

# Effects of Directed Reading Lessons on Second Graders' Content Area Reading Comprehension

**Tina Roisin V. Linsangan**

Content area reading supports young children's literacy development. This quasi-experimental research determined the effects of Directed Reading Lessons (DRLs) on second graders' content area reading comprehension. A one group pretest-posttest design was administered to 25 second graders from a laboratory school in Quezon City. Research tools included a comprehension pretest and posttest, and independent practice activities. Results show that DRLs helped improve the comprehension of expository texts. Furthermore, it revealed that the students improved better in text-based compared to inference comprehension questions. With these results, it is concluded that DRLs are helpful in teaching primary-school-age-children. Although content area reading is new to the students, DRLs helped them improve in their comprehension of expository texts. The independent practice activities were pilot tested and validated by experts but it was observed that some second graders had difficulty communicating their ideas in written Filipino form. Thus, checklists, observations, focus group discussions, and interviews may also be effective instruments in gathering data for these variables. Further research may examine the use of English expository texts, other levels of comprehension, and other content areas. Subsequent studies may use different populations to examine broader generalizability.

**Keywords:** *primary-school-age-children, reading comprehension, content area reading, directed reading lessons*

## Introduction

Investigating expository texts and their role in child development is a continuing concern in the early education area that has received critical attention (Allyn, 2009). Ample evidence from literature shows that the materials early grade teachers use to teach reading and writing are mostly in narrative form (Allyn, 2009; Barone, 2011). In addition, some educators in the field have had concerns about the contents of expository texts particularly how children would interpret and comprehend such texts. Thus, expository texts are taught mostly to and are read by older students (Calo, 2011).

Focusing on literacy instruction within the content areas is central to teaching (Sáenz & Fuchs, 2002; Smith & Robertson, 2016). In other words, this means that teachers should not just merely teach content per se, they should also teach how to read texts that contain different topics in the content areas. In fact, there is sufficient evidence from studies with elementary school students as participants indicating that integrated literacy and content area learning supports children's literacy development (Best, Floyd, & Mcnamara, 2008; Halvorsen, Duke, Brugar, Block, Strachan, Berka & Brown, 2012; Samson, 2013).

Sanacore and Palumbo (2009) coined terms called "fourth-grade slump" and "eight-grade cliff" (p. 69) to describe a decline in the comprehension of children when it comes to reading expository texts. One possible cause is that not all teachers in the upper grade levels are equipped to teach reading in the content areas. Recent evidence suggests that both the amount of time spent reading and the number of available resources for expository texts are insufficient to create a balanced, comprehensive reading program in the primary level (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009). Sanacore and Palumbo (2009) cited none or less exposure to expository texts in the early grades as one of the causes of the "fourth-grade slump". Therefore, as Pentimonti et al., (2010) recommended, early childhood educators and reading teachers need to devote serious attention

to their selection of expository texts for it affects the student's language, literacy, content knowledge, and reading comprehension.

Expository texts in Social Studies cover topics that are closely related to the immediate environment of a child. Based on the Department of Education's (2016) Araling Panlipunan (AP) K-2 Curriculum, the progression of lessons starts from the family, then moves to the school, and finally to the child's neighborhood and community. Early exposure to Social Studies expository texts will help children learn more about their own world (Allyn, 2009; Jackman et al., 2015).

In reading, good readers are able to use the information from the text to arrive at a deeper understanding of ideas. They should not merely recall what they read; rather, they should comprehend the text. A number of local researchers have reported that directed reading lessons (DRLs) have positive effects on young children's literacy (Esparar, 2010; Samson, 2013; Danao, 2015). A directed reading lesson is a five-step approach in guiding the reading of a text (Tierney & Readney, 2005, as cited in Esparar 2010).

Although extensive study has been carried out on the effects of directed reading lessons, researchers have not studied reading comprehension of expository texts, especially among primary-school-age children. In this study, directed reading lessons were explored as to how they would affect second graders in their content area reading comprehension.

### Primary-School-Age Children

Much of the literature on early childhood would describe a child in terms of the different domains, namely cognitive, psychosocial, and physical domains. Studies have highlighted the importance of taking these domains into consideration when discussing who the child is and how they learn.

General characteristics of children include the following: 1) they have intellectual curiosity;

2) they have a keen sense of observation; and finally, 3) they are often called sponges who absorb information rapidly (Jackman et al., 2015).

Primary grades are important to literacy development because it is in these grade levels that most students first receive formal reading instruction. If they are taught well in these levels,

success in reading may follow. According to Chall (1983, as cited in Hermosa, 2002), there are stages of reading development that should be considered in teaching primary-school-age children. Using Chall's stages as basis, Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) proposed a developmental model that describes cognitive features that are related to writing. These are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Chall's Reading Stages and Fitzgerald & Shanahan's Writing Development*

Stage	Name of Stage	Age	Key Characteristics	Writing Development
0	Prereading or Pseudo-reading	6 mos to 6 y/o	Pretend reading, some letter recognition	Knowledge include concept of a book
1	Initial reading and decoding	7-mid 8 y/o	Read simple texts	Learning to write words and sentences
2	Confirmation and fluency	7-8 y/o	Read more quickly and accurately	Instantiate smooth integration of strategies in reading and writing words; learns how to make "big words"

*Note.* From "The psychology of reading," (Hermosa, 2002, pp. 153-154) and "Reading and writing relations and their development," Fitzgerald & Shanahan, (2000).

