

Story Map: Enhancing the Reading Comprehension of Grade 6 Learners in the New Normal

Amysaida P. Sumanduran¹, Lolita A. Dulay²

^{1,2}Bukidnon State University, Malaybalay City, Philippines-8700

Email address: 2122120@student.buksu.edu.ph; lolitadulay@buksu.edu.ph

Abstract— This action research examined the effectiveness of story mapping as a strategy in enhancing the reading comprehension of Grade 6 learners in the new normal setting. Conducted at Sumpong Central School during the School Year 2021–2022, the study utilized a quantitative approach employing a non-equivalent pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups based on their reading comprehension levels. Data were gathered using teacher-made pre- and post-assessments aligned with story elements such as characters, setting, problem, solution, and theme. The intervention involved explicit instruction on the use of story maps as graphic organizers over a two-week period. Findings revealed that prior to the intervention, most learners were at the instructional level, with some at frustration and independent levels. After the implementation of story mapping, there was a notable improvement in learners' reading comprehension, as evidenced by increased scores in the post-assessment and a decrease in the number of learners under the frustration level. Statistical analysis further confirmed a significant difference between learners who used story maps and those who did not. The results indicate that story mapping is an effective instructional strategy that enhances learners' ability to comprehend and retell stories by organizing key elements visually. The study recommends the integration of story maps in reading instruction to support comprehension development, particularly in flexible learning environments.

Keywords: Story mapping; reading comprehension; graphic organizer

I. INTRODUCTION

The sudden outbreak of a deadly disease called Covid-19 by a Corona virus shook the entire world. Thus, the education sector is undergoing a paradigm shift in which learning should be changed from normal to the new normal; face to face to modular, online, and blended learning. This situation encourages the Department of Education to continue the learning opportunities provided to the learners in a safe manner through different learning modalities as mandated by the DepEd Order No.18 s. 2020, the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan that no Filipino learner will be left behind amidst the crisis.

Reading comprehension encourages student readers to engage in multiple cognitive strategies (summarizing, questioning, background knowledge, visualizing, predicting, and organizing) to comprehend and recall what they have read (Dougherty-Stahl, 2004). Miller (2002) discusses when readers slow down and think about what they are doing, readers begin to think about what is going on in their head while reading and can begin to apply strategies. Comprehension lets one go from being a passive reader to an active reader monitoring their

reading by understanding aspects of a story (Cassamisse and Snyder, 2009). From elementary to college to adulthood, reading comprehension is an essential skill to obtain information and immerse oneself in an experience that brings joy.

Story map is a graphic representation of the elements of a story and the relationship between them. Using graphic representational tools provide learners with visual that will help them organize content from the story into coherent parts, creating a pathway through the story (Smith, 1990). Using maps to provide these paths gives learners a way to organize information they gathered from reading to promote a deeper understanding of what they read. Story maps can be used before, during, and after reading the story.

Reading comprehension is a major focus in primary years and Common Core standards and requires skills that readers need to possess lifetime. It's a reality right now that the ability for a learner to comprehend and retell a story is lacking in the K-12 learners. Many comprehension-focused strategies were frequently used in the classroom, and graphic organizers are one of those. The influence and extent of the use of story maps specifically, helped enable the learners to retell the story they have read.

The researchers came up with the idea of story maps in enhancing the reading comprehension of grade 6 learners. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how the explicit teaching and use of story mapping as a graphic organizer, can promote higher reading comprehension of grade six learners.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental research design using a non-equivalent pretest-posttest approach. The participants were Grade 6 learners who were divided into two groups: an experimental group, which used story mapping, and a control group, which followed the usual reading instruction without the use of story maps. Data were collected through teacher-made pretest and posttest assessments that measured learners' reading comprehension based on story elements such as characters, setting, problem, solution, and theme. The experimental group underwent a two-week intervention where they were explicitly taught how to use a story map graphic organizer during reading activities. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation were used to determine the level of comprehension, while inferential statistics like t-test and

ANCOVA were applied to identify if there was a significant difference between the two groups.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1: What is the reading comprehension level of grade 6 learners?

