

# Open, Read and Hope: Developing Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade 8 Students in Filipino Using the KWL Chart and Story Map

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## Abstract

The main objective of this study is to address the low level of reading comprehension skills among Grade 8 students through the use of the KWL Chart and Story Map strategies. The researchers conducted a pre-assessment to determine the students' level of reading comprehension. Based on the data gathered from this initial test, students who scored 79% and below were identified as having low comprehension skills and were selected to participate in six intensive sessions involving reading activities using the KWL Chart and Story Map. Following the intervention, a post-assessment was administered to the same students to determine any changes in their scores. Based on the data collected, the use of the KWL Chart and Story Map proved to be effective, as the participants showed significant improvement in their post-assessment scores.

**Keywords:** *Reading Comprehension, KWL Chart, Story Map, Expository Text, Narrative Text.*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is a deliberate, active, and interactive process that occurs before, during, and after a person reads a particular piece of text (K12 Reader, 2014). It is one of the key components of reading proficiency. When a person reads a text, they engage in a complex set of cognitive processes. There are five skills that make up the reading comprehension process: identifying the main idea and details, understanding the sequence of events, answering literal recall questions, making inferences, and recognizing unfamiliar vocabulary (Ascend Learning Center, 2019).

Meanwhile, students who struggle to understand the messages, ideas, and words in the texts they read face a significant challenge that hinders their learning clarity and speed. Success and competence in reading and comprehending texts are crucial aspects of a student's development and learning. A clear example of this issue is reflected in the global assessment conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Among 600,000 students worldwide, Filipino students aged fifteen (15) scored only 340 points in reading comprehension, far below the average score of 487 points. As a result, the Philippines ranked last among the 79 participating countries (Manila Times). In response to this, the Department of Education (DepEd) launched a program in accordance with DepEd Order No. 173, s. 2019 entitled 'HAMON: BAWAT BATA BUMABASA (3Bs Initiative).' According to the order:

"In support of the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program, the Department of Education (DepEd) is continuously fulfilling its mandate to produce productive and responsible citizens equipped with essential competencies and skills for lifelong learning. To make every learner a proficient reader, schools across the country are tasked to help learners develop their reading skills. However, such initiatives are still not enough based on the recent results of national assessments for student learning."

The Department also firmly believes in the importance of developing reading comprehension skills to achieve reading proficiency. As stated in paragraph 3 of the same order, “In order to address the aforementioned gaps, there is a need to strengthen the reading proficiency of every learner and to nurture a culture of reading which is a requisite skill in all content areas” (Department of Education, 2019).

Reading comprehension is an essential skill that every student must possess, especially since they frequently encounter narrative and expository texts across the curriculum. However, the low level of reading comprehension skills becomes a barrier to achieving their future goals. This is evident in the issue observed among the Grade 8-Aristotle section. To address this concern, this action research aims to improve the reading comprehension skills of Grade 8-Aristotle students of Lucsoon National High School by using the KWL Chart and Story Map as strategies to develop their reading comprehension.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This action research sought to address the following:

- 1) Determine the demographic profile of the selected students involved in the study in terms of the following aspects:
  - a. Sex
  - b. Age
  - c. Monthly Family Income
- 2) Identify the level of reading comprehension skills of the selected Grade 8- Aristotle students before and after the implementation of the study.
- 3) Obtain the scores of the selected students in each session using the KWL Chart and Story Map.
- 4) Ascertain significant difference between the scores in the pre-test and the post- test

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the scores in the pre-test and the post-test.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This section discusses the concepts and units involved in the careful selection of the appropriate method to be used, the population, respondents, and the procedures for data collection.

#### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive research methodology. While there are various types of descriptive research, the researchers chose to use the Descriptive Survey Research Design, which utilizes an Assessment Approach to gather data. The descriptive design was identified by the researchers as an effective means to obtain the necessary information that contributed to the success of this research.

#### **Respondent Selection**

The respondents of this study were the Grade 8 students from Section Aristotle of Lucsoon National High School. The researchers employed non-random sampling, specifically using convenience sampling. The entire section was given a pre- assessment test to measure their reading comprehension skills. To determine which students would participate in the six

sessions aimed at developing their reading comprehension using the KWL Chart and Story Map, only those who did not meet the required score of 80% in the initial assessment were selected.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data collection in this study began with the researchers administering an assessment-type questionnaire based on the five reading comprehension skills from Ascend Learning Center (2019), as outlined on page 2. Students who failed to reach the 80% benchmark in this assessment became participants in the six intervention sessions, which aimed to develop their reading comprehension skills using the KWL Chart and Story Map.

