

## Effectiveness of three Instructional Strategies on Reading Comprehension Abilities of Pupils in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the effectiveness of shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity instructional strategies on reading comprehension performance of pupils in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district, Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. A quasi-experimental research design utilizing the pre-test and post-test non-randomized control group was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of five thousand and ninety four (5094) primary school pupils in public primary schools in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 200 pupils was arrived at using Simple random sampling technique. Four classes from two schools were randomly sampled and the four classes were further sampled into control and experimental groups. A researcher-made instrument titled "Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT)" developed from the reading comprehension passage titled "The Computer" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by five experts. A trial test was carried out on 30 respondents who were not part of the study but were drawn from the population under study. Cronbach alpha was used to compute the coefficient, which gave a value of .79. Data obtained from research questions were answered using means and standard deviations while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Findings reveals that pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity) performed better in their ability to find main ideas and predict outcomes in a reading comprehension passage. It was recommended that teachers should make use of repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity strategies in teaching reading comprehension because these strategies have been found to be useful in helping he pupils to develop abilities to find main ideas, predict outcomes, answer questions, comprehend sentences, make summaries, evaluate critically and follow directions.*

**Keywords:** Reading, Comprehension Abilities, Instructional Strategies, critical evaluation of passages, question and answering in passages

### **Introduction**

Reading is an indispensable language skill, which is fundamental to communication and literacy. It is likened to a window through which a literate person can see the world far beyond his physical reach. Reading according to Nwaiwu (2007) is a form of communication in which the decoder (reader) endeavours to interpret the mind of the writer (encoder). Through reading, the reader sees, feels, hears and interact with the writer who is either

familiar or unfamiliar to him. Reading is an act that facilitates the learning process and effectively promotes one's intellectual development. Hasenstab and Laughton (1982) asserted that throughout history, reading has been the badge of intellect and the proof of knowledge and education. This implies that reading is the act of understanding the meaning of symbols and signs by looking at them and assimilating them mentally. Experts in language education affirm that reading has multiple descriptions (Eze 2007). Haris and Sipay (2005) described reading as involving the identification, comprehension and interpretation of symbols on the printed page and as a complex interaction of cognitive and linguistic processes.

According to Joffen (1988) reading is a thinking process that involves making sense of (interpreting) symbols. Hudson (1992) defines reading as "an active and creative process involving the generation of meaning from written language". In this context reading is considered as a thoughtful process requiring the reader to perform a number of functions while reading. These processes include understanding what the author is writing to contribute his own experience and thoughts and interpret, recognize and evaluate these thoughts. Reading is a complex process involving physiological and cerebral activities, which allows the reader to think and ruminate on the read passage. It is obvious that reading entails not only the recognition of printed symbols, but also the emotional response to the meaning of words. Implicit in the definition is the fact that reading involves thinking, understanding and interpreting meaningfully the written form of words, phrases or sentences.

The importance of reading in educational pursuit is overwhelming. Reading exercises the brain and improves concentration. It helps pupils to acquire knowledge; it improves pupils' vocabulary and develops their imagination. One of the objectives of early childhood education is to prepare a child for the primary level of education and a child who does well in reading comprehension in the pre-school classes will perform excellently in the primary level of education and even do better in the common entrance examinations.

Children need reading comprehension skills in their early years of schooling for survival into future academic life. Abe (2001) observed that reading comprehension skills developed in the early years of the child's schooling are effective in enhancing good and sustainable reading habit and culture. The term reading comprehension denotes the ability to read and understand what is being read from soft or hard copies of readable materials. Pressley and Afflesbach (2005) defined reading comprehension as "the level of understanding of a read text or passage".

There are certain competencies an individual should acquire to ensure that he has suitable mastery of reading comprehension. These include ability to find the main ideas based on the passage read, ability to predict outcomes, ability to answer questions from the read passage; ability to comprehend sentences, ability to make summaries from the passage read, ability to critically evaluate and the ability to follow directions. The ability to find main ideas based on the passage read comes because of comprehending the read passage. This could be observed if the child is able to match a series of pictures with the passage or paragraphs they illustrate, match the picture that illustrate the main idea with a paragraph that it illustrated. Main ideas help readers to remember important information in any paragraph or passage.

Main ideas are derived from the topic or topic sentences of the paragraph or passage. Main ideas tell information about all or most of the sentences in the passage. Other sentences in the paragraph provide details, which describe or explain the main ideas (Kuccan, Beek & Mckeoun, 2002). For the learner to show that he has comprehended what he has read in a passage, he should be able to at least relate or match the pictures that illustrate a main idea with a paragraph or passage that it illustrates. This ability is an indication that the reader has understood what was read, and that he has been able to get the main idea from the passage.