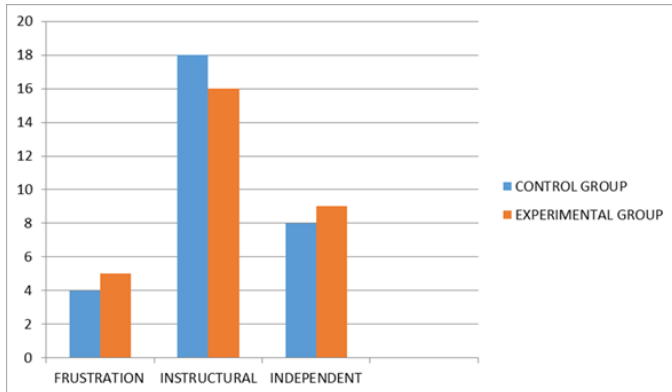


FIGURE 1. READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS

The results of the pre-assessment revealed that the majority of the Grade 6 learners were at the instructional level of reading comprehension, while a smaller number of learners were classified under the independent level, and some remained at the frustration level. This indicates that most learners possess basic comprehension skills but still require guidance and support from the teacher to fully understand and interpret the text.

Being at the instructional level suggests that learners can read and partially comprehend the material; however, they are not yet fully independent readers. The presence of learners at the frustration level further implies that some students struggle significantly with understanding the text, particularly in identifying key story elements such as characters, setting, problem, solution, and theme.

These findings highlight that reading comprehension remains a challenge among Grade 6 learners, especially in the context of the new normal where learning modalities may limit direct teacher support. The results also support the idea that comprehension is not automatic but requires the use of appropriate strategies to help learners process and organize information effectively.

Consistent with the study of Miller (2002), comprehension improves when learners actively engage in thinking about what they read. Similarly, as emphasized by Caccamise and Snyder (2009), comprehension transforms learners from passive readers into active participants in the reading process. Therefore, the results suggest the need for structured interventions, such as the use of graphic organizers like story maps, to enhance learners' comprehension skills and help them progress toward independent reading.

Problem 2: What is the effect of story map on the reading comprehension of Grade 6 learners?

The comparison of pre- and post-assessment results, as shown in Figure 2, indicates a noticeable improvement in learners' reading comprehension after the implementation of the Story Map intervention. There was an increase in both instructional and independent levels of comprehension, while the number of learners at the frustration level decreased by

10%. This suggests that the use of Story Maps helped reduce learners' difficulties in understanding texts and supported their progression toward higher levels of comprehension.

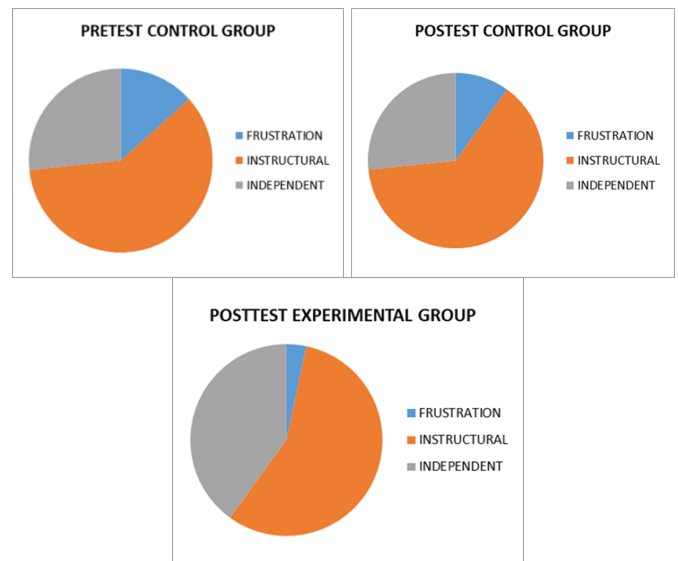


FIGURE 2. PRETEST AND POSTTEST OF CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Individual student data further support this improvement, as all learners demonstrated an increase in their post-assessment scores compared to their pre-assessment results. By the end of the intervention, more than half of the students were already able to correctly identify key story elements such as characters, problem, and solution, as reflected in Figure 2. This implies that Story Maps effectively guided learners in organizing and understanding essential components of a story, leading to improved comprehension skills.

In addition, teacher observations conducted during Week 2 provided further evidence of the intervention's effectiveness. The teacher documented learners' use of Story Maps in three different settings: whole group, small group, and independent reading activities. After each reading session, learners independently completed their Story Maps, allowing the teacher to assess their understanding of story elements.

The teacher recorded whether students were able to identify each story element, as well as whether they were able to do so with or without prompting. These observations were systematically recorded using a checklist during three separate implementations of the activity throughout the intervention period. The results showed a gradual improvement in learners' ability to independently identify story elements, indicating that repeated use of Story Maps strengthened their comprehension and reduced their dependence on teacher guidance.