The Story Map was used to assess selected short stories during sessions 1, 3, and 5, while the KWL Chart was used for selected essays during sessions 2, 4, and 6. After completing all six sessions, the researchers conducted a post-assessment, which was also based on the five reading comprehension skills. The data from the pre- assessment and post-assessment were compared to determine whether the objectives of the study were met and to evaluate the effectiveness of the action research.

The data collection was carried out through the limited face-to-face learning modality, as this mode of instruction was already being implemented at the time the researchers conducted the study.

### Research Instrument

This research was conducted through the administration of an assessment-type questionnaire. Both the initial and final assessments used questions based on the five reading comprehension skills. After identifying the respondents who would participate in the six sessions aimed at enhancing reading comprehension, they were given assessment-type questionnaires using the KWL Chart and Story Map. The nature of the questions for each of the six sessions was aligned with the structure of the KWL Chart and Story Map.

### Data Treatment

The collected data were analyzed to facilitate evaluation. This section presents the formulas used and the computations applied to the gathered data. It also clearly outlines the purpose of each formula and the specific research question it addresses.

The researchers used the **Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test** on both the pre-test and post-test data. This was done to satisfy the assumptions required for performing a **T-test** using **SPSS version 21**.

**Percentage** was the method used to analyze the data gathered during the six sessions. This was a valuable tool in processing the responses from the questionnaires. To further understand the analysis, the formulas used are presented below.

**Interpretation of the Six (6) Session Assessments**  $\text{PERCENTAGE (\%)} = F / N \times 100$

**Where:**

F = Total score from the assessment N = Total number of students

The first table presents the interpretation of the level of reading comprehension skills of the respondents based on the scores they obtained in the pre-assessment and post- assessment.

**Table 1: Interpretation of Reading Comprehension Skill Levels**

| Interpretation of Reading Comprehension Skill Levels | Score (in %)  |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Independent                                          | 80–100%       |
| Instructional                                        | 59–79%        |
| Frustration                                          | 58% and below |

Readers (in reading activities and reading comprehension) are classified into three levels based on their skill: **independent**, **instructional**, and **frustration** levels. These classifications are defined in the study by Treptow et al. (2007) on page 11. The table above was adapted from the **Phil-IRI Manual**, which was used for interpreting the results of the pre- and post-assessments in this study. The second table presents the scoring rubric used for the students' responses during sessions that utilized the KWL Chart.

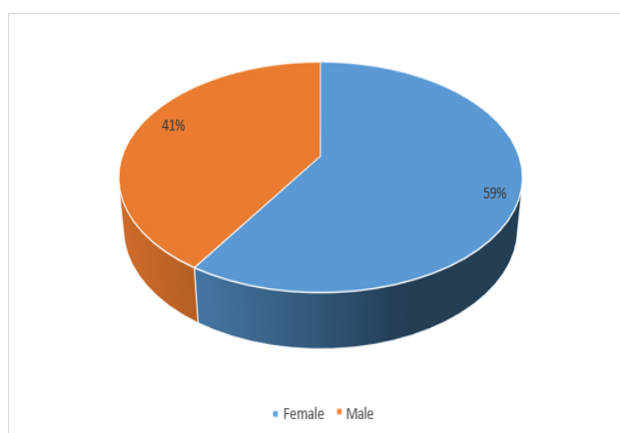
**Table 2: Assessment Rubric for the KWL Chart**

| Rubric for KWL Chart Assessment | Criteria                                                                  | 4                                                | 3                                              | 2                                            | 1 Score |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------|
| Critical Thinking               | The ideas demonstrate very deep critical thinking relevant to the topic.  | Ideas show deep critical thinking.               | Ideas are short and shallow.                   | Ideas do not show any deep thinking.         |         |
| Inference                       | Forms correct inferences from all five questions.                         | Forms correct inferences from four questions.    | Forms correct inferences from three questions. | Forms correct inferences from two questions. |         |
| Understanding                   | Clearly presents five or more answers in the "L" column of the KWL Chart. | Clearly presents four answers in the "L" column. | Clearly presents three answers.                | Clearly presents two answers.                |         |

Unlike the **Story Map**, which requires direct answers from a given text, the **KWL Chart** assessment requires a standard rubric to accurately evaluate the outputs or answers of the respondents. The rubric developed by the researchers served as a framework to analyze the subjective responses of the students during the assessments that utilized the KWL Chart.