Stage 0, which the author calls prereading or pseudo-reading is usually found in the preschool years (six-months-to-six-year-old children) where they pretend to read and retell a story based on the pictures found in the book. Children that fall under this stage can already print their own name though they can only name letters of the alphabet. As such, they are familiar with the concept of a book.

Stage 1, which manifests in children aged seven-to-mid-eight, is called the initial reading and decoding stage. In this stage, children can already recognize the relationship between letters and sounds and can read simple texts with phonetically regular words. This is also called the trial-and-error stage when the students try to experiment on their

reading and attempts on writing words and sentences are evident.

The next stage is the confirmation and fluency stage, which characterizes seven- and eight-year-old children. They can already read simple and familiar texts. They can already decode in the basic level as well as provide context while reading selections that they have read or have been read to before. Knowledge that students gained is made "more internalized, less deliberate, and less overt" (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000, p. 46). Moreover, because students start to read different genres of texts that use more complex words, efforts in writing using big words are evident by this stage.

However, it is crucial to note that these stages are not prescriptive. The key to address their needs in literacy development is to consider their fundamental characteristics. In this regard, it is important to mention Vygotsky's (1978) concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which states that the development of the person may be enriched when one gains knowledge through the aid of a "more knowledgeable other" (Vygotsky, 1978), using ways that are relevant to them. This means that higher order knowledge is derived from social sources. Vygotsky believed in the influence of the environment such that children continually make sense of and are drawn to learn more about concepts, skills, and processes because of their interactions with others.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009), aside from Chall's stages, second graders can do the following: 1) read with greater fluency; 2) use strategies more efficiently when comprehension is not met; 3) use identification strategies with greater facility in unlocking unknown words; and 4) spend time reading daily and use reading to research topics. In fact, the Common Core Standards Initiative (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2018) in the US recommends students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to be exposed to different text structures including expository texts. On the other hand, based on DepEd's (2016) Curriculum Standards for Filipino, second graders can read critically to broaden vocabulary (*naisasagawa ang mapanuring pagbasa upang mapalawak ang talasalitaan*) with exposure to expository texts (*nakasasagot sa mga tanong tungkol sa nabasang tekstong pang-impormasyon*) by the end of the grade level. As an early grades teacher, I can attest to this fact that is why I adhere to the call to include and use more expository texts in primary grades instruction.

To be able to attain these, the holistic development of a child should be considered. NAEYC in 2009 highlights the need for instruction to meet the needs and abilities of the students appropriately. This is what is referred to as

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP), which emphasizes the call to apply child development knowledge in making meaningful decisions about early childhood program practices. Children must be considered within the context of their family, culture, community, past history, and present circumstances. Responding to each child as an individual is fundamental to DAP. For teaching strategies to be developmentally appropriate, they must be age, culturally, and individually appropriate (NAEYC, 2009).

### Reading Comprehension

Children should not just learn decoding, but also comprehension. They should not just know how to read, but they should understand what they are reading. Since readers need to look closely at the text to make meaning, there are different levels tapped for comprehension to take place. According to the Gray, Gates, Smith, and Barrett model of reading comprehension (as cited in Hermosa, 2002), there are five levels. These levels of comprehension are literal, inferential, evaluative, integrative, and creative. The first level, the literal level, claims that comprehension is making meaning from what is explicitly stated in the text. The second level, the inferential level, refers to getting meaning based on what is implied in the text. The third level, the evaluative level, is concerned mainly with making meaning based on the reader's personal judgment on certain parts of the text. The fourth level, the integrative level, is mainly concerned with how the student connects with the text. Questions at this level elicit application of the ideas and values of the text to one's life in order to comprehend the text more. Lastly, at the creative level, questions are related to new insights gained from the text or even alternate solutions evoked by the reading of the material.

Reading comprehension can be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively. In quantitative assessments, multiple-choice questions could minimize the randomization of answers by the test-takers (Alderson, 2000). Locally, Diaz (2013) proposed a model for Grades 1-10 Filipino expository texts based on her assessments of text

difficulty. The tools she used were comprehension tests in multiple-choice format. Santos (2015) also used a multiple-choice format for testing comprehension. It included five items of literal level questions on a short narrative written in Filipino. She conducted a quasi-experimental study on parent involvement in addressing reading comprehension and reading attitude of young learners. Her participants included a group of 11 dyads – five-to-seven-year-old children and their parents, which were from low-income families. After the sessions on her intervention called the “GuroKo, Kapamilya Ko: GK Reading Program”, the reading comprehension skills increased among her participants. On the other hand, Roehling et al., (2017) suggested four strategies that can help assess comprehension qualitatively. These are: 1) asking guide questions, 2) using signal words again, 3) using graphic organizers, and 4) using note frames. Each strategy helps students focus on the elements present in the text. In using signal words, an example is finding ‘because’ and ‘therefore’ words in passages and identifying the cause and effect. Next, an example of a graphic organizer is to list down the main idea and supporting details to ensure that each supporting detail should be under the umbrella of the main idea (Graves & Graves, 2007). Finally, an example of the note frame strategy is giving students a template in which they can take down notes from the literature.

