

ENHANCING STUDENTS' READING COMPETENCE THROUGH EDUCATIONAL GAMES: A CASE STUDY AT KATIPUNAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, CARMEN, BOHOL

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ABSTRACT

Article history:

Submission: 8 May 2022

Revised: 4 June 2022

Accepted: 15 August 2022

Publication: 20 Sept 2022

Keywords — Educational Games, Game-based Teaching, Reading Competence

English reading proficiency is essential for various human activities; however, in 2018, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) released that among the 79 participating countries, the Philippines scored the lowest in reading comprehension. This research on the use of educational games in teaching English for learners' reading competence aimed to develop an understanding of English reading texts that can promote better learning and enable learners to grow in various aspects, such as intellectual, physical, and social. To determine the effectiveness of educational games as a post-reading activity for learners' reading competence, pilot testing of the researcher-made questionnaire was conducted in one Grade 12 section. After the pilot test analysis, the study was conducted in which participants were tasked with reading the text first. Then the educational games were implemented as a post-reading activity. This study used an experimental research design with three Grade 11 sections: two sections as the experimental group and one as the control group. The Individual Games had 46 population, Group Games had 43, and the Control Group had 45. Before the study, the researcher asked for the consent of the participants and that their data will be used for research purposes only. The result of this study unveiled that the



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null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, it was found that both individual and group games effectively enhanced the learners' reading competence. Although there is a difference between the three groups, it was found that all of them had insignificant variance, which leads the researcher to conclude that in implementing Educational Games, one must be creative and innovative. This indicates that incorporating a Game-Based teaching strategy effectively enhances the reading competence of Grade 11 students.

INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that proficiency in reading English is essential for various human activities. However, in 2018, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) released results showing that, among the 79 participating countries, the Philippines scored the lowest in reading comprehension. This is an alarming fact that the Philippine Education System must face. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic dealt another blow to Filipino learners' adequate reading competence. Hence, during the pandemic, the medium of instruction shifted to modular distance learning, wherein teacher and learner interaction was minimal.

After two years of modular distance learning, we are now opening the doors of schools throughout the Philippines for face-to-face classes. This poses another challenge for educators to be innovative and look for ways to improve their teaching. Teachers are encouraged to use strategies that promote meaningful learning to help bridge the gap created by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of those strategies is the use of educational games in teaching. Educational Games in teaching English are one way of promoting active learning. Thus, active participation and involvement of the learners in the learning process will lead to better retention and understanding of the information. In this study, the educational games are categorized into individual and group games, and their effects on learners' reading competence are examined.

This study is anchored with the Constructivism Theory by John Dewey. This theory emphasizes learning as an active process in which learners construct meaning from their sensory input. Learners generate insights and understanding on their own through learning-by-doing. Moreover, this theory stresses that learning is not a passive acceptance of knowledge but an active process in which learners engage with the real world.

Moreover, this study also seeks the Social Constructivism Theory of Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky emphasized the collaborative nature of learning by constructing knowledge through social negotiation. Vygotsky's approach to child development is a form of social constructivism based on the idea that cognitive functions are the products of social interactions. Another theory anchored in this study is Cooperative Learning Theory. The Cooperative Learning Theory is based on creating small groups of students to work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. This learner-centered

teaching approach encourages diverse learners to work in small groups to attain a common goal. Cooperative learning aims at learner-centered learning and claims to increase understanding and reasoning, develop critical thinking, and increase the accuracy of long-term retention.

Concerning developing the learners' critical thinking skills, the Schema Theory is also anchored in this study. Schema theory concerns how readers use their prior knowledge to comprehend and learn from the text they read. In this theory, it is believed that there is an interaction between the learner's existing knowledge and the text being read. Thus, "schema" is believed to be the building block of cognition. Also, the Information Processing Theory is one of the theories that are anchored in this study. In 1956, George A. Miller theorized that humans process information in a manner similar to that of a computer. Information processing theory explains how people work with or perform mental operations on information they have received. These operations include all mental activities that involve noticing, taking in, manipulating, storing, combining, or retrieving information.