Another reading comprehension skill that a child has to acquire is the ability to predict outcomes. This is a critical competence in reading. Predicting outcomes is telling what might possibly happen next in a story or passage read. It has to do with making inference or drawing conclusion based on the information provided by the author in a story or passage just read. The reader who has the ability to predict outcome should be able to tell why things happened as they did in a story or passage, and perhaps make up endings for the stories orally or in writing. It requires that the reader should estimate answers to some type of problem or questions or predict what will happen next after listening to part of the story or account of an experience another pupil has had. Without comprehension ability, this may not be possible.

Another comprehension skill a child should acquire for effective reading comprehension is learning to follow direction. Some reading passages or stories give the reader directions to follow in accomplishing a task. For pupils to follow the steps sequentially in accomplishing such a task as read from the passage, they have to understand what is written. This implies that they must have a good ability to comprehend reading comprehensions. After reading, to remember the steps described in order to carry out a particular task is an index one can use to measure the extent to which the reader comprehends the passage or story.

Children who are learning to follow direction in a reading comprehension should be able to carry out the following skills, repeat directions given by the teacher, observe written directions by the teachers; such as “make one ball yellow”. Make the other blue,” answer questions about a set of directions such as: “what should you do after drawing a picture?”. He should be able to follow written or oral directions for making things, such as a folder for papers or producing a paper Mache. He should be able to draw a picture from direction given. He should be able to arrange in a correct order, the sentences for direction to do or make something. This ability can be improved with the use of effective strategies in teaching, reading comprehension. The present study therefore aimed at assessing the effectiveness of three instructional strategies of teaching reading comprehension on the comprehension achievement of pupils in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The poor performance of pupils in reading comprehension has been attributed to the use of poor instructional strategies by teachers. Eze (2007) studied the problems affecting reading comprehension in primary schools. After using mean statistics for analysis, it was

found out that teachers consistently use “Look and say” and “phonics” teaching, methods in their reading lessons. Their instructional strategies for teaching reading comprehension were considered to be poor because the methods promote spoken English, and not reading comprehension.

From the researcher’s interaction with primary school teachers, the researcher has observed that primary school English teachers in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District use “look and say” and “phonics” teaching methods frequently in their reading comprehension lessons. These methods are not appropriate instructional strategies in teaching reading comprehension in primary schools. It appears that the primary school pupils rarely read comprehension passages with understanding. They seem to lack the ability to recall main ideas from the passage, or make a summary based on the passage read. Most of them are not able to critically evaluate a passage read. They also lack the ability to follow direction in accomplishing task in a given passage (Teale 2012). Hence, there is need to investigate the different instructional strategies used in teaching reading comprehension in primary schools, with a view to determining or identifying the appropriate instructional strategies that will cater for the needs, interest and background of children in Akwa Ibom State. It was on this premise that the present researcher sought to assess the effectiveness of three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated reading and directed listening and thinking activities) on pupils reading comprehension achievement in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of three instructional strategies of teaching reading comprehension on the comprehension achievement of pupils in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically the study sought to achieve the following objectives.

1. To determine pupils’ ability to find main ideas in a passage when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).
2. To investigate pupils’ ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the difference in pupils’ ability to find main ideas in a passage when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity)?
2. What is the difference in pupils’ ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity)?

## Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study

1. Pupils would not differ significantly in their ability to find main ideas when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).
2. Pupils would not differ significantly in their ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).

## Methodology

A quasi-experimental research design of pre-test and post-test non-equivalent control group was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of five thousand and ninety-four (5094) (2034 males and 3060 females) primary school pupils in public primary schools in the study area. A simple random sampling technique was used to select four (4) public primary schools of intact classes of fifty (50) in the study area. Purposively, four intact classes from the selected school were used for the selection, giving a total number of 200 (comprising 93 males and 107 females). A researcher-made instrument titled “Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT)” developed from the reading comprehension passage titled “The Computer” was used for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section “A” was designed to collect the respondent’s bio-data and section “B” contains 20 items. Items 1-10 tested pupils’ ability to main ideas in the passage; items 11 – 20 tested their ability to predict outcomes. To ensure content appropriateness, the instrument was face and content validated by five experts, two from the Department of Early Childhood Education, two in the Department of English and one from Test and Measurement in the Department of Educational Foundation, College of Education, Afaha Nsit. To test for internal stability of the instrument, a trial test was carried out on 30 respondents who were not part of the study but were drawn from the population under study. A reliability coefficient of .79 was obtained signifying that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was administered to the subjects (pupils) as pre-test and post-test as achievement test. Data obtained from research questions were answered using means and standard deviations while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). When the p value is less than 0.05 (P0.05) level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted.

