Grade 7 in their pre-test and

post-test.

Despite the varied interpretations of the G score average to each participant's reading comprehension level within the experimental group, the overall mean of the post-test surpassed the overall mean obtained in the pre-test results. There is an increase in the overall mean of the post-test results, but it indicates that their comprehension level is consistent with the group's current grade level. Thus, the post-test results suggest a need for more significant improvement in the students' critical thinking skills and acquired reading comprehension in their reading text, in contrast to the findings of Nasrollahi et al. (2014).

### Significant difference in the reading comprehension level of the students taught using critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned texts

**Table 5**

Table 5 shows the significant value of the pre-test and post-test G scores obtained by the participants from the control group. The calculated p-value ( $t(3) = -0.86$   $p = .45$ ) which is greater than the standard p-value which is 0.05 suggests that the mean G scores of the pre-test and the mean G scores of the post-tests processed through the t-Test provides insufficient evidence to support that there is a significant difference between the G scores. Acquiring the remark of “no significant difference” entails that the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

Interpretation of pre-test and post-test G scores from the control group

Control Group				
Test	t-value	p-value	Remarks	Interpretation
Pre-test vs. Post-test G Scores	-0.861	0.452	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis

\* $p < 0.05$

The table shows that there were no significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants from the control group. Hence, using critical reading strategies on teacher-assigned texts did not significantly improve the reading comprehension level of the participants of the control group. This contradicts previous research conducted by Khabiri & Pakzad (2012), Nasrollahi et al. (2014), Fadhilla (2017), Larking (2017), Lestari (2021), and Al Roomy, (2022) which shows a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension and vocabulary.

### Significant difference in the reading comprehension level of the students taught using critical reading strategies on learner-chosen texts

**Table 6**

Table 6 shows the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test G scores of the participants from the experimental group. The remark of the G scores from the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group indicates that it is not significant because the p-value exceeds 0.05 ( $t(3) = -0.27$   $p = .80$ ). Therefore, the data from the said group indicates that it should not reject the null hypothesis.

Interpretation of pre-test and post-test G scores from the experimental group

Experimental Group				
Test	t-value	p-value	Remarks	Interpretation
Pre-test vs. Post-test G Scores	-0.275	0.800	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis

\* $p < 0.05$

The table above shows no statistical evidence of the differences between the pre-test and post-test results of the participants who used learner-chosen text in applying the critical reading strategies. Although there may have been an increase in the average G scores of student 3 ( $M = 8.7$ ) and student 4 ( $M = 7.5$ ) after the intervention, the result of the difference between the pre-test and post-test computed using the paired t-test rejects the null hypothesis, indicating no significant difference between the two mentioned variables. With the given results, there is insufficient evidence to claim that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test of the participants in the experimental group. As such, the results of the study differed from previous studies regarding the effectiveness of critical reading strategies in improving students' reading comprehension (Nasrollahi et al., 2014; Larking, 2017; Lestari, 2021; Al Roomy, 2022) and the positive influence of learner-chosen texts in learning (Bonyadi & Zeinalpur, 2014; Mishra, 2020; Barberg, 2022).

### Significant difference between the reading comprehension level of the control and experimental groups

**Table 7**

Table 7 compares the average G scores from the pre-test and post-test in the control and experimental groups using an independent sample t-test. The results indicate that the G scores from the pre-tests of the control versus the experimental group are insignificant ( $t(6) = 0.83$ ,  $p = .43$ ). As for the G scores from the post-tests, the results indicate that the G scores of the control versus the experimental group are insignificant ( $t(6) = 0.60$ ,  $p = .56$ ). Therefore, the results from the pre-test and post-test G scores of both control and experimental groups are not statistically significant. As such, the data from the two indicates that it does not reject the null hypothesis.