In educational games, learners can process the information needed to understand the concept being presented. As encouraged by the Philippine education system, educators are urged to develop learners' minds through higher-order thinking skills. One way to do that is to immerse the learners in an enjoyable yet wholesome classroom. Educational games not only limit the fun they bring to the class but also develop critical thinking skills in learners, which are essential for 21st-century educators to develop.

Related Studies. Reading is an essential aspect of human life, day by day. It is more significant in education because it overall impacts the reader. However, reading only occurs with reading comprehension (Suson et al., 2020). Thus, reading comprehension is an essential skill that includes the cognitive and linguistic aspects of the learners.

In addition, reading can be considered a complex process that affects many aspects of our human life. Hence, researchers revealed that extensive readers achieve more academically than those who are not (Hassan et al., 2021). This challenges educators, especially in the Philippines, because Filipino learners are among the lowest in reading competence. Enhancing the reading competence of Filipino learners also means enhancing their academic performance.

Developing students' reading competence in the 21st century is the prime concern of educators worldwide. Hence, this is very important in both the academic and workplace settings. Learning institutions must undertake initiatives to facilitate the development of reading competence, which is highly in demand for the global workforce (Akut & Abejuela, 2020).

Moreover, Hernandez Zumaeta (2022) emphasized that students need proper comprehension skills to understand what they read. The point of reading is not to make sounds in the brain or out loud but to understand essential lessons, stories, and arguments. The primary goal of reading comprehension instruction is to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and experiences

they need to become competent and enthusiastic readers across all learning endeavors.

Reading is an essential skill for human beings. Students' reading competence is vital to performing well in school. It is not only the reading materials provided for them that must be very interesting for their liking, but also the learning activities that involve understanding the text must be engaging (Maribbay, 2022). That is why educators are challenged to provide enjoyable yet wholesome activities to enhance learners' reading competence.

Moreover, reading comprehension is essential for learning English, as it helps students understand the texts they read. Comprehending English texts is more complex regarding their importance in education (Suryani, 2021). However, educators need to capture the learners' minds to enhance their comprehension skills. Hence, educators worldwide are encouraged to be very innovative in teaching.

Accordingly, learning through games is highly valuable because it arouses learners' interest and helps teachers provide an effective teaching method. Teaching through games in English is crucial in activating the learners' enthusiasm and motivation to learn the English Language (Bavi, 2018). Thus, this poses a challenge for Filipino educators to create engaging learning activities, especially in developing learners' reading competence.

Game-based learning, regarded as educational games, is a subset of serious games. The fully-fledged game is designed to deliver immersive, engaging learning experiences that achieve specific learning goals, outcomes, and results (Al Fatta et al., 2018). This means game-based learning includes learning content derived from the school curriculum or essential life skills to enhance the learning experience, which is believed to increase learners' understanding of the delivered content.

A study by Nurjanah (2018) stated, "To overcome the Reading Comprehension problems, students propose interactive learning for reading activities, both in audiovisual and games. Thus, it can help them enjoy the class better." This proves that game-based learning makes students more interested in reading and better able to comprehend the material. The use of games in the learning process is one pedagogical practice that is helpful for excellent learning and responsive to various types of student motivation, bringing students closer together (Sanders et al., 2020). It can facilitate various learning outcomes. Incorporating educational games in class has a positive impact on the learning-teaching process.

Ningsih et al. (2021) reported that group work benefits students by enabling them to exchange opinions and collaborate on learning tasks. Moreover, it positively impacts learners' understanding of the text they read because group work can enable collaboration among learners. Thus, the tasks given by the teachers can also be done quickly and efficiently.

The study conducted by Suryani & Kareviati (2021) revealed that reading comprehension is vital for learning English, as it helps students understand

every text they read. Since the process of comprehending English texts is more complex, it is of great importance in the education context. Using educational games to improve reading comprehension aims to ease learners' challenges with texts.

Sitanggang et al. (2018) also stated in their study, "The application of Team Game Tournament Technique can improve the students' reading comprehension. The students' responses were excellent. They felt enthusiastic and motivated after being taught with the Team Game Tournament Technique." This highlights the positive effects of organizing games in class on reading comprehension.

As cited by Khadijah et al. (2022), educational games can optimize learners' development. This is why games could work well as a teaching method, given the shift in the teaching world, where students have become much more active in the learning process. Thus, learners enjoy learning in this way.

