

Content literacy strategies module and the learning achievement of Grade 9 learners in English

Marily A. Laluna*

T'boli National High School

Barangay Poblacion, Province of South Cotabato, Philippines

Email: marily.albano@deped.gov.ph

Cristobal M. Ambayon

Sultan Kudarat State University

Access Campus, EJC Montilla, City of Tacurong, Philippines

Email: cristobalambayon@sksu.edu.ph

Abstract: Reading comprehension remains a critical concern in Philippine secondary education, particularly among Grade 9 learners in rural and marginalized communities. This study aimed to develop and evaluate a Content Literacy Strategies Module designed to enhance the reading comprehension skills of Grade 9 students at T'boli National High School. Grounded in a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design, the study utilized a research-based instructional module aligned with the Most Essential Learning Competencies in English. The module was validated by content experts and evaluated in terms of content, organization, mechanics, and overall quality. Participants were divided into control and experimental groups, with the latter receiving instruction through the developed module and the former using conventional methods. Results from expert validation indicated the module's strong instructional potential. Findings revealed that students who were taught using the Content Literacy Strategies Module demonstrated a marked improvement in reading comprehension compared to those in the control group. Statistical analyses confirmed the module's effectiveness as a literacy intervention. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on instructional strategies for literacy and underscores the need for integrating content literacy approaches into English instruction at the secondary level. The developed module presents a promising tool for addressing comprehension challenges and enhancing learning outcomes in similar educational contexts.

*Corresponding author**

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INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill necessary for academic success and lifelong learning. It allows individuals to extract meaning from texts, analyze information, and make critical connections that contribute to knowledge acquisition and problem-solving. Strong reading skills are essential for academic achievement as they enable students to engage with complex materials across different subjects. Moreover, reading comprehension fosters cognitive development, enhances communication abilities, and supports independent learning. However, despite its importance, literacy remains a critical global issue.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022), approximately 773 million people worldwide still lack basic reading and writing skills, with a significant number of students struggling with reading comprehension. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated literacy challenges as prolonged school closures led to significant learning losses, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

In Asia, literacy rates have generally improved over the past decades, yet disparities remain, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. A study by the Southeast Asian

Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO, 2021) revealed that students in developing Asian nations, including the Philippines, continue to struggle with reading proficiency due to limited access to quality educational resources and ineffective literacy instruction. Countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand have implemented national reading programs to address literacy gaps, emphasizing the need for content literacy strategies to enhance reading comprehension.

In the Philippine context, reading comprehension is a persistent challenge among learners. The 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results revealed that the Philippines ranked among the lowest in reading literacy, with Filipino students scoring significantly below the global average (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). These findings highlight the urgent need for effective literacy interventions, particularly in secondary education. Recognizing this crisis, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched various literacy initiatives, including the Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (Every Child Reads) program, to strengthen foundational reading skills among Filipino learners. However, despite these efforts, many students continue to struggle with reading comprehension due to factors such as limited instructional support, inadequate learning materials, and a lack of teacher training in content literacy strategies.

At the regional level, the literacy situation in South Cotabato, particularly in DepEd South Cotabato, reflects the national trend. Schools in the province face challenges in improving students' reading comprehension levels, especially among Grade 9 learners. A regional assessment conducted by DepEd Region XII (2022) revealed that a significant percentage of learners in South Cotabato scored below the proficiency level in reading, emphasizing the need for structured and research-based literacy interventions. Similarly, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessment conducted in the 2024-2025 school year at T'boli National High School found that 298 out of 339 Grade 9 learners were classified as being at the frustration level, indicating severe difficulties in reading comprehension. Teachers report difficulties in implementing effective reading strategies, which directly affect students' academic performance across subjects. Addressing this issue requires well-developed instructional materials that integrate content literacy strategies to enhance students' comprehension skills and overall learning outcomes.

Given these challenges, this study aimed to develop and evaluate a Content Literacy Strategies Module specifically designed for Grade 9 learners. By incorporating research-based reading strategies, the module sought to address the gaps in reading comprehension and provided teachers with effective tools for instruction. Additionally, this study contributed to the growing body of research on literacy education by offering insights into the effectiveness of content literacy strategies in improving students' reading skills.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of using Content Literacy Strategies in selected Grade 9 English lessons on the learning achievement of the learners.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the evaluation result of the module using Content Literacy Strategies in selected English 9 lessons in terms of: (a) content; (b) organization; (c) mechanics; and (d) overall Package?
- 2) What is the level of students' learning achievement in the pretest and posttest scores of the control group in Grade 9 English Quarter 2 lessons?
- 3) What is the level of students' learning achievement in the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group in Grade 9 English Quarter 2 lessons?
- 4) Is there a significant difference in the students' learning achievement between the pretest and posttest scores in the control and experimental groups?

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5) Is there a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the students' learning achievement between the control group and the experimental group?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

To evaluate the impact of a module on content literacy strategies, this study employed a quasi-experimental design, specifically a pretest-posttest control and experimental group design. Quasi-experimental designs are highly regarded for their ability to establish causal relationships by manipulating an independent variable and observing its effect on a dependent variable under controlled conditions (Cook & Campbell, 2014).

Respondents and locale of the study

The population for this study consisted of Grade 9 students at T'boli National High School (TNHS) for the 2024-2025 academic year, with a total of sixty (60) participants. Research indicated that Grade 9 was a pivotal year in a student's academic journey, as it is often characterized by significant cognitive and emotional development, which made it an ideal time to implement new instructional strategies (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008). In addition, studies showed that targeted interventions during this stage could have lasting effects on academic achievement and engagement (Wang et al., 2016).

