

Enhancing the Reading Comprehension Skills of Junior High School Students Using Young Adult Literature: A Review of Related Studies

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Abstract—This study examines the concept of reading comprehension and highlights the significance of engaging in discussion as a means of generating meaning from textual material. The process of understanding written text involves various intricate elements, primarily encompassing cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural components. The study revealed that a significant proportion of individuals who exhibit reluctance towards reading had the ability to accurately decode words, yet struggle with comprehending the content they read. Furthermore, these individuals lack the necessary cognitive processes to facilitate their comprehension of written material. The acquisition of robust reading comprehension abilities is widely recognized as a very advantageous talent for students. Despite the fact that reading comprehension is evaluated in literacy courses spanning from middle school to high school, its explicit instruction may be lacking. In the contemporary era, the proficiency of pupils in literacy is intricately linked to the requisites of reading aptitude, hence facilitating the capacity to comprehend information in an analytical, critical, and creative manner. This advocate that young adult literature can help enhance a learner's reading comprehension. Engaging in the activity of reading and engaging in discussions centered around young adult literature presents an advantageous opportunity for educators at the middle and high school levels. This practice not only facilitates their preparation for literature-based discussions within their respective classrooms, but also serves to enhance their comprehension processes and shed light on their personal utilization of comprehension strategies in order to foster text comprehension. For these reasons, the researchers aim to determine the importance in promoting the reading comprehension skills using the young adult literature to the junior high school students.

Keywords— A cross-sectional study, comprehension skills, enhancing the reading, junior high school students, young adult literature.

I. INTRODUCTION

This literature review presented the related foreign and local ideas, concepts, and principles to support the study. Those that were covered in this literature contribute in providing a greater understanding of the subject being investigated and familiarizing the information that are significant to and related to the current study.

According to Henderson (2011), those who face difficulties in reading commonly experience challenges in comprehending the text, rather than in the fundamental skill of

word recognition. The process of comprehension is characterized by its dynamic nature, requiring readers to employ a range of strategies in order to construct meaning (Altwies, 2022). Consequently, language teachers have challenges in devising an efficient reading approach (Alenizi, 2019; Ismail & Tawalbeh, 2015). The acquisition of robust reading comprehension abilities is widely recognized as a very advantageous talent for students. Despite the fact that reading comprehension is evaluated in literacy courses spanning from middle school to high school, its explicit instruction may be lacking. In the contemporary era, the proficiency of pupils in literacy is intricately linked to the requisites of reading aptitude, hence facilitating the capacity to comprehend information in an analytical, critical, and creative manner. However, the educational system in schools fails to acknowledge this reality.

According to a study conducted by Faizah et al. (2016), the findings of policy research supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture indicated that there was a notable deficiency in the reading abilities of youngsters.

II. DISCUSSION

Academic Performance

According to BS Accountancy (FABM 1) (2021) that the students are experiencing struggles in comprehension which is vital in understanding their lessons. As an illustration, consider how they analyze and resolve accounting-related problems, which are always written in English or discussed in English. As a result, pupils' struggles with reading comprehension may have an impact on their academic achievement. The aspect of motivation in English language education is often overlooked. Educators frequently overlook the fundamental role of motivation in learners' engagement with English language acquisition endeavors. In this context, learners exert influence over the dynamics of the classroom. The presence of learners' motivation is essential for the vitality and vibrancy of the classroom environment. When individuals acquire the ability to integrate direct strategies aimed at fostering motivation in their learning process, they are likely to experience increased levels of satisfaction and achievement as learners. This study aims to examine the influence of motivation on the reading comprehension abilities of learners.

This paper provides an overview of the concepts of motivation, various types of motivation, reading comprehension, and several models of reading comprehension. According to Tehran (2017), the literature evaluation revealed that motivation has a significant impact in the reading comprehension of learners.

Whitten (2019), Labby (2019), and Sullivan (2019) assert that the pursuit of enhancing student academic performance poses a prevalent obstacle in contemporary educational settings. The present study aimed to investigate the reading behaviors of a sample of sixty-five high school juniors, ranging in age from fifteen to seventeen years, who attended a high school located in a rural area in Southeast Texas. A hypothesis was put up suggesting that students who actively participated in reading books of their own choice for recreational purposes would achieve higher academic performance in English, mathematics, science, and history compared to their counterparts who did not engage in reading.