Statement of the Problem. This study aimed to determine the effects of Educational Games on the Reading Competence of Grade 11 Students of Katipunan National High School, Carmen, Bohol, during the School Year 2022 – 2023. The study findings will serve as the basis for proposed Lesson Designs to develop students' reading competence.

Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the performances in the Pretest and Posttest of the Grade 11 students exposed to the following strategies:
 - 1.1. Individual Games
 - 1.2. Group Games
 - 1.3. Traditional paper-pencil?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of the three groups?
3. Is there a significant degree of variance among the three groups of students in the following results:
 - 3.1. Pretest
 - 3.2. Posttest; and
 - 3.3. Mean Gain?
4. What Lesson Design can be proposed?

The Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant effect on the reading competence of the Grade 11 students of Katipunan National High School using the Educational Games in Teaching English, as evidenced by their pretest-posttest and between-posttest results.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed an experimental research design utilizing a pretest–posttest control group structure **to** determine the effects of educational games on students' reading comprehension. Specifically, three intact Grade 11

sections were assigned to one of three conditions: Individual Games, Group Games, and Control (Traditional Instruction).

The experimental groups received instruction wherein educational games were systematically integrated as post-reading activities, while the control group was taught using conventional teaching strategies without game-based reinforcement. This design enabled comparison of learning gains attributable to different instructional strategies while controlling for pre-existing differences through baseline measurement.

Table 1. *Distribution of Research Participants*

Section	Instructional Group	Number of Students
Section A	Individual Games	45
Section B	Group Games	46
Section C	Control Group	43
Total		134

Participants. The participants of the study were **Grade 11 students enrolled in the General Academic Strand (GAS)** at Katipunan National High School during School Year 2022–2023. Of the nine Grade 11 sections in the school, three GAS sections offering the Reading and Writing Skills subject were purposively selected for their curricular alignment with the study objectives.

Instrument. A researcher-developed multiple-choice test was utilized as both the pretest and posttest instrument to measure students' reading comprehension. The instrument consisted of two parallel forms (Set A and Set B), each containing 50 items, yielding a total of 100 items. Each reading text was followed by 10 comprehension questions, each with four response options.

The test items were aligned with the competencies and reading selections prescribed in the Reading and Writing Skills curriculum for Grade 11. Content validity was ensured through careful alignment with lesson objectives and expert review.

Pilot Testing and Reliability. Prior to the main data collection, pilot testing was conducted among 32 Grade 12 GAS students who were not part of the study population. The purpose of the pilot test was to evaluate the clarity, appropriateness, consistency, and reliability of the test items.

Reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach's Alpha via SPSS Version 29. The results indicated acceptable internal consistency:

- **Set A:** $\alpha = 0.749$
- **Set B:** $\alpha = 0.701$

These values meet the acceptable threshold for educational research

instruments, indicating that the test items were reliable for measuring reading comprehension.

Experimental Procedure. Upon securing approval from the Division Superintendent of the Division of Bohol, the District Supervisor of Carmen 3 District, and the School Principal of Katipunan National High School, the researcher conducted the study in the following phases:

Pretesting Phase. All participants were administered the pretest to establish baseline reading comprehension levels.

Treatment Phase. The researcher implemented structured lesson plans using the same reading materials across all groups. The instructional variation occurred during the post-reading activity phase:

Individual Games Group. Students participated in individual educational games such as *Cabbage Relay* and *Fact or Bluff*, which required independent comprehension and recall of reading content.

Group Games Group. Students engaged in collaborative games such as *Message Relay* and *Board Race*, emphasizing cooperative problem-solving and shared comprehension.

Control Group. Students received traditional instruction without game-based activities.

Post-Activity Assessment. After each lesson, all groups completed a 10-item paper-and-pencil quiz, derived from validated test items, to reinforce comprehension and monitor immediate learning outcomes.

Posttesting Phase. At the end of the intervention period, the posttest was administered to measure gains in reading comprehension across groups.

All groups were exposed to identical reading texts and followed the same lesson structure, including vocabulary unlocking and guided reading. The differentiation occurred during the Analysis phase of the lesson, where game-based strategies were implemented for the experimental groups.

The educational games were designed to promote active engagement, comprehension, retention, and enjoyment, requiring students to internalize reading content in order to respond accurately during gameplay.