Problem 3: Is there a significant difference between the reading comprehension level of the grade six learners using story map and those who do not use story map?

The ANCOVA results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in the reading comprehension posttest scores of Grade Six learners between those who used Story Map and those who did not, after controlling for pretest scores. This suggests that the improvement in reading comprehension is not merely due to initial differences in ability but is significantly

influenced by the use of the Story Map intervention. Specifically, learners who used Story Maps obtained higher adjusted posttest scores compared to those who did not use the strategy. This finding implies that Story Map is an effective instructional tool in enhancing learners' reading comprehension skills by helping them better organize and understand story elements. Therefore, the results confirm that the use of Story Map has a positive and significant effect on improving reading comprehension performance among Grade Six learners.

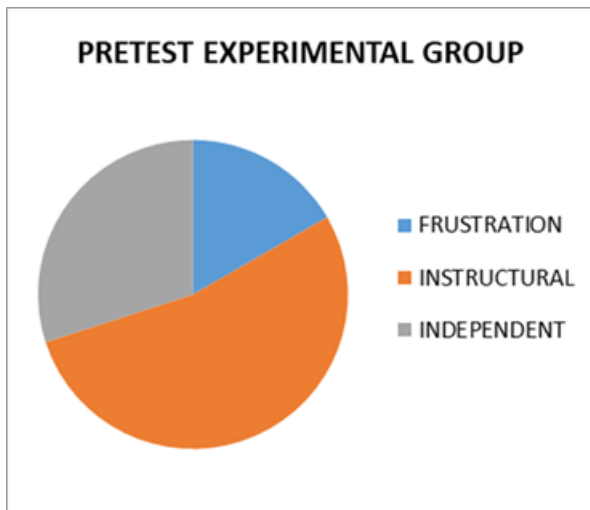


FIGURE 3

ANCOVA RESULTS
Comparison of Reading Comprehension Scores of Grade Six Learners Using Story Map and Those Who Do Not Use Story Map

Descriptive Statistics (Adjusted Posttest Means)					
Group	N	Pretest Mean (Covariate)	Posttest Mean (Observed)	Adjusted Posttest Mean	Standard Error
With Story Map	30	56.30	84.67	83.45	2.15
Without Story Map	30	55.97	69.10	68.33	2.15

ANCOVA Summary						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2642.715 ^a	2	1321.357	45.892	< .001	.610
Pretest (Covariate)	1543.219	1	1543.219	53.631	< .001	.487
Group (Story Map)	987.654	1	987.654	34.322	< .001*	.374
Error	1596.933	57	28.017			
Total	5836.600	60				
Corrected Total	4239.648	59				

Assumption Checks

Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)	Homogeneity of Variances (Levene's Test)	Homogeneity of Regression Slopes (Interaction: Group * Pretest)	Linearity	Independence of Errors
W = 0.974, p = .412	F(1,58) = 0.842, p = .361	F(1,58) = 0.623, p = .433	p < .001	Durbin-Watson = 1.92

Conclusion: After controlling for the effect of the pretest scores, there is a statistically significant difference in the reading comprehension posttest scores between learners who used Story Map and those who did not, $F(1,57) = 34.322, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .374$. Learners who used Story Map performed significantly better.

* Significant at $p < .05$

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: Story maps provide learners guidance to retell a story. When a graphic organizer is used, learners are able to retell a story more effectively than without the creation of a story map. Support and prompting are still important support provided by the teacher during the retelling of the story. By giving learners a graphic organizer, they will be able to better comprehend on what they read.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

After much examination of the data, the teacher discovered the following recommendations to further the overall success in comprehending a story. First, story maps should be explicitly

taught at the beginning of the school year. Teachers should focus on teaching the basic story elements to the learners. Story maps should be utilized as a strategy in whole group, small group, and independent work. Story maps can easily be integrated into the classroom routine and current curriculum, even this time of pandemic. Throughout the preparation of this research, the implementation story maps, gathering data and analyzing it, we were provided with the opportunity to grow as an educator,

The researchers plan to use the results of this action research project to develop a deeper plan of instruction for comprehension by focusing on the process of explicit instruction and graphic organizers at the start of the school year. Reading a story is a part of every day activity in our classroom and this study allowed the researchers to learn how to take that everyday task and implement a strategy that will increase the reading comprehension of the learners, a skill that will proved to be valuable to them throughout their lives in and out of the educational system.

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