Interpretation of significant difference of control versus experimental group

Control vs. Experimental Group				
Test	t-value	p-value	Remarks	Interpretation
Pre-test G Scores	0.830	0.438	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis
Post-test G Scores	0.609	0.564	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis

\* $p < 0.05$

The findings of the study contribute contrasting results compared to the other studies that implemented critical reading strategies and learner-chosen reading interventions. The results of the study entails an insignificant difference with the post-test scores of each group which is contrary to the study of Nasrollahi et al. (2014) which indicates an improvement of critical thinking and higher-order thinking skills with teaching the usage of critical reading skills. Comparing the results of this research to Fadhilah (2017)'s results, it is evident that while Fadhilah found that most students had high improvement and no student got low improvement, results of this research showed that the use of the same critical reading strategies that mentioned study used made no significant improvement on students who took opportunity classes. Similarly with Hilmi and Addinna (2021), whose research showed that students showed improvement in expanding their vocabularies and understanding various types of texts using autonomy in learning, this research showed that the implementations done for this study showed no significant improvement in student performance.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of Findings

The study used critical reading strategies as the intervention for the selected grade 7 students from UST Education High School during the third quarter. Previous studies have used these strategies to improve students'

reading comprehension (Nasrollahi et al., 2014; Larking, 2017; Lestari, 2021; Al Roomy, 2022). In addition, the researchers explored and furthered the existing studies by incorporating the use of learner-chosen text for the experimental group to increase the learners' autonomy and motivation by choosing their reading material as explored in previous studies (Bonyadi & Zeinalpur, 2014; Mishra, 2020; Barberg, 2022). Additionally, the schema theory was used in the study to highlight the process of understanding the given reading materials (Anderson and Pearson, 1984; An, 2013; as cited in McAlpine, 2019) and applying the strategies. Thus, the study analyzed the implications of critical reading strategies to teacher-assigned text and learner-chosen text.

Based on the results and discussion, the overall mean G score of the control group showed slight changes, with the pre-test having an overall mean of 7.818 and the post-test having an overall mean of 7.9. There is also a slight increase in the overall mean G score of the experimental group, wherein the pre-test has an overall mean of 7.45, and the post-test has an overall mean of 7.6. However, despite the increase in the overall mean of the two groups after the intervention, the statistical difference computed using a paired test shows that the data has an insignificant difference. The p-value of the control group is at 0.452, and the experimental group is at 0.800, exceeding the 0.05 p-value, which both fall under the interpretation of not rejecting the null hypothesis, which reveals the insignificant differences of the two variables from the control and experimental group. Furthermore, the interpretation of the differences between the two groups using the independent sample t-test shows no significant difference with the p-values of the pre-test and post-test at 0.438 and 0.564, respectively.

## Conclusion

The researchers conclude that applying critical reading strategies in learning may affect students' reading comprehension. However, no concrete implications and statistical evidence prove the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of those who used teacher-assigned text vis-a-vis learner-chosen text during the intervention. Therefore, the effectiveness of the teacher-assigned and learner-chosen texts is almost the same, showing no significant difference. As such, teachers may either use teacher-assigned text or learner-chosen text to improve students' reading comprehension. With insufficient evidence to conclude which type of text works best, the researchers observed and concluded that the different factors during the intervention may have influenced the results of the study, such as the student's learning environment, challenges in online learning and testing, and the low sample of participants who took the opportunity classes.

## Recommendations

Based on the study's outcomes and observations, the following recommendations have been crafted to address the encountered challenges and capitalize on opportunities for enhancing the reading comprehension proficiency of Grade 7 students. These suggestions offer practical strategies for language teachers and educators of UST Education High School to optimize reading comprehension instruction and foster students' literacy skills effectively.

The researchers suggest that the UST-EHS test the reading comprehension level of the students at the beginning of the academic year. The same test should be conducted by the end of the academic year to ensure the students are at par with their suitable level. Subsequently, the results of the pre-tests and post-tests will bring forth new understanding of the current pedagogies practiced by the Pre-Service Teachers.

The study was conducted using an online modality, which the researchers found to be one of the reasons why some participants were unresponsive when asked about their perspectives. Thus, the researchers suggest an onsite or face-to-face implementation of critical reading strategies to learner-chosen texts to see if a different modality will bring contrasting results to the reading comprehension level of the students.

The study was conducted on students taking opportunity classes, who had low performance in their Mastery Test and were not compliant with the requirements in their English subject. Researchers observed that they were not actively engaged in their assigned or chosen literary text. Consequently, the researchers suggest that English Pre-Service Teachers of UST-EHS use opportunity classes to provide engaging reading activities using teacher-assigned texts that would improve the reading habits of the participants of opportunity classes. The engaging reading activities must also allow students to apply critical reading strategies while they read a text.