Ethical Considerations. The study was reviewed and approved by the University of Bohol Research Ethics Committee (UB-REC) prior to data collection. Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the research process.

Participants were provided with informed consent forms detailing the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. No monetary incentives were provided.

Confidentiality and anonymity of participant data were maintained, and all collected data were used solely for academic research purposes. The study adhered to the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Performance of Grade 11 Students in the Pretest and Posttest Across Instructional Conditions. Prior to the instructional intervention, all three groups demonstrated comparable, relatively low reading competence, classified as *Less Proficient*. As presented in Table 2, the pretest mean scores were 37.35 for the Individual Games group, 34.12 for the Group Games group, and 37.16 for the Traditional Paper-and-Pencil group. These results indicate a generally weak baseline in reading comprehension among the participants, regardless of instructional grouping, and confirm initial equivalence among groups.

Table 3. Paired-Samples *t*-Test Results Comparing Pretest and Posttest Performance of the Three Instructional Groups

Instructional Group	Mean Difference (Pretest – Posttest)	t	df	Significance	Decision
Individual Games	-34.52	-16.303	45	Significant	Reject H ₀
Group Games	-35.67	-14.629	42	Significant	Reject H ₀
Traditional (Control)	-30.42	-14.433	44	Significant	Reject H ₀

Proficiency Scale:

15–29 = *Not Proficient* | 30–49 = *Less Proficient* | 50–59 = *Moderately Proficient* | 60–64 = *Very Proficient* | 65–100 = *Very Much Proficient*

Following the instructional intervention, a substantial improvement in reading competence was observed across all groups. Posttest mean scores increased to 71.87 for the Individual Games group, 69.79 for the Group Games group, and 67.58 for the Traditional group. All posttest means fell within the *Very Much Proficient* category, indicating that structured reading instruction—particularly when enriched with game-based strategies—had a substantial positive impact on students’ reading comprehension.

These findings are consistent with Bavi (2018), who reported that game-based learning enhances learner motivation and engagement, thereby increasing instructional effectiveness. Similarly, Nurwanti et al. (2019) emphasized that interaction and collaboration among learners reduce difficulties in reading comprehension by enabling students to share strategies, clarify meanings, and co-construct understanding.

The marked improvement from pretest to posttest across all groups suggests that instructional intervention itself was effective in enhancing reading competence. However, the relatively higher posttest means in the game-based groups indicate the added instructional value of interactive and learner-centered environments. Educational games transformed post-

reading activities from passive recall tasks into active, cognitively engaging experiences, facilitating comprehension, retention, and learner motivation. While traditional instruction also yielded improvement, game-based strategies appeared to promote deeper engagement and sustained attention.

Mean Gain in Reading Competence Across Instructional Groups.

Further analysis revealed differences in mean gain scores among the three groups. The Group Games group recorded the highest mean gain (35.67), followed closely by the Individual Games group (34.52), while the Traditional Paper-and-Pencil group obtained the lowest mean gain (30.42) (Table 2).

These results align with Sitanggang et al. (2018), who found that reading competence can be significantly enhanced through interactive, team-based games that promote critical thinking and shared interpretation of texts. Likewise, Ningsih et al. (2021) reported that group work facilitates deeper comprehension by allowing learners to exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and collaboratively solve problems.

Although all instructional approaches improved reading competence, the higher gains observed in the Group Games condition suggest that collaborative learning environments amplify comprehension development. Group-based games require learners to justify answers, process information socially, and engage in collective reasoning—processes that strengthen higher-order thinking and deepen textual understanding. These dynamics appear to provide an advantage over purely individual or traditional approaches.

Significant Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Results Within Groups. Paired-samples *t*-test results revealed statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest scores in all three groups (Table 3). The Individual Games group recorded a mean difference of -34.52, the Group Games group -35.67, and the Control Group -30.42. In all cases, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that students' reading comprehension significantly improved after instruction.

Table 3. *Paired-Samples t-Test Results Comparing Pretest and Posttest Performance*

Instructional Group	Mean Difference (Pretest – Posttest)	t	df	Significance	Decision
Individual Games	-34.52	-16.303	45	Significant	Reject H ₀
Group Games	-35.67	-14.629	42	Significant	Reject H ₀
Traditional (Control)	-30.42	-14.433	44	Significant	Reject H ₀

Degree of Variance Among the Three Groups. The one-way ANOVA for pretest scores revealed no statistically significant variance among the three

groups ($p = .246$), confirming baseline equivalence and strengthening the study's internal validity (Table 4).