Basic Reading Skill

According to Slauch (2014) “It teaches you new found words, fluency, and perspectives. It helps strengthen language and sharpens sentence structure. It gives you a better command over the language. According to the Department of Education, basic reading encompasses a range of abilities that foster students' comprehension and familiarity with print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, spelling, and fluency. These abilities are organized in a specific order and provide a foundation for future mastery and expertise in reading and writing across various genres and academic subjects. The acquisition of advanced reading abilities necessitates the mastery of multiple skills that must be employed concurrently (Tirol, 2021). Evidently, this process does not occur instantaneously. According to Hollowel (2021), it is recommended that learners initially acquire fundamental abilities in isolation. As their proficiency in each area improves, they can gradually advance and integrate these skills, ultimately achieving autonomous reading ability with comprehensive understanding (Tirol, 2022).

Work on the Basics

According to Butchard (2021), in the case of a student experiencing difficulties in reading, it is possible that assistance may be required in developing proficiency in the fundamental components of decoding. Certain individuals may initially succeed due to their proficient recognition of sight words, but may struggle when the reading requirements get more intricate in grades 2 and beyond. However, in the case of a student who is in grade 7 or higher but exhibits deficiencies in reading skills, it is imperative to provide assistance in strengthening their core phonics knowledge, which should have been acquired during their earlier years in grade 1 and kindergarten. This can be achieved by employing educational tools such as flash cards or phonics worksheets to review and reinforce the understanding of sound-letter correspondences. The establishment of a robust foundation in phonics can significantly enhance a student's reading

proficiency. Therefore, by focusing on the basic skills that are found within reading, give children more tools that they can use to strengthen their reading ability overall.

Promote Consistent Engagement

Despite possessing great phonics skills, kids may still have challenges in developing fluency, which refers to the ability to read with smoothness and emotion. Based on the study referenced on the Reading Rockets website, it has been shown that the practice of repeated reading plays a pivotal role in enhancing the fluency levels of youngsters. Instruct the pupils to engage in the activity of reading a preferred narrative aloud to their instructor, followed by reading the identical narrative to either a sibling or a domesticated animal. Repeatedly reading a certain chapter can contribute to the development of reading fluency and enhance a child's self-assurance in approaching novel reading objectives. According to Briggs (2013), increased reading and practice contribute to improved comprehension of the contextual usage of words.

Enhance Its Uniqueness

Even kids who possess advanced phonics skills require extensive repetition in order to attain proficiency in reading. Moreover, students who are encountering difficulties in reading necessitate even greater exposure and practice to overcome the challenges they have in this area. Make every effort to provide ample support and encouragement to promote the progress of your reader who is facing difficulties. It is advisable to engage in regular reading sessions with your child or students in order to cultivate a fondness for literature. Request her to engage in reading activities with you and express your appreciation for her achievements in reading, regardless of their magnitude, as they hold significant value to you. Encourage your child or students to observe your reading habits, as this will convey the message that reading is highly esteemed by the significant individuals in their lives. According to Ho and Stevens (2013), it has been asserted that reading enhances one's vocabulary and expands their understanding of the world. Exposure to many perspectives has the potential to broaden one's intellectual horizons, prompting individuals to critically reevaluate their own beliefs and adopt alternative viewpoints (Tinapay & Tirol, 2021). This process engenders a fresh perspective on various subjects, facilitating a more nuanced understanding of the world (Tinapay et al, 2021).

Checklist for reading & Comprehension Strategy for Literature

Duczeminsk (2021) highlighted that educators prioritize the various components that constitute the holistic profile of a student's reading skills during the assessment process. Several elements, including phonemic awareness and phonics, center on the process of converting written text into spoken words. Once students have achieved mastery of these foundational skills, they are able to direct their attention on the task of comprehending written texts (Tinapay & Tirol, 2021). To achieve a comprehensive understanding of a text, students must employ comprehension skills prior to,

during, and subsequent to the act of reading. Teachers must also diligently observe and document the tactics employed by pupils, as well as those that are not utilized, in order to effectively foster the development of their reading abilities (Tinapay et al., 2023). The utilization of reading assessment checklists serves as an ideal instrument for evaluating the progress of children and monitoring the development of their reading skills.