### **Content Area Reading in the Primary Grades**

Many children have little to no exposure to content area reading in the primary grades (Barone, 2011; Calo, 2011). This becomes problematic because it is through content area reading that students are able to build knowledge necessary to understand complex concepts and ideas starting from the fourth grade (Sáenz & Fuchs, 2002).

Content area reading mostly uses expository texts which are written differently from narrative texts. In expository texts, the plot, setting, characters, theme, and other literary elements of a narrative are not present. Readers of expository texts focus on understanding facts. These

differences are summarized by Marinak and Gambrell (2009) and include the following:

- 1) The author’s purpose refers to the intent of the author in writing the text;
- 2) Major ideas are the key points the author wants to convey to the readers;
- 3) Supporting details are the information clarifying the major ideas;
- 4) Pictorial aids are the pictures and other graphical representations of data in the expository text. Finally,
- 5) vocabulary pertains to the technical words needed for utmost comprehension of the text. Each element is essential, and when combined, gives the distinct features of an expository text that distinguishes it from a narrative text.

Expository texts are structured differently, with elements organized in various ways (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009; Meyer, 1975, 1985, as cited in Hebert, et al., 2016). First among these structures is enumeration which is a list of major ideas or events. Second, time order structure is arranging ideas in the sequence that they happened. Third, the compare and contrast structure describes how ideas or concepts are similar to or different from one another. Fourth, cause and effect structure shows where major ideas come from and/or their result. Another structure of expository texts is question and answer. It refers to the structure in which the major idea is in question form and the answers are implicitly found in the supporting details. Probably one of the reasons of primary education teachers having doubts on exposing children to expository texts at a young age is because research shows that although students have the interest to read about facts, they have difficulty comprehending expository texts because they are not familiar with its structure (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009; Hebert et al., 2016).

Best et al., (2008) state that due to the structure and elements of expository texts, these may be more difficult to comprehend than narrative texts. In their study, they employed a 12-item multiple-choice test to measure third grade students’ comprehension of expository texts in Science. Their findings reveal that the skills necessary for comprehending expository texts are different from that of narrative texts.

## 6 Alipato

The researchers used the terms, “text-based” and “inference” levels to test third graders in their reading of expository texts. The text-based questions referred to literal level comprehension questions, in reference to the Gray et al. model of reading comprehension (as cited in Hermosa, 2002) while the inference level questions pertained to world knowledge that is essential to the comprehension of expository texts.

Because Social Studies emphasizes ways to link a child to their environment, teachers should take advantage of teaching this field to prepare children to become functional citizens of society in the future (Jackman et al., 2015). The Social Studies curricula can strengthen the young child’s experiences of self, home, family, and beyond (NAEYC, 2009). In the local setting, grade level standards for second graders in the Araling Panlipunan curriculum (DepEd, 2016) states that Filipino students should show broad understanding and importance toward the communities in the Philippines. They could show this by being aware of the physical characteristics of a community, its culture and trade, as well as its other features. As Ekstrom & Tuft (2007) state, for children to be able to learn new competencies that real-life information might bring about, expository texts, especially in Social Studies, should be used.

### Directed Reading Lessons

Through the years, DRLs have been explored as a particular way of teaching (Esparar, 2010; Samson, 2013; Danao, 2015). According to Tierney and Readence (2005 as cited in Esparar, 2010), DRLs could be outlined as: 1) Preparation for Reading, 2) Direct/Guided Silent Reading, 3) Comprehension Check and Discussion/Comprehension Development, 4) Skill Development and Application, and 5) Extension and Follow-Up Activities.

In early childhood education, DRLs are used to teach children terms, strategies, precise factual information, and routines. To prevent the “fourth-grade slump” in motivation and achievement, there are three guiding principles teachers can

apply to their teaching strategies as early as in the primary grades. These are “balance teacher and student-center learning, expand student choices and options, and exploit the social nature of learning” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000 as cited in Brozo, 2005, pp. 48-49). Directed reading lessons follow these principles. Furthermore, directed reading lessons are considered to follow Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of ZPD because the teacher serves as the student’s guide in learning.

A local researcher, Esparar (2010), investigated the reading performance and attitude of fifth graders in his action research. The use of DRL with the aid of additional activities for teaching specific reading skills such as retelling, reading comprehension and word reading, fluency, and vocabulary helped him assess the aforementioned reading skills of the participants. He followed Tierney and Readence’s description of DRL but he did not employ the last step – extension and follow up activities. He allotted 30 sessions for this study due to the nature and number of reading skills to be taught. The 50 student participants were divided into two groups namely, the Unique subgroup and the Common subgroup. The former consisted of students who attended either English or Filipino classes only and the latter were those who attended both classes. Esparar used the Qualitative Reading Inventory – IV, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, and a researcher-made vocabulary test as research instruments. The findings revealed that there was a positive change in the retelling, word reading, reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary of the students after exposure to DRL. Moreover, there was a statistically significant increase in the mean scores of all of the participants in the posttests across the different comprehension skills as compared to the pretests. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of the Unique and Common subgroups.