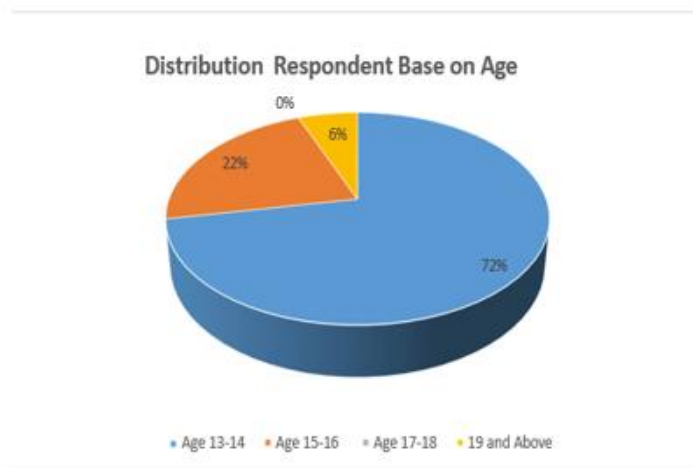
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Students' Demographic Profile



This pie graph shows the distribution of respondents based on sex. Initially, a total of 39 Grade 8-Aristotle students were selected by the researchers for the pre- assessment. Of this population, 41% were male and 59% were female. This indicates that females outnumbered males in this study.

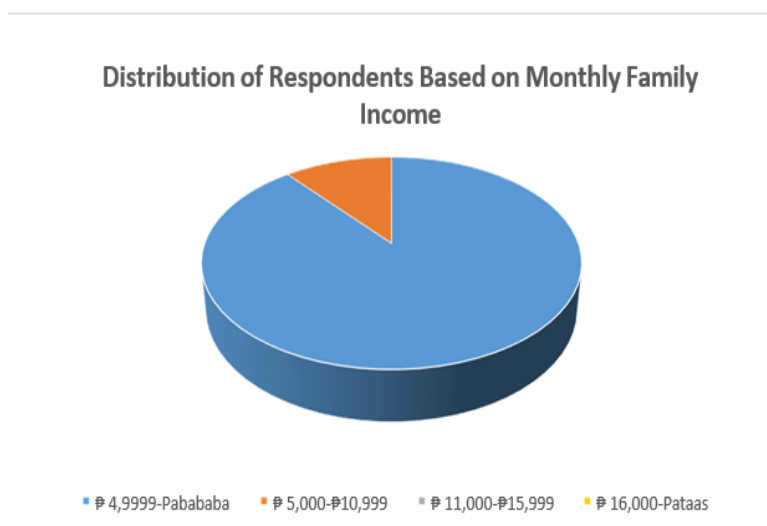
After conducting the pre-assessment to identify students who showed deficiencies in reading comprehension skills, 18 students—representing 46% of the total 39—were selected as the final participants of the research. These consisted of 11 females and 7 males.



**Graph 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Age**

The pie graph above shows the distribution of respondents based on age.

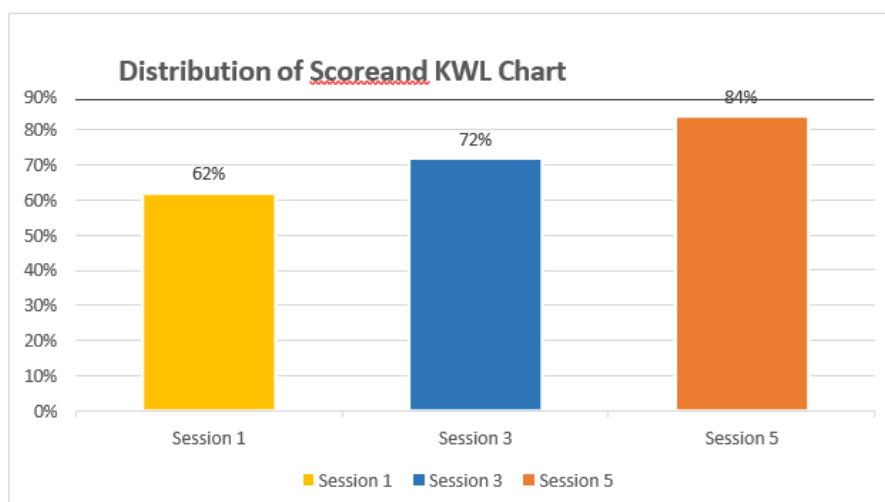
Among the 18 respondents in this study, 72% or 13 students were aged 13–14 years old; 22% or 4 students were aged 15–16 years old; 0% of the respondents were aged 17–18; and 6% or one respondent was aged 19 and above. This indicates that the majority of the respondents in this study were aged 13–14, which is the appropriate age range for a Grade 8 student.