Research instrument

To address the problem posed in this study, the researcher utilized two sets of research instruments: the Content Literacy Strategies Module and Pretest/Posttest assessments designed to measure the learning performance of the participants. The Content Literacy Strategies Module served as the primary treatment instrument, developed based on the Grade 9 English Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) to ensure relevance and alignment with educational standards (Department of Education, 2020).

To further enhance the instructional approach, two teaching methods were employed. Specifically, the experimental group utilized the Content Literacy Strategies Module, while the control group followed the Conventional Lecture Method without integrating these strategies. In order to evaluate the module's effectiveness, a validation and evaluation instrument was completed by content experts, specifically English teachers, who assessed the module using the Module Validation Tool of the SKSU - Instructional Materials Development Center Format in terms of content, organization, mechanics, and overall package. This evaluation involved three Master Teachers recognized for their outstanding performance in the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) for the 2023-2024 school year, along with one English professor from Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU) and one international English teacher.

Furthermore, pretest and posttest assessments proved critical for determining the effectiveness of the instructional interventions. The pretest provided baseline data on the students' prior knowledge and skills, enabling the researcher to identify gaps and areas for improvement. Subsequently, the posttest measured the knowledge and skills acquired after the intervention, allowing for a direct comparison of the students' performance before and after using the module (Fraenkel et al., 2019). A significant difference between pretest and posttest scores in favor of the experimental group indicated the module's effectiveness in enhancing learning outcomes. Moreover, statistical analyses, such as paired sample t-tests and standard deviation, were employed to control for pre-existing differences and provide a robust interpretation of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In addition, to ensure the reliability and validity of the pretest and posttest instruments, the same evaluators assessed both assessments using criteria aligned with the research objectives and learning competencies. Their expertise ensured consistency in measuring students' learning outcomes and reduced the potential for bias in interpreting the results.

Data analyses procedure

To assess the level of students' learning achievement in English 9, several key indicators were utilized. Central to this evaluation was the administration of pretest and posttest assessments, each comprising 50 items. The pretest served as a baseline measure of students' initial proficiency, while the posttest gauged their progress after engaging with the Content Literacy Strategies Module.

In addition, to ensure alignment with the Department of Education's national standards for grading and proficiency evaluation, students' scores were transmuted and interpreted based on DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015). The computation of pretest and posttest scores followed a standardized formula:

$$(\text{Raw Score} \div \text{Highest Possible Score}) \times 100\% = \text{Initial Score.}$$

Subsequently, these initial scores were converted using DepEd's transmutation table, which transformed percentage scores into numerical grades. Following this process, the final grades were interpreted according to the prescribed proficiency levels, categorizing students as Beginning, Developing, Approaching Proficiency, Proficient, or Advanced (DepEd, 2015). This systematic approach ensured consistency, fairness, and objectivity in the assessment process.

Furthermore, the comparison of pretest and posttest results provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the module in enhancing students' reading comprehension and related literacy skills. By employing DepEd's transmutation and proficiency scales, the study ensured the validity and reliability of the findings, thereby offering a clear measure of the module's impact on the literacy achievement of Grade 9 learners.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Summary of the overall mean rating of the content literacy strategies module

Data shows that the Content Literacy Strategies Module received an overall mean rating of 4.52, described as Excellent. Among the indicators, the Overall Package received the highest mean rating (4.84), while Organization had the lowest (4.20), though still rated as Very Satisfactory. These results indicate that the module was generally well-received, particularly in terms of content quality and overall presentation.

The level of students' learning performance of the control group in the pretest and posttest

Data presents the learning performance of the control group, showing a slight increase in mean scores from the pretest (67.90) to the posttest (72.30). Despite this improvement, both scores fall under the Did Not Meet Expectations category, indicating minimal academic progress without the intervention of the content literacy strategies module.

The level of students' learning performance of the experimental group in the pretest and posttest

Data reveals a significant improvement in the learning performance of the experimental group, with the mean score increasing from 72.43 in the pretest to 83.60 in the posttest. This shift from

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Did Not Meet Expectations to Satisfactory suggests that the Content Literacy Strategies Module had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension and overall academic performance.

The t-test analysis between the pretest and posttest of the control group

Data presents the t-test analysis of the control group, showing a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($t = 8.25$, $p = 0.0000$). Although the control group showed a modest improvement, the results indicate that the change in performance is significant even without the intervention. However, the level of achievement still did not meet expectations.

Results of the t-test analysis between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group

Results show a significant increase in the experimental group's scores, with the mean rising from 72.43 in the pretest to 83.60 in the posttest. The t-test result ($t = 10.57$, $p = 0.0000$) indicates a statistically significant improvement, suggesting that the Content Literacy Strategies Module had a strong positive effect on students' learning performance.

The t-test analysis between the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups

Result displays a significant difference in the mean gain scores between the control and experimental groups, with the experimental group achieving a higher gain ($M = 11.17$) compared to the control group ($M = 4.40$). The t-test result ($t = 5.72$, $p = 0.0000$) confirms that this difference is statistically significant. These findings indicate that the Content Literacy Strategies Module was effective in enhancing students' learning performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study demonstrate that the Content Literacy Strategies Module is a valid and effective intervention for improving the reading comprehension of Grade 9 learners. Expert evaluations confirmed the module's high quality in terms of content, organization, mechanics, and overall presentation, affirming its appropriateness for instructional use. Furthermore, the significant improvement observed in the experimental group's posttest performance, in contrast to the minimal gains of the control group, underscores the module's effectiveness in addressing learners' comprehension difficulties. These findings highlight the importance of integrating evidence-based content literacy strategies into classroom instruction and suggest that the developed module may serve as a valuable model for future literacy-focused interventions in similar educational settings.

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