Samson (2013) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the effects of directed reading lessons on twenty-five third graders’ reading and writing skills in 18 sessions that lasted from 30 to 60 minutes each. The results of the

study revealed that there were statistically significant differences in both reading and writing. The type of text used to teach directed reading lessons was expository.

A more recent study on DRLs was conducted by Danao (2015). Using a multiple case study research design, she investigated the listening comprehension skills and book orientation behaviors of six preparatory children as they were exposed to Directed Reading Lessons using narrative texts in print and electronic book (e-book) formats. The time allotted for each DRL, with a total of 26-32 minutes, was as follows: 1) five to seven minutes for prereading activities, 2) eight to ten minutes for read-alouds, and 3) 13-15 minutes for discussion using a questioning strategy called Gradual Psychological Unfolding (GPU). An 18-item multiple choice assessment of listening comprehension skills that tapped the literal, inferential, evaluative, and integrative levels of comprehension (Chall, 1983 as cited in Hermosa, 2002) was used. The results of Danao's study indicated that DRLs using e-books were effective in improving young children's book orientation behaviors and listening comprehension, specifically story retelling and their ability to answer the different levels of comprehension.

Local studies have presented the effectiveness of DRLs. Although teaching content area reading comprehension for young students remains limited, DRLs may aid teachers with one of the appropriate methods in teaching this skill to young students. This research aimed to investigate whether there is a significant difference in second graders' content area reading comprehension before and after directed reading lessons.

### Method

This is a quasi-experimental research conducted to determine if second graders' content area reading comprehension improved after sixteen sessions of directed reading lessons (DRLs). A one-group pretest-posttest design was conducted among twenty-five male and female participants from a Grade 2 class in a laboratory school in

Quezon City. A quasi-experimental design was deemed appropriate in this study because a teaching strategy was implemented; thus, an intact class was recommended. The study did not necessitate another group to compare the results. This research design resembled that of Samson's (2013) study that determined the effects of DRLs on third graders' reading comprehension and writing skills, and the research of Santos (2015) that investigated parent involvement in addressing reading comprehension and reading attitude of young children from low-income families. Samson (2013) likewise had 25 participants in her research while Santos (2015) utilized her quasi-experimental one group pre- and posttest design with one group of 11 dyads. Quantitative data were necessary in order to find out significant differences in reading comprehension.

In order to ensure that the program would be administered as planned, and to minimize extraneous factors that might affect the outcome of the study, the lesson plans were constructed and the sessions were facilitated by the researcher herself.

The participants who were able to complete the program are 16 female and 9 male students. According to the second grade teachers in the institution, all of the participants are functionally literate and know how to read. They have also been exposed to literature-based learning since Kindergarten. Moreover, according to the DepEd (2016) Curriculum Standards for Filipino, second grade students are expected to be ready for critical reading in order to broaden vocabulary (*naisasagawa ang mapanuring pagbasa upang mapalawak ang talasalitaan*) with exposure to expository texts (*nakasasagot sa mga tanong tungkol sa nabasang tekstong pang-impormasyon*).

To determine a significant difference in the comprehension of the students before and after the DRL Program, a ten-item multiple-choice test for pretest and another parallel test for posttest were designed by the researcher. The comprehension tests have three options per item. These were done in order to prevent

randomization of responses (Alderson, 2000). Furthermore, the questions were based on expository texts in Social Studies. The texts were based on the topic about the community and were anchored upon the existing DepEd (2016) AP curriculum. The allotment for the total number of questions and the number of items per comprehension level was in accordance with Best et al.'s (2008) research where they have 12 items for the comprehension test for third graders. Their

tool has a 50-50 distribution of comprehension level items between text-based and inference questions. The researcher-made tests were validated by a panel, pilot tested, and item analyzed.

The DRL Program consisted of sixteen 40-minute sessions over a span of four weeks. There was a lesson plan for each week thus, there were a total of four directed reading lesson plans. Table 2 shows the DRL format for each week.

**Table 2**  
*Format of the DRL per Week*

DAY	TIME ALLOTTED	ACTIVITY
1	5 minutes	Prereading
	20 minutes	During Reading
	15 minutes	Post Reading Discussion
2	15 minutes	Introduction of a Reading Comprehension Strategy
	25 minutes	Teaching/Modelling of the Reading Comprehension Strategy
3	20 minutes	Guided Practice
	20 minutes	Independent Practice
4	20 minutes	Application
	20 minutes	Extension and Follow up Activity
TOTAL TIME	160 MINUTES	

One expository text served as the main reading material for each lesson plan, which was good for a four-day implementation. Like in the pre- and posttest, the topic on community was selected and this was based on the existing DepEd (2016) AP curriculum. The first part was read during the During Reading step of the DRL. The second and third parts were guided practice and independent practice, respectively. Graphic organizers that are based on literature written by Graves and Graves (2007) were used for these

parts. As stated by Roehling et al. (2017), graphic organizers are one of the ways to help students select and organize data and messages from an expository text. Finally, the fourth part was used for the application and an extension activity on it followed. Each part is not dependent on the other parts yet they are all under the same theme. This means that even if all four expository texts for the week may pertain to one topic, one does not need to remember what they read previously in order to understand the expository text that they are

reading at the moment. The lesson plans were expert validated, pilot tested and revised, and the materials were prepared only after the revisions from the pilot test were made.