According to Junkie (2021), a reading strategy checklist includes various components such as utilizing background knowledge, posing inquiries, discerning the author's intent, ascertaining the principal idea, recognizing the sequence of events, identifying cause and effect relationships, making logical deductions, predicting outcomes, summarizing content, differentiating between factual information and opinions, locating pertinent facts and details, noting instances of comparison and contrast, establishing connections between ideas, employing visualization techniques, engaging in rereading, and adapting one's reading pace as necessary.

Comprehension Prompts

According to Duczeminsk (2021), in the evaluation of comprehension, educators ought to prioritize a more in-depth approach rather than relying on superficial questioning techniques that merely scratch the surface of a given text. Through this approach, kids are introduced to the concept that reading encompasses more than just recognizing individual words printed on a page. The individuals will acquire the understanding that engaging in a comprehensive examination of a text entails assimilating all the provided information, engaging in introspection, and experiencing personal development as a result. As an alternative, rather than prompting students to simply describe a character's actions, educators should employ inquiries that delve into a student's comprehension of a literary work (Tirol, 2023). For instance, instead of asking "What did Frog do to cheer Toad up?", teachers could pose the question "How can you characterize Frog based on how he treats Toad throughout the story?" With the use of this strategy, children are made aware that reading entails more than just recognizing words on a page.

The Benefits of Sustained Silent Reading in the Study of Literature

LoBello (2021) posits that youngsters who derive pleasure from engaging in extended silent reading develop a propensity for lifetime reading habits. Sustained silent reading (SSR) refers to the practice of engaging in solo and quiet reading. A designated period of time, often ranging from 10 to 30 minutes, is consistently allocated for engaging in recreational reading activities. Numerous educators include this methodology into their instructional practices, while certain educational administrators have implemented schoolwide sustained silent reading (SSR) initiatives. Given that reading is primarily an individualized activity, it is inherent for individuals to engage in quiet reading. The provision of sustained silent reading time by instructors or parents yields advantageous outcomes for youngsters.

Wilhelm (2017) asserts that engaging in pleasurable

reading activities contributes to cognitive advancement, social opportunities, and the development of wisdom and overall well-being. Furthermore, it can be argued that pleasurable reading aligns with the principles of democracy on a broader scale. According to the National Library Trust (UK), reading for pleasure, also known as independent, leisure, or recreational reading, is defined as the voluntary engagement in reading, driven by the anticipation of personal enjoyment derived from the act itself. It has been suggested that reading may have initially commenced at the behest of another individual, and afterwards persisted due to our personal enthusiasm in the activity.

The Enhancement of Comprehension

The understanding of written material is a critical component of the reading process. According to Herryty (2023), it is important to engage in reading with the goal of comprehending and deriving meaning from the text in order to enhance one's entire consciousness. When engaging in silent reading, individuals are not required to allocate excessive attention to the precise pronunciation of each individual word. Consequently, they are able to direct their focus towards comprehending the text being read. As the acquisition of vocabulary, development of fluency, and enhancement of motivation rise, there is a corresponding increase in comprehension. Children engage in reading materials that are appropriate for their individual skill level and progress at a rate that is comfortable for them. Individuals have the ability to mentally construct and assign meaning to words based on their own unique perspectives and interpretations. Certain educators allocate a designated period following sustained silent reading (SSR) for pupils to engage in discourse regarding their literary selections. This process aids in the retrieval of information from memory and strengthens the understanding of the subject matter. According to Clarke (2018), the process of reading comprehension involves more than just the text itself. It also encompasses the reader's response to the text and the interplay between the two. The Cambridge Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) in the year 2019. According to Mevin (2022), it is important to note that enhancing reading comprehension skills can significantly contribute to the long-term success of pupils as proficient readers, both within and beyond the educational setting.

Builds Vocabulary

According to Hansen (2019), silent reading affords individuals the chance to acquire the definitions of numerous unfamiliar words within a contextual framework. Children have the ability to acquire word meanings in a captivating manner without explicit guidance or training. Individuals often exhibit a greater inclination towards embracing this particular approach to acquiring new vocabulary compared to their potential resistance towards engaging in rigorous and obligatory vocabulary education. Children will utilize their acquired word assault skills to independently decipher unfamiliar words. Learning vocabulary through a book is a more efficient method compared to the rote memorization of

terms from a dictionary. This is due to the fact that you are acquiring knowledge of words inside their respective contexts. The semantic coherence of the words in relation to the contextual information facilitates enhanced retention for future recall. Based on the findings of a study referenced by Street (2020), it has been established that reading can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing the vocabulary of those learning a language. This comprehensive approach consists of seven steps that offer valuable suggestions to assist students in optimizing their acquisition of vocabulary through independent reading. To begin, it is advisable to engage with intellectually stimulating material that aligns with one's proficiency level.