The researchers recommend that future studies focus on the selection of learner-chosen text and how reading and remedial teachers can review them to ensure the appropriateness of the text to the target grade level.

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## APPENDIX A

### Informed Consent Form

#### Terminologies

**Critical Reading Strategies (CRS)** - It refers to the five (5) critical reading strategies suggested by Sousa (2004) and WSSU (2013) as one of the proposed teaching interventions when reading a text to improve the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students. These are implemented by the researchers during the opportunity classes.

**Intervention** - An act that refers to teaching new skills to students especially those who are struggling. This is to address the gap that needs to fill in and it can be done individually or delivered as a group.

**Learner-Chosen Text (LCT)** - A proposed teaching intervention in which students have the opportunity to choose their literary text in relation to the guidelines given by the researchers.

**Mastery Test** - A test that is used to determine whether the students have achieved or understood the lessons covered during the first three (3) weeks of every quarter.

**Opportunity Classes (OC)** - This refers to the classes that are given to students with low performances in mastery tests to catch up with their requirements and have their remedial lessons. The researchers aimed to implement the proposed teaching interventions during the OC in the Third Quarter of the academic year.

**Post-test** - A standard McCall-Crabbs Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test that is re-applied at the end of opportunity classes.

**Pre-service Teachers** - It refers to the students who were enrolled in a teacher education course who are preparing to become a teacher. The Pre-service teachers are the ones who are teaching the students in the University of Santo Tomas' laboratory school which is the Education High School.

**Pre-test** - A standard McCall-Crabbs Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test that is given before the proposed teaching intervention applies.

**Reading Comprehension** - The ability of Grade 7 students to read text, process it, and understand what one reads.

**Students** - This refers to the person enrolled in UST Education High School. Specifically, the subjects of the study are Grade 7 students from both sections who were part of the opportunity class.

**Teacher-Assigned Text (TAT)** - A proposed teaching intervention in which the literary texts assigned by the researchers are in accordance with the English Curriculum Guide of the Department of Education.

**UST Education High School (UST-EHS)** - It serves as a laboratory school for the training of Fourth-year Secondary Education students of UST College of Education. It also seeks to extend opportunities for gifted and talented students who belong to financially challenged families.

### **Explanation of purpose of the study**

The researchers aim to investigate and improve the reading comprehension levels of the selected subjects from UST-EHS taking OC (opportunity classes). As an intervention, they will be taught using critical reading strategies and use teacher-assigned and learner-chosen text throughout the entire course of their opportunity classes.

### **Explanation of study procedures**

Data will be collected by PSTs during students' opportunity classes. The teacher will ask students to use certain CRSs (critical reading strategies) on TATs (teacher-assigned text) and LCTs (learner-chosen text), depending on which group the students will fall under (experimental or controlled groups). Students will be asked to answer a pre-test and a post-test which will be held with confidentiality.

### **Enumeration of risks and side effects**

Time will be taken from students' participation in their opportunity classes.

### **Benefits of the study**

There is a chance that the reading comprehension of students who will partake in this study will improve. They may also learn CRS that they have never tried before. They may also find enjoyment from being allowed to choose a material to read, especially those who will fall under the experimental group. Overall, the effects of this study on students' reading may affect the way students comprehend texts that they might encounter in the future (e.g. instructional manuals, college texts, program descriptions, etc.).

### **Cost of the study**

Print materials to be used in this study will be the responsibility of the researchers. Students who will partake in this study should not contribute to the expenses. However, students must bring their own pens/pencils in answering the test items.

### **Statement of confidentiality**

Results that will be collected from the tests will be viewed only by the researchers of this study for the purpose of gaining data only. The names of the students, their answers on the three (3) tests, and their performance will not be given to any other party outside this study.

### **Consent Form**

I voluntarily agree to let my child, (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ from (Grade level and Section) \_\_\_\_\_, participate in this action research. I understand that my child shall participate during the entire course of this study during the opportunity classes for the third quarter. I understand that the opportunity classes will be held within 1 hour.