The reading comprehension pretest in which the questions were based on the expository text, entitled *Ang Pamayanan*, was administered. The total time for administration was 40 minutes.

The DRL Program was implemented during Filipino time for four consecutive days a week to avoid extraneous factors that might affect the study. There was an allotment of four weeks, discussing one expository text per week. There were a total of 16 class meetings with approximately 40 minutes per session. The time allotment and the total number of meetings were patterned after the studies of Samson (2013) and Danao (2015) on DRLs. A variety of activities was done in the classroom following the DRL format. Independent practice worksheets were collected as qualitative data.

After the 16-session DRL program, the comprehension posttest was administered to the class. The questions for the parallel comprehension test came from the text, *Pagtutulungan Upang Mabigyan ng Solusyon ang mga Suliranin sa Pamayanan*.

To find out if there is a significant difference on the children's content area reading comprehension before and after the treatment, the pre- and post-assessment comprehension tests were analyzed using the paired t-test. Inferential statistics was also used to further analyze the data. Furthermore, independent practice activities from selected students were qualitatively analyzed for their content. Trends were observed in their answers.

## Results and Discussion

The research question aims to find out if there is a significant difference before and after directed reading lessons in second graders' content area reading comprehension. The null hypothesis states that after 16 sessions of Directed Reading Lessons (DRLs), there is no significant difference in second graders' content area reading comprehension.

Scores of the reading comprehension pretest and posttest were analyzed using paired t-test to determine if there is a significant difference between the reading comprehension of the participants before and after the directed reading lessons. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for this statistical test. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Result of T-Test and Descriptive Statistics for Content Area Reading Comprehension*

Outcome	Comprehension Pretest		Comprehension Posttest		n	95% CI for Mean Difference	p	t	df
	M	SD	M	SD					
	5.7	2.2	6.7	1.89	25	-1.9606925, -0.0393075	.042*	-2.15*	24

\**p-value*<.05

Table 3 shows the results from the comprehension pre-test ( $M= 5.7, SD= 2.2$ ) and posttest ( $M= 6.7, SD= 1.89$ ). These indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in the content area reading comprehension of the students before and after the DRL program,  $t(24)= -2.15, p= .042$ . It should be noted that the p-value of .04199 is smaller than 0.05, thus it is concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre- and posttest reading comprehension scores. This indicates that the directed reading lessons had an effect on the second graders' reading content area reading

comprehension. This warrants a rejection of the null hypothesis.

To be able to look deeper into the results, inferential statistics of the comprehension pre- and posttest is presented. The performance of the second graders based on the comprehension level items as reflected in their pre- and posttest mean scores and aggregate scores is presented. Table 4 shows the percentages of students who responded correctly to the items based on the two comprehension levels, which are text-based and inferential.

**Table 4**

*Percentages of Students Who Correctly Answered the Comprehension Items*

Comprehension Level	Comprehension Test Objective	Percentage of Students who Answered Correctly	
		Pretest	Posttest
Text Based Level	Recall details in the expository text	62	86
	Recall the details in the expository text and eliminate those that are not explicitly stated	58	78
	Mean Percentage	60	82
Inferential Level	Make inferences about the supporting details of a main idea	64	20
	Make inferences on differentiating facts from opinions	64	84
	Make inferences about the characteristics of a community/possible solutions for the problems based on the details stated in the text and one's own world knowledge	56	72
	Make inferences about the overall message of the text	50	52
	Mean Percentage	56.67	58.67

\*N= 25

Based on Table 4, the students' scores improved in both the text-based and inferential comprehension levels. As for the comprehension test objectives, the results of the pre- and posttest scores improved as well, except for making inferences pertaining to supporting details, which is worth discussing further. The question in the pretest is, "Alin dito ang detalyeng sumusuporta sa pangungusap na, 'May magkaibang uri ng pamayanan sa Pilipinas.'?" (Which of the following statements supports the sentence, 'There are different types of communities in the Philippines.?) while the question in the posttest is, "Alin dito ang detalyeng sumusuporta sa pangungusap na, 'Marami ang maaaring maging suliranin ng isang pamayanan.'?" (Which of the following statements supports the sentence, 'There might be a lot of problems a community faces'?). Although *suliranin* was unlocked prior to the reading of the expository text, this might have been the cause why there was a drop in the scores in the posttest. The term *problema* might be more familiar to students than the word *suliranin*. To further analyze the answers in the posttest, the number of students who answered the options is presented. Seven of twenty-five students answered option A, which is "Makakatulong ang pamahalaan sa maraming suliranin ng pamayanan" (The government can help in the many problems of the community). Next, thirteen students answered option B, which is "Kailangan magtulungan ng mga mamamayan para malutas ang suliranin" (Citizens