**Graph 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on Monthly Family Income**

The graph above shows the distribution of respondents based on their family's monthly income. Among the 18 students involved in this study, 89% or 16 respondents reported a monthly family income of ₱4,999.00 or below; 11% or 2 respondents had a monthly family income ranging from ₱5,000 to ₱10,999; while 0% of the respondents reported a monthly income of ₱11,000–₱15,999 and ₱16,000 and above. This indicates that the majority of the respondents in this study come from families with a monthly income of ₱4,999.00 or below.

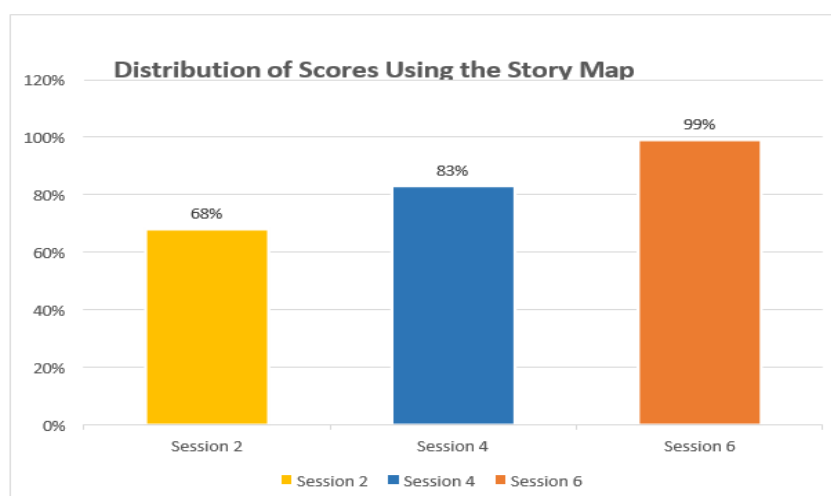
## B. Students' Level of Reading Comprehension Skills



**Graph 4: Distribution of Scores Using the KWL Chart**

The bar graph above (Graph 4) shows the distribution of scores using the KWL Chart across three sessions (1, 3, and 5). In Session 1, the total score of the 18 respondents in this study was 62%, indicating that the students' reading comprehension skills were still at the **"instructional level."** In Session 3, the respondents achieved a score of 72%, which still falls under the **"instructional level,"** but shows a 10% improvement from Session 1. In the final session using the KWL Chart, the selected respondents achieved a score of 84%, indicating they had reached the **"independent level"** of reading comprehension. This represents a 12% increase from Session 3. This indicates that the sessions conducted using the KWL Chart were effective, as evidenced by the consistent increase in score percentages per session. The overall student scores were interpreted using the study of Treptow et al. (2007), which focuses on levels of reading comprehension skills (p.14).

## C. Students' Scores In Each Session Using The KWL Chart And Story Map



**Graph 5: Distribution of Scores Using the Story Map**

The bar graph above (Graph 5) shows the distribution of scores using the Story Map across three sessions (2, 4, and 6). In Session 2, the total score of the 18 respondents in this

study was 68%, indicating that the students' reading comprehension skills were still at the **“instructional level.”** In Session 4, they achieved a score of 83%, which indicates they had reached the **“independent level”** in reading comprehension. This reflects a 15% increase from Session 2.

In the final session using the Story Map, the selected respondents achieved a score of 99%, which means they had firmly reached the **“independent level”** of reading comprehension. This shows a 16% increase from Session 4. This suggests that the sessions conducted using the Story Map were successful, as shown by the increasing percentage of scores in each session. The interpretation of the students' total scores was based on the study of Treptow et al. (2007), which discusses levels of reading comprehension skills (p.14).

The third table presents the results of the Normality Test for the pre-assessment.

**Table 3: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the Pre-Assessment One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of the Pre-Assessment**

|                                  |                | VAR00002 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| N                                |                | 18       |
|                                  | Mean           | 5.7778   |
| Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup> | Std. Deviation | 1.16597  |
|                                  | Absolute       | .298     |
| Most Extreme Differences         | Positive       | .147     |
|                                  | Negative       | -.298    |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z             |                | 1.263    |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)           |                | .082     |

The table above shows the computation of the normality test using the respondents' scores from the pre-assessment. A result of **0.082** was recorded, indicating that the outcome of the pre-assessment is **normally distributed**, allowing the researchers to proceed with the next steps of the study.