Additionally, it is recommended to persist in reading even when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. Firstly, it is recommended to make an educated estimation and proceed, secondly, it is advisable to engage in the process of annotating the text while reading, thirdly, it is suggested to consult a dictionary to clarify any unfamiliar words encountered at the conclusion of the passage or chapter, fourthly, employing a corpus to determine the frequency of each word is advised, fifthly, it is recommended to document the most prevalent and useful words in a vocabulary journal, sixthly, periodically reviewing the vocabulary journal and testing oneself is encouraged. In order to effectively articulate one's thoughts, it is imperative to possess a proficient active lexicon. Proficiency in language entails more than just word recognition; it necessitates the ability to employ words accurately and appropriately. According to Wil (2016), the process of acquiring new vocabulary should involve the utilization of example sentences rather than relying just on word lists.

Enhancing Writing Proficiency

A strong correlation has been shown between the act of reading and the act of writing. The act of engaging in silent reading allows youngsters to immerse themselves in a diverse range of writing styles and sentence structures, which subsequently impacts their own writing styles. The act of focusing on the words being read often leads to an enhancement in grammar and spelling skills. Engaging in regular and autonomous reading fosters a cognitive process that stimulates creativity, which can afterwards be reflected in one's written expression. Following a period of silent reading, the students engage in the practice of composing entries in dialogue diaries as a means of reflecting upon the content they have recently consumed. Aspiring authors who cultivate robust reading habits will acquire a wealth of knowledge and insights from the literary works they engage with. The approach of "reading to write" can be employed to explore many creative writing strategies, word choice strategies, and syntactic control techniques that might enhance one's own writing abilities, as suggested by Masterclass (2021).

According to Shewan (2022), individuals who possess exceptional writing abilities often have a strong inclination towards reading. Engaging in regular reading habits serves as a convenient method for initiating the cultivation of one's writing proficiency. Reading is widely recognized as a highly

efficacious method for enhancing one's writing skills. Engaging in the act of reading provides individuals with the opportunity to encounter diverse writing styles and novel concepts. Engaging with diverse subject matter through reading facilitates the acquisition of comprehensive information, hence enabling the integration of this knowledge into one's written work.

According to Wilber (2022), exposure to written works authored by various writers facilitates the acquisition of diverse writing styles, expansion of vocabulary, and enhancement of one's ability to structure written compositions more efficiently. According to Tower (2022), it is imperative to develop one's narrative abilities, a task that can be accomplished by regular and consistent practice. Establishing a consistent daily writing routine enhances one's productivity in the act of writing. Furthermore, Rahman (2022) posited that the optimal approach to enhancing one's writing abilities is to identify the strategies that yield the most favorable outcomes for the individual. Engaging in increased reading can provide beneficial outcomes for individuals who already possess a pre-existing reading habit, particularly in relation to their writing abilities.

Five Components to a Comprehensive Reading Program

Hollowell (2023) asserts that the act of reading encompasses more than just identification of printed words on a page. The procedure encompasses the simultaneous utilization of multiple skills. The aforementioned skills are categorized into five primary domains, namely phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding. An optimal reading program will encompass all of these elements and establish the approach for instructional delivery within the classroom.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness pertains to the cognitive ability to discern that words are comprised of distinct phonemes that are blended together. Phonemic skills are only reliant on the auditory aspects of a word. When infants are able to audibly perceive a word and subsequently articulate the individual phonemes in isolation, they are effectively acquiring proficiency in phonemic skills. Reading programs incorporate several strategies to develop phonemic awareness, such as engaging in rhyming exercises and employing phoneme deletion or substitution techniques to facilitate the creation of novel words. Based on the findings of the National Reading Panel, the level of phonemic awareness a child has acquired before to commencing formal education significantly influences their reading proficiency at the conclusion of first grade.