☐ Yes    ☐ No

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name with Signature

Name of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name with Signature

Name of Witness (Thesis Adviser): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name with Signature

Name of Investigator (Researcher): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name with Signature

## APPENDIX B

### McCall-Crabbs Reading Comprehension Proficiency Test

When children are born in any of the hamlets and villages along the banks of the "Blue Danube," a violin and a silver spoon are held up before their eyes as soon as they are safe in their cradles. If they reach for the silver spoon, they are declared destined to become merchants. If they grasp the violin, people say they will become musicians. We do not know which Johann Strauss did, but the infant was destined to become one of the most famous musicians in the world and to be called the "Waltz King."

Johann Strauss was an orchestra leader. He vowed that his son, Johann, Jr., or "Schani," was to become not a fiddler but a businessman. However, "Schani" could scarcely escape the fate that awaited him, for music was in his blood. Then, too, did he not share his bedroom with the violin, the drum, the flute, and the harp? Was he not rocked to sleep to the strains of waltzes and polkas, lancers and quadrilles, while his father rehearsed his orchestra, practically beside the infant's crib?

It is not surprising that "Schani" began composing almost as soon as he could talk and before he knew one note from another. His mother took down his first waltz when he was six. It had its "premiere" on his fifteenth birthday, under the title *First Thoughts*, and proved to have considerable merit.

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- Choose the best title:    Ⓐ First Thoughts    Ⓑ Early Life of Johann Strauss, Jr.    Ⓒ Talks to Future Musicians    Ⓓ Blue Danube
- The father was    Ⓐ an orchestra leader    Ⓑ a violinist    Ⓒ a waltz king    Ⓓ a merchant
- It is said that when infants reach for a spoon, they are destined to be    Ⓐ fiddlers    Ⓑ merchants    Ⓒ band leaders    Ⓓ musicians
- This story is primarily about    Ⓐ musicians    Ⓑ Johann Strauss, Sr.    Ⓒ infants    Ⓓ the son of Johann Strauss, Sr.
- "Schani's" first waltz was composed when the boy was    Ⓐ fifteen    Ⓑ at school    Ⓒ in the cradle    Ⓓ six years old
- Johann Strauss, Jr., first wrote    Ⓐ poetry    Ⓑ prose    Ⓒ a march    Ⓓ a waltz
- Who probably encouraged Johann Strauss, Jr., most?    Ⓐ mother    Ⓑ orchestra    Ⓒ father    Ⓓ uncle
- Johann, Jr.'s mother    Ⓐ had her "premiere"    Ⓑ composed a waltz of considerable merit    Ⓒ wrote the music as he composed it    Ⓓ taught him his first waltz when he was six

No. right Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	4.5	5.2	5.9	6.6	7.4	8.1	9.2	10.0

The Pankhurst family of Manchester, England, were all deeply concerned about social injustices, especially those that affected women. In 1903 Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst and her two daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, organized the Women's Social and Political Union in which women joined together to fight for the right to vote. To gain support for women's suffrage, the Pankhursts gave speeches throughout the country, organized parades and rallies, talked to members of Parliament, and wrote hundreds of pamphlets. When the movement became militant, more than one thousand were arrested, jailed, and forced to do hard labor.

Sylvia Pankhurst wanted to be a painter. She was studying at the Royal School of Art when she joined her mother and sister in the fight for women's rights. After women in England won the right to vote in 1918, Sylvia continued to work for better social conditions. She moved to the slums of London's East End and established a shelter for abandoned, abused, and homeless women. She campaigned for equal pay for equal work, nurseries for working mothers, and better health care for the poor. Several times she was arrested and imprisoned for her activities, but that did not deter her.

1. Suffrage means    Ⓐ misery    Ⓑ lack of air    Ⓒ right to vote  
Ⓓ social injustice
2. Equal pay for equal work means    Ⓐ the poor receive the same pay as the rich    Ⓑ people doing the same work are paid the same    Ⓒ no one works harder than anyone else    Ⓓ no one earns more money than anyone else
3. Sylvia Pankhurst wanted to be    Ⓐ an artist    Ⓑ a member of Parliament    Ⓒ a working mother    Ⓓ arrested
4. Women had the right to vote    Ⓐ since 1903    Ⓑ since the American Revolution    Ⓒ at the same time men won the right    Ⓓ after a long hard struggle
5. Women were sent to jail because    Ⓐ they joined the military    Ⓑ they became militant    Ⓒ they refused to vote    Ⓓ a shelter was needed
6. One method the activists used was    Ⓐ marches    Ⓑ strikes  
Ⓒ electing representatives to Parliament    Ⓓ making speeches on TV
7. In 1918, Sylvia    Ⓐ studied at The Royal School of Art    Ⓑ gave up the fight for human rights    Ⓒ helped the poor fight for better conditions  
Ⓓ joined her mother and sister in the fight for women's right to vote
8. The Pankhurst family    Ⓐ fought for what they believed in  
Ⓑ struggled to improve prison conditions    Ⓒ died in jail  
Ⓓ campaigned for election

No. right G score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	5.3	6.0	6.7	7.4	8.1	9.1	9.9	10.7

Most trees live at least one hundred years, many very much longer. On the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California there are trees of great age. The oldest are estimated to be between two and three thousand years of age. Modern scientists have named them *Sequoia gigantea*—*Sequoia* after a famous Cherokee Indian, *gigantea* because of their enormous size.

These trees belong to the pine family and are distinguished by the reddish color of their heartwood. Their foliage is more delicate and feathery than that of the other conifers. The cones are very small, about two and one-half inches long. For a hundred feet or more, the massive trunk rises without a branch. The tallest trees attain a height of about 300 feet, and their trunks vary from thirty to forty feet in diameter.

Most of these giant trees would have been felled for lumber but for the intervention of the great naturalist, John Muir. Largely through his efforts, the groves have been made national parks, and the sequoias have been saved from extinction.

1. These trees grow    (A) west of California    (B) in valleys    (C) on the sides of mountains    (D) on the summits of mountains
2. The oldest of these trees are between    (A) 20 and 30 years    (B) 200 and 300 years    (C) 2,000 and 3,000 years    (D) 20,000 and 30,000 years
3. They were named for    (A) a naturalist    (B) an Indian    (C) an explorer    (D) a lumberman
4. The giant sequoias are conserved    (A) so they will become extinct    (B) to be used as lumber    (C) for their natural grandeur    (D) because of the scarcity of pine trees
5. In thickness the tallest sequoias are approximately    (A) 2½ inches    (B) 35 feet    (C) 100 feet    (D) 300 feet
6. John Muir was    (A) a scientist    (B) a Cherokee    (C) an ecologist    (D) a park ranger
7. If not for Muir, the trees would    (A) be very small    (B) no longer exist    (C) be in a national park    (D) be enormous
8. The sequence of discussion is    (A) description of tree, conservation, name, age    (B) name, age, conservation, description of tree    (C) age, name, description of tree, conservation    (D) conservation, description of tree, age, name

No. right G score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	5.5	6.2	7.0	7.7	8.6	9.5	10.4	11.3

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How many of us realize the world-wide implications of enjoying a big, juicy steak for dinner? The global ethics of food production and how we eat concern Frances Moore Lappé in her book *Diet for a Small Planet*. World hunger poses a growing threat as populations increase and the earth's agricultural capacity moves towards its limits. Lappé's partial solution to the problem includes changing our dietary assumptions and habits. Sixteen pounds of grain consumed by a steer will yield one pound of beef. Those sixteen pounds of grain and soybeans, if prepared wisely for human consumption, could yield protein of a comparable or higher quality than the beef. Too often foods low on the food chain go unrecognized for the food value they contain. She pioneered the idea of combining two inferior sources of protein, lacking different essential elements, in order to come up with complete and high-yield protein meals. The body can use only a specific amount of protein at one time; beyond that amount, it is wasted. Our habitual excesses deprive others of their basic requirements. Lappé doesn't necessarily advocate vegetarianism. She presents the facts on global production and consumption of life-sustaining protein, and asks us to eat as our consciences dictate.