## Presentation of Findings

**Research Questions 1:** What is the difference in pupils’ ability to find main ideas in a passage when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity)?

**Table 1:** Mean difference in pupils' ability to find main ideas from a passage before and after exposure to three instructional strategies.

Variables	Pretest		Posttest		Mean gain
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
<b>Experimental Group</b>					
Shared book experience	4.81	1.24	10.01	0.49	5.2
Repeated book reading	4.56	0.95	10.28	0.68	5.72
DLTA*	4.72	1.37	10.95	0.49	6.2
<b>Control Group</b>					
	4.74	1.37	6.69	1.04	1.95

\*DLTA = Directed Listening and Thinking Activity

Analysis in Table 1 showed that the post-test mean scores of pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience:  $x = 10.01$ ; repeated book reading:  $x = 10.28$ ; and directed listening and thinking activity:  $x = 10.95$ ) was greater than the post-test mean score of pupils in the control group ( $x = 6.69$ ). This implies that, pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity) performed better in their ability to find main ideas from a passage than those not exposed to any of the instructional strategies. The mean score for each instructional strategy was also higher than that of the control group. This confirmed that pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies performed better in their ability to find main ideas from a passage than those not exposed.

**Research Questions 2:** What is the difference in pupils' ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity)?

**Table 2:** Mean difference in pupils' ability to predict outcomes from a passage before and after exposure to three instructional strategies

Variables	Pretest		Posttest		Mean gain
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
<b>Experimental Group</b>					
Shared book experience	4.2	0.80	8.94	0.46	4.74
Repeated book reading	4.01	1.12	9.37	0.48	5.36
DLTA*	4.53	1.44	9.81	0.54	5.28
<b>Control Group</b>					
	4.46	1.37	5.62	0.98	1.16

\*DLTA = Directed Listening and Thinking Activity

Analysis in Table 2 showed that the post-test mean scores of pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience:  $x = 8.94$ ; repeated book reading:  $x = 9.37$ ; and directed listening and thinking activity:  $x = 9.81$ ) was greater than the post-test

mean score of pupils in the control group ( $x = 5.62$ ). This implies that, pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity) performed better in their ability to predict outcomes from a passage than those not exposed to any of the instructional strategies. The mean score for each instructional strategy was also higher than that of the control group. This confirmed that pupils' exposed to the three instructional strategies performed better in their ability to predict outcomes from a passage than those not exposed.

**Null Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis 1:** Pupils would not differ significantly in their ability to find main ideas when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).

**Table 3:** Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on difference in pupils ability to find main ideas when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	Compound F-ratio	p-value
Corrected model	213.69 <sup>a</sup>	2	106.85	9.581	.000*
Intercept	19.68	1	19.68	1.764	.005*
Pretest	17.83	1	17.83	1.599	.001*
Group	169.01	2	84.505	7.578	.000*
Error	2197.00	197	11.152		
Total	2410.69	200			
Corrected Total	2410.69	199			

\* Significant at .05 alpha level.

The results in Table 3 indicated that the pupils differ significantly in their ability to find main ideas when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity). This is because the calculated F-value of 7.578 in respect of the between group treatment is significant at .000 p value, which is less than .05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis one was rejected.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** Pupils would not differ significantly in their ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).

**Table 4:** Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on difference in pupils ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	Compound F-ratio	p-value
Corrected model	203.687	2	101.844	9.34	.000*
Intercept	18.147	1	18.147	1.664	.005*
Pretest	13.467	1	13.467	1.235	.001*
Group	146.159	2	73.079	6.701	.000*
Error	2148.505	197	10.906		
Total	2442.49	200			
Corrected Total	2352.192	199			

\* Significant at .05 alpha level.

Table 4 shows that the calculated F-value of 6.701 in respect of the between group treatment of the three instructional strategies was significant at .000 p-value. The p-value (.000) was significant because it was less than .05 alpha level at degrees of freedom of 2 and 200. This result indicates that the pupils differ significantly in their ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies. Hence, hypothesis two was rejected.

### Discussion of Findings

#### **Pupils Ability to find Main Ideas in a Passage When Exposed to the Three Instruction Strategies (Shared Book Experience, Repeated Book Reading and Directed Listening and Thinking Activity)**

The results in Table 1 showed that pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (Shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity) performed better in their ability to find main ideas from a passage than those not exposed to any of the instructional strategies. The mean score for each instructional strategy as shown in Table 1 was also higher than that of the control group. This confirmed that pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies performed better in their ability to find main ideas from a passage