Table 4. Table 4. *One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Pretest Scores across Instructional Groups*

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	288.109	2	144.054	1.416	0.246
Within Groups	13,326.76	131	101.731		
Total	13,614.87	133			

This result is consistent with prior experimental studies emphasizing baseline equivalence when comparing instructional strategies (Kamarulzaman et al., 2017; Sitanggang et al., 2018).

Posttest Variance. Similarly, the ANOVA for posttest scores showed no statistically significant variance among the groups ($p = .417$) (Table 6).

Table 6. *One-Way ANOVA of Posttest Scores Across Instructional Groups*

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	419.047	2	209.523	0.88	0.417
Within Groups	31,179.31	131	238.01		
Total	31,598.36	133			

This finding suggests that all instructional approaches were comparably effective in enabling students to reach high levels of reading comprehension by the end of the intervention, a pattern also noted by Sanders et al. (2020).

Mean Gain Variance. The ANOVA for mean gain scores likewise revealed no statistically significant difference among the three groups, $F(2, 131) = 1.54, p = .218$ (Table 9).

Table 9. *One-Way ANOVA of Mean Gain Scores Across Instructional Groups*

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
Between Groups	677.572	2	338.786	1.54	0.218
Within Groups	28,817.90	131	219.984		
Total	29,495.47	133			

These results align with Nurwanti et al. (2019) and Prabha and Abdul Aziz (2020), who observed that while game-based strategies enhance motivation

and engagement, improvements in reading comprehension may be distributed similarly across instructional approaches when examined using inferential statistics.

Taken together, the ANOVA results indicate that the instructional intervention—regardless of modality—was effective in improving reading comprehension, but no single strategy demonstrated statistical superiority in variance. The consistently larger within-group variance highlights the influence of individual learner characteristics, such as motivation, prior knowledge, and learning strategies, over instructional modality alone.

From an instructional perspective, these findings suggest that instructional quality, learner engagement, and contextual implementation are more decisive than the specific strategy employed. While game-based approaches offer clear motivational and interactional benefits, traditional methods—when thoughtfully implemented—remain capable of producing meaningful learning outcomes. This convergence underscores the value of flexible, learner-centered pedagogy rather than reliance on a single instructional approach.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the effectiveness of game-based teaching strategies, specifically Individual Games and Group Games, in enhancing the reading comprehension of Grade 11 students, compared with traditional paper-and-pencil instruction. Overall, the findings demonstrate that all instructional approaches led to significant improvements in students' reading competence, as evidenced by the substantial increase in posttest scores across all groups. Results revealed that prior to the intervention, students in all three groups exhibited low and statistically equivalent levels of reading competence, establishing a valid baseline for comparison. Following the instructional intervention, students in the Individual Games, Group Games, and Traditional Paper-and-Pencil groups all achieved Very Much Proficient levels of reading comprehension. Paired-samples *t*-test results confirmed that the improvements from pretest to posttest were statistically significant within each group, indicating that structured reading instruction—regardless of delivery mode—was effective in enhancing reading performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Integrate Game-Based Strategies in Reading Instruction.**

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate individual and group educational games as complementary strategies to traditional instruction to enhance learner engagement and reading comprehension.

2. **Emphasize Collaborative Learning Approaches.**
Given the relatively higher learning gains observed in the Group Games condition, collaborative and interactive activities should be prioritized to promote peer interaction and shared meaning-making in reading tasks.
3. **Maintain a Balanced Instructional Approach.**
Traditional paper-and-pencil methods should be retained and strategically combined with game-based activities to address diverse learner needs and sustain instructional effectiveness.
4. **Provide Professional Development for Teachers.**
School administrators should support training initiatives that equip teachers with practical strategies for designing and implementing game-based and learner-centered reading activities.
5. **Encourage Further Research.**
Future studies are recommended to examine long-term effects, learner variables, and technology-enhanced game-based strategies to deepen understanding of their impact on reading comprehension.

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