should help out in order to solve the problems). Lastly, five students answered option C which is, "Ang ilan sa suliranin sa pamayanan ay ang pagkakaroon ng krimen at hindi pagsunod sa batas trapiko" (Some of the problems in the community are crime and violation of traffic rules) and is the correct answer. The majority of the students, instead of thinking about the concept of supporting details, might have thought of answering the question based on the cause and effect of the statements. Even if this is the case, the students improved in the other inferential comprehension objectives which are about fact and opinion, characterization, problem and solution, and overall message. The students perhaps had difficulty in identifying the supporting details because of how they are presented due to the structure of the expository text (Marinak & Gambrell, 2009).

The DRL Program could have aided them in responding correctly to the comprehension questions, most especially those under the text-based level. However, literal level questions are easier to answer than inference questions for the latter level of questions has more demands on students to read between the lines (Chall, 1983, as cited in Hermosa, 2002).

In order to further analyze the results, graphic organizers from selected students were analyzed for their content. Figures 1-3 show these outputs.

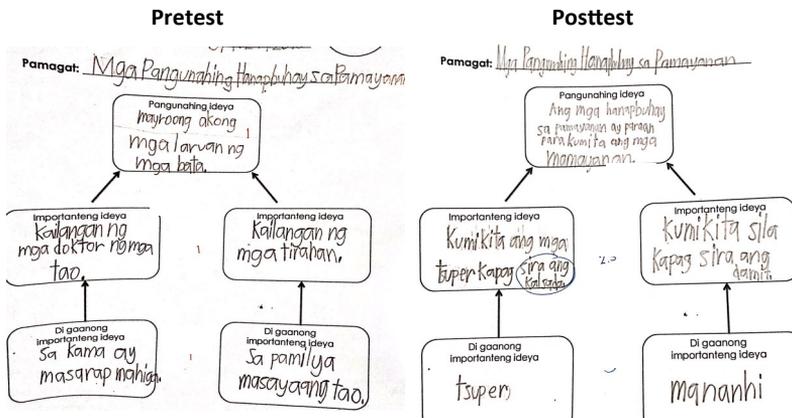


Figure 1. Student M's outputs

Figure 1 presents the pretest and posttest samples of Student M. For the pretest, Student M's answers are not, in any way, related to the expository text. The expository text is about medical practitioners, sellers, and school employees as jobs in the community. The only answer that is related to the expository text is one of their important ideas, "Kailangan ng mga doktor ng mga tao" (Doctors need people), which is not really clear of its meaning. The other important idea is "Kailangan ng mga tirahan" (People need homes) while their interesting ideas are "Sa kama ay masarap mahiga" (It feels good to lie down in bed) and "Sa pamilya masaya ang tao" (It feels good when one is with their family). With all of these ideas, Student M came up with the main idea, "Mayroon akong mga laruan ng mga bata." (I have toys for children). All of these statements, except for the important idea pertaining to doctors, are not related to the expository text the participants read for the pretest. On the other hand, for the posttest,

Student M was able to answer the chart with ease. The expository text for the posttest cites drivers and tailors as jobs in the community. The first important and interesting idea that Student M plotted is "Kumikita ang mga tsuper kapag sira ang kalsada." (Drivers earn money when the road is not passable). While it is true that driving is one of the ways of earning money in the community, earning money because the road is not passable does not make any sense. The second important and interesting idea that Student M wrote is "Kumikita ang mga mananahi kapag sira ang damit." (Tailors and seamstresses earn money when clothes are torn or tattered). With these important and interesting ideas, this time, Student M was able to identify the main idea of the expository text, "Ang mga hanapbuhay sa pamayanan ay paraan para kumita ang mga mamamayan." (Different sources of employment in the community are means for the citizens to earn money).