The fourth table presents the results of the normality test for the post-assessment.

**Table 4: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the Post-Assessment One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the Post-Assessment**

|                                  |                | VAR00002 |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| N                                |                | 18       |
|                                  | Mean           | 9.1667   |
| Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup> | Std. Deviation | .85749   |
|                                  | Absolute       | .279     |
| Most Extreme Differences         | Positive       | .191     |
|                                  | Negative       | -.279    |
| Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z             |                | 1.183    |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)           |                | .122     |

The table above shows the computation of the normality test using the respondents' scores from the post-assessment. A result of **0.122** was recorded, indicating that the outcome of the post-assessment is **normally distributed**, allowing the researchers to proceed with the next steps of the study.

The fifth table presents the results of the paired sample T-test between the pre- assessment and post-assessment.

**Table 5: Paired Sample T-Test between the Pre-Assessment and Post- Assessment**  
**Paired Sample T-Test between the Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment**

| Mean     | Std. Deviation | Significant Value | Decision   |
|----------|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| -3.38889 | 1.14475        | 0.000             | Reject Ho1 |

The table above shows the Paired Sample T-Test between the pre-assessment and post-assessment. The results recorded were a mean of **-3.388**, a standard deviation (SD) of **1.144**, and a **Significance Value (SV)** of **0.000**. Based on the SV of 0.000, Hypothesis 1 is **rejected**, indicating that there is a **significant difference** between the pre-assessment and the post-assessment results. Findings suggest that the use of the KWL Chart and Story Map is effective in developing students' reading comprehension skills.

## CONCLUSION

The findings and results have drawn several relevant and key conclusions. Firstly, the demographic profile of respondents reveals a predominance of female students, comprising 59% of the sample (Graph 1). The majority of respondents, approximately 72%, fell within the 13–14 age group, aligning with the Grade 8 educational level (Graph 2). Economically, 89% of students came from families earning ₱4,999.00 or less per month, highlighting their economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Graph 3). Analysis of the data collected using the KWL Chart (Graph 4) demonstrated a consistent improvement in reading comprehension scores across sessions 1, 3, and 5. This progression suggests that students advanced from an instructional level to independently applying their comprehension skills. Similarly, results from sessions 2, 4, and 6 using the Story Map (Graph 5) indicated a steady increase in scores, reflecting a similar transition. Furthermore, significant improvements were observed from pre-test to post-test scores, following six learning sessions employing the KWL Chart and Story Map methodologies. This evidence underscores the efficacy of structured strategies and activities in enhancing students' reading comprehension abilities. This study, therefore, affirms that targeted instructional interventions, such as the KWL Chart and Story Map, effectively promote reading comprehension among Grade 8 students. These findings underscore the importance of tailored pedagogical approaches in fostering academic development, particularly in economically challenged contexts.

## Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, while most of the students were within the appropriate age range for their grade level, the results suggest that many lacked sufficient time or support during the school year to develop adequate reading comprehension skills. One possible contributing factor is the Department of Education's policy on automatic promotion, which may allow students to progress to the next grade level despite not having fully mastered required competencies. It is recommended that this policy be carefully reviewed. Teachers should be granted greater authority in decisions regarding student promotion, given their direct knowledge of learners' academic performance and progress.

Second, the significant improvement in students' reading comprehension from pre-test to post-test—shifting from frustration and instructional levels to independent reading—highlights the effectiveness of the KWL Chart and Story Map strategies. These tools proved valuable in guiding students toward comprehension mastery. Therefore, it is strongly

recommended that these strategies be institutionalized in reading instruction, particularly in middle-grade classrooms.

Third, the consistent upward trend in performance across the six learning sessions further supports the continued use of the KWL Chart and Story Map as effective instructional tools. These strategies should be integrated into regular reading programs to sustain and enhance student learning outcomes.

Finally, the issue of poor reading comprehension is not only a school-based concern but a national challenge that requires a collaborative response. Stakeholders— including teachers, school administrators, parents, and policymakers—must work together to implement proven interventions. The success of the KWL Chart and Story Map in this study serves as a compelling example of how simple, structured approaches can make a significant difference when applied consistently and effectively.

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