1. Frances Moore Lappé's book is on    Ⓐ raising beef    Ⓑ population control    Ⓒ the ethics of protein consumption    Ⓓ dieting
2. World hunger becomes a threat when    Ⓐ nations take political risks    Ⓑ populations increase and new farm land cannot be found    Ⓒ we order steak    Ⓓ the protein in our food is incomplete
3. Part of Lappé's solution to the problem is    Ⓐ eating as the Chinese eat    Ⓑ conforming to a strict diet without meat    Ⓒ weekly fasting    Ⓓ revising our dietary assumptions and habits
4. Sixteen pounds of soybeans and grains    Ⓐ are fed daily to beef cattle    Ⓑ yield one pound of beef    Ⓒ are less good for you than beef    Ⓓ yield an inferior protein
5. Food low on the food chain too often is overlooked    Ⓐ as a valuable protein source    Ⓑ as cattle feed    Ⓒ by vegetarians    Ⓓ for purely economic reasons
6. By carefully combining two less valuable sources of protein, Lappé discovered    Ⓐ many new recipes    Ⓑ new reasons to eat red meat    Ⓒ new essential elements    Ⓓ new ways to provide high-protein meals
7. Too much protein eaten at any one time    Ⓐ is difficult to digest    Ⓑ is wasted    Ⓒ causes rapid growth    Ⓓ causes disease
8. Lappé believes    Ⓐ we should be vegetarians    Ⓑ protein is harmful    Ⓒ our eating habits need to be changed    Ⓓ we do not get our basic requirements

No. right G score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	5.9	6.8	7.6	8.7	9.8	10.8	11.9	12.9+

## APPENDIX C

### Raw Test Scores of Control Group

**Table 8**

*Raw test scores of control group*

Control Group		
	Pre-test	Post-test
Student 1	4	3
	4	5
	5	4
	8	8
Average	5.25	5
Student 2	1	4
	5	3
	5	5
	5	5
Average	4	4.25
Student 3	3	4
	5	4
	3	4
	5	5
Average	4	4.25
Student 4	2	1
	4	4
	4	3
	3	5
Average	3.25	3.25
Overall Average	4.125	4.1875

## APPENDIX D

### Raw Test Scores of Experimental Group

**Table 9**

*Raw test scores of experimental group*

Experimental Group		
	Pre-test	Post-test
Student 1	1	1

	6	6
	5	3
	5	4
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Student 2</b>	4	3
	2	3
	3	2
	6	8
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.75</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Student 3</b>	1	2
	3	6
	5	5
	4	7
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Student 4</b>	1	3
	5	5
	3	2
	4	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>3.75</b>
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>3.625</b>	<b>4.0625</b>

## APPENDIX E

### G scores of Control Group

**Table 10**

*G scores of control group*

<b>Control Group</b>		
	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
<b>Student 1</b>	6.5	5.9
	7.4	8.1
	8.6	7.7
	12.9	12.9
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.85</b>	<b>8.65</b>
<b>Student 2</b>	4.5	6.5
	8.1	6.7
	8.6	8.6
	9.8	9.8

<b>Average</b>	<b>7.75</b>	<b>7.9</b>
<b>Student 3</b>	5.9	6.6
	8.1	7.4
	7	7.7
	9.8	9.8
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>7.875</b>
<b>Student 4</b>	5.2	4.5
	7.4	7.4
	7.7	7
	7.6	9.8
<b>Average</b>	<b>6.975</b>	<b>7.175</b>
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>7.818</b>	<b>7.9</b>

## APPENDIX F

### G scores of Experimental Group

**Table 11**

*G scores of experimental group*

<b>Experimental Group</b>		
	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
<b>Student 1</b>	4.5	4.5
	9.1	9.1
	8.6	7
	9.8	8.7
<b>Average</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.325</b>
<b>Student 2</b>	6.6	5.9
	6	6.7
	7	6.2
	10.8	8.7
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>6.875</b>
<b>Student 3</b>	4.5	5.2
	6.7	9.1
	8.6	8.6
	8.7	11.9
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.125</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Student 4</b>	4.5	5.9
	8.1	8.1

	7	6.2
	8.7	9.8
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.075</b>	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>7.45</b>	<b>7.6</b>

## APPENDIX G

### Assumption Testing Using SPSS

**Table 12**

*Test of normality using Shapiro-Wilk test for pre-test and post-test results of control and experimental groups*

Test of Normality		
	Shapiro-Wilk	
	df	Significant Difference
Pre-test (Control)	4	.639
Pre-test (Experimental)	4	.440
Post-test (Control)	4	.726
Post-test (Experimental)	4	.453

## APPENDIX H

### Ethics Committee Clearance