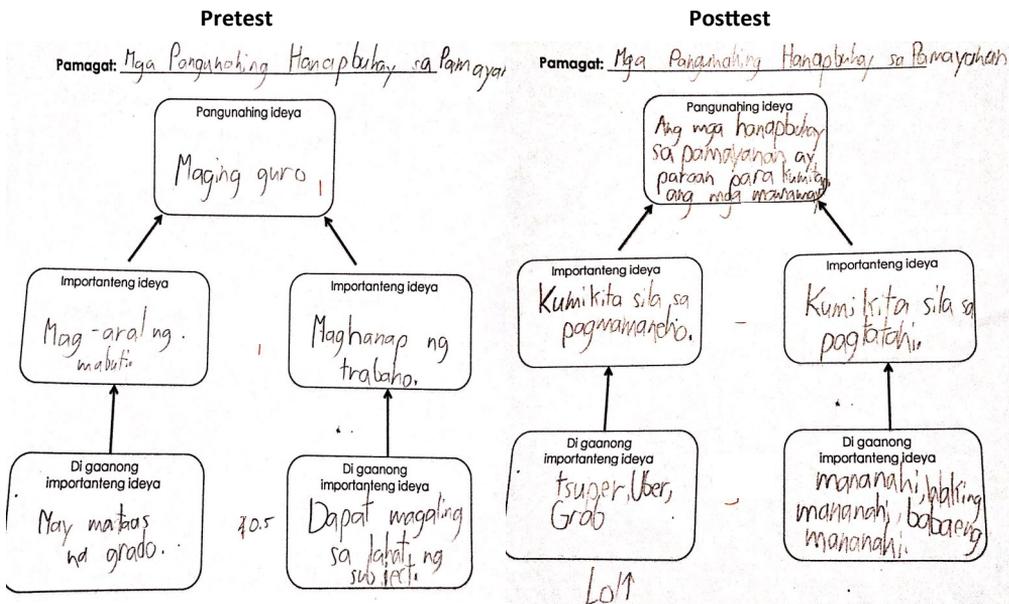


Figure 2. Student G's outputs

Figure 2 presents the pretest and posttest samples from Student G. For the pretest, it seems that the ideas are a little bit disorganized although it can be noticed that there is a common trend in the answers. The important and interesting ideas are the following: 1) “May mataas na grado” (Has high grades) then “Mag-aral ng mabuti” (Study hard); and 2) “Dapat magaling sa lahat ng subject” (You have to be good in all of your subjects) then “Maghanap ng trabaho” (Find a job). All these important and interesting ideas could be found under the main idea, “Maging guro” (Be a teacher). Based on the researcher’s observation of Student G’s answers, the important and interesting ideas are ways on how to achieve the main idea. In this case, these are ways on how to be a teacher. On the other hand, in the posttest Student G was

able to identify the following important and interesting ideas: 1) “Kumikita ang mga mananahi sa pagtatahi” (Tailors and seamstresses earn money by sewing); and 2) “Kumikita ang mga tsuper, Grab at Uber sa pagmamaneho.” (Drivers, including Uber and Grab drivers, earn money by driving). For the main idea, “Ang mga hanapbuhay sa pamayanan ay paraan para kumita ang mga mamamayan” (Different sources of employment in the community are means for the citizens to earn money) was given. Looking closely at Student G’s second interesting idea, even if Grab or Uber (a ride hailing mobile application) is not mentioned in the expository text, they were able to use prior knowledge to make even more sense to the expository text that they read.