Phonics

Phonics refers to the process of combining phonemic awareness, which involves recognizing and manipulating individual sounds in spoken language, with the visual representation of words in written form. The approach to reading instruction discussed above is predicated upon the principle of establishing a direct relationship between letters

and their corresponding sounds. The process of phonics instruction commences with the identification and acknowledgment of letters, gradually advancing towards the acquisition of knowledge regarding the phonetic sounds associated with each letter. Over time, toddlers will acquire the ability to visually see a word, articulate the phonetic sound associated with each individual letter, and subsequently integrate these sounds to form the complete word. The utilization of phonics is crucial in the process of deciphering words and achieving proficiency in spelling. In the absence of phonological awareness, individuals may allocate excessive time and effort towards the articulation of words, so impeding their ability to retain the content of their reading material. According to Dugger (2019), a report published in 2000 by the National Reading Panel determined that the most effective method for instructing children in reading included explicit guidance in phonemic awareness and systematic phonics, in addition to instruction in vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension.

Vocabulary

Jones (2018) stated that vocabulary might be defined as the comprehension and awareness of words and their respective meanings. The primary objective of vocabulary instruction is to facilitate children's comprehension of words and enable them to effectively utilize language for the goal of acquiring and expressing meaning. Additionally, the development of vocabulary is a crucial element of a comprehensive reading program. Merely relying on phonetic decoding is insufficient.

In order to comprehend the text, it is imperative for students to possess a comprehensive understanding of the vocabulary employed within the reading material. Vocabulary instruction encompasses two primary approaches: explicit and implicit methods. Educators employ vocabulary lists and employ specific instructional techniques to provide direct guidance on the definition and appropriate application of individual words. Implicit instruction is a cognitive process that takes place during the act of reading, wherein youngsters are able to deduce the meanings of words by utilizing contextual cues provided by accompanying visuals or other words within the same sentence or paragraph.

Fluency

Fluency can be defined as the aptitude to read with precision and fluidity, incorporating appropriate intonation and pacing, while maintaining a speed that facilitates readers' comprehension of the text. The development of fluency tends to be enhanced as students are exposed to a greater number of books and are provided with regular chances for reading. Reading programs place significant emphasis on developing fluency through various activities such as echo and choral reading. These activities afford students the opportunity to engage in deliberate practice of proficient reading abilities, while also allowing them to emulate the teacher who serves as a model of fluency. Nieporent (2021) posited that it is crucial for youngsters to engage in recurrent reading as a means of practice. The text should be written in a manner that is accessible to readers and concise in length.

Decoding

Decoding is a process of converting or translating coded information into a comprehensible or understandable form. It is commonly used in various contexts, such as:

Language and Communication. In linguistics, decoding refers to the ability to interpret and understand written or spoken language. When you read a text or listen to someone speak, your brain decodes the symbols or sounds into meaningful words and sentences.

Data and Information. Within the field of computer science and information technology, the term "decoding" pertains to the systematic procedure of transforming encoded material into its initial, unaltered state. For example, when you download a file from the internet, your device decodes the data to access and present the information in a readable format.

Cryptography. In cryptography, decoding involves the process of deciphering encoded or encrypted messages using a specific key or algorithm. It is the reverse of encoding, where the original message is converted into a secret code to protect its content.

Reading Comprehension. In education, decoding is a crucial skill for early readers. It refers to the ability to sound out and recognize words, which enables children to understand written text. As decoding is a fundamental cognitive process that allows humans and machines to understand and interpret information that is initially presented in a coded or symbolic form

Comprehension

Comprehension is the conclusion of reading skills acquired via the mastery of the remaining four components of reading. In essence, comprehension refers to the cognitive capacity to grasp and interpret the meaning conveyed by written text (Son et al., 2022). The ability to decipher words, comprehend their semantic significance, and read with ease is essential for a pupil to achieve comprehension of a narrative. The assessment of comprehension can be conducted through the utilization of questions that prompt readers to recognize fundamental elements of a tale, such as characters, setting, and storyline. Enhanced cognitive abilities, encompassing the skills of prediction, summarization, and critical analysis, are often introduced at more advanced educational stages, following the establishment of a solid foundation in fundamental knowledge and understanding. According to Usaid (2018), it is imperative to engage in the monitoring and evaluation of learners' acquisition of the five fundamental sub-skills of reading instruction, namely phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, promoting young adult literature within educational settings is paramount. Integrating it more comprehensively in curricula and encouraging its exploration can help shape well-rounded and empathetic young adults. By embracing the potential of young adult literature, educators can better engage and inspire young readers, ultimately

equipping them with the skills and perspectives needed to navigate an increasingly diverse and complex world.

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