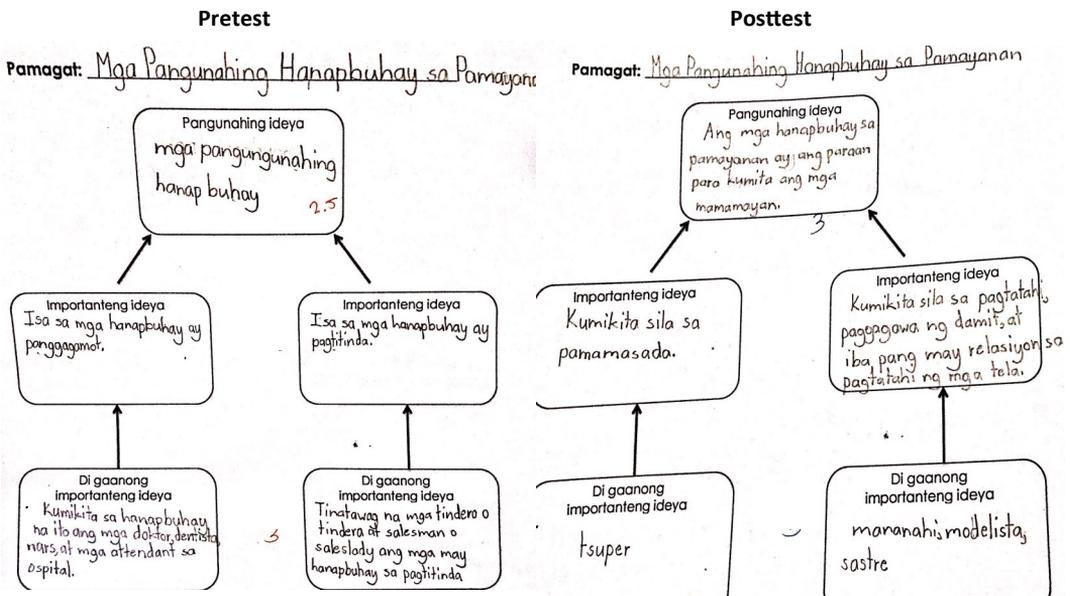


Figure 3. Student L’s outputs

Figure 3 presents the pretest and posttest samples from Student L. In the pretest, Student L indicated that examples of jobs providing healthcare are doctors, nurses, dentists, and hospital attendants (*“Kumikita sa hanapbuhay na ito ang mga doktor, dentista, nars at mga attendant sa ospital”*) while examples of jobs selling goods are salesmen and salesladies (*“Tinatawag na mga tindero o tindera at salesman o saleslady ang mga may hanapbuhay sa pagtitinda”*). The important ideas were *“isa sa mga hanapbuhay ay ang pangagamot”* (one of the main jobs is providing healthcare) and *“isa sa mga hanapbuhay ay ang pagtitinda”* (one of the main jobs is selling goods). Student L then stated that the main idea was *“[mga pangunahing hanapbuhay]”* (the main jobs). These answers were precise with the content of the expository text. As for the posttest output in which the expository text refers to drivers and tailors being helpers in the community, Student L’s interesting ideas were an example of a job that requires driving is being a driver (*“tsuper”*) and an example of a job involving sewing is being a seamstress (*“mananahi, [modista], sastre*). For important ideas, they were able to break down sewing (*“Kumikita sila sa pagtatahi, paggawa ng damit, at iba pang may relasyon sa pagtatahi ng mga tela”*) and driving (*“Kumikita sila sa pamamasada”*) as two of the main jobs in the community. Finally, the main idea written was about the different jobs people have in the community in order to earn money (*“Ang mga hanapbuhay sa pamayanan ay ang paraan para kumita ang mga mamamayan”*). The interesting ideas are connected with the two important ideas, and the main idea that was mentioned. As observed, there is already a clearer picture of Student L’s use of the Determining Importance strategy after the DRL sessions.

Overall, although the participants have a strong use of their background knowledge in comprehending the expository texts, the DRLs helped the students focus more on what were mentioned in the texts as they determined the interesting, important, and main ideas. Based on the patterns of responses, the participants were able to determine the important ideas better than

interesting ideas. The most challenging for them was identifying the main idea. It is also evident that they had difficulty stating their ideas in written form. Fitzgerald and Shanahan’s (2000) developmental model describes cognitive features that are related to writing, while children in the confirmation and fluency stage start to read different genres of texts that use more complex words, efforts in writing using big words are evident by this stage. Efforts are noticeable though they cannot be presupposed to write their ideas as clearly as how the ideas in the expository texts were written.

In general, the results suggest that second graders’ content area reading comprehension improved when they were exposed to directed reading lessons. These results are supported by the studies of Esparar (2010), Samson (2013), and Danao (2015).

Esparar’s (2010) research found out that DRLs have positive effects on the reading performance of fifth graders. This study showed that there was a statistically significant increase in the mean scores of all of the participants in the posttests across the different comprehension skills as compared to the pretests. Furthermore, Samson (2013) assessed the writing skills of third graders before and after exposure to DRLs. The results presented a statistically significant difference in the reading comprehension skills before and after the treatment. Likewise, the results of Danao’s (2015) study indicated that DRLs using e-books were effective in improving the listening comprehension of young children.

### Limitations

The participants of the study were students, specifically a class of second graders, from a laboratory school in Quezon City, Metro Manila. These participants had been exposed to a literature-based reading program since their Kindergarten year. Filipino was used as the medium of instruction since Social Studies, as a subject, is delivered using this language, being the mother tongue of the students in the research locale.

Other participants, like students who are from Metro Manila or students who had not been exposed to a literature-based reading program, can be used for broader generalizability.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The study shows that after 16 sessions of directed reading lessons, there is a significant improvement in the content area reading comprehension of second graders, seven-to-eight years of age, specifically in the text-based questions. The DRLs also helped the students find ideas from the expository texts themselves, instead of thinking of other ideas that are connected to, but not mentioned in the text. However, it was evident both in the comprehension pretest, posttest, and independent practice activities that finding out the main idea is a challenge for them. Moreover, difficulty in expressing and writing ideas in Filipino is observed from the students' answers in the independent practice activities.

Directed reading lessons are indeed helpful in teaching in the primary grades. Even if content area reading is new to the students, the teaching method helped them improve in their comprehension of expository texts. Although the independent activities in comprehension activities were pilot tested and validated by experts, it was observed that some second graders had difficulty communicating their ideas in written form. Checklists, observations, focus group discussions, and interviews may also be effective instruments in gathering data for these variables.

Future research on utilizing Filipino expository texts in other content areas such as Science may be examined. Subsequent research to replicate the study may focus on the effects of DRLs on expository texts written in English as well as exploring other levels of comprehension.

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### About the Author

**Tina Roisin Vinluan Linsangan** obtained her Master of Arts in Education degree from the University of the Philippines Diliman. She specializes in Teaching in the Early Grades, K-2. Moreover, she earned her Bachelor in Elementary Education degree from the same institution. Her major was Communication Arts – English.

Asst. Prof. Linsangan has been teaching since 2012. She was a former Grades 2-4 English teacher in Xavier School San Juan and is currently an early grades teacher in the University of the Philippines Integrated School. As a current early grades teacher, she teaches English, Filipino, Mathematics, Science, and Physical Education to her students. Her research interests include primary-level children, informational texts or nonfiction genre for children, Social Studies in the early grades, and Reading Education.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Tina Roisin Vinluan Linsangan at [tbvinluan@up.edu.ph](mailto:tbvinluan@up.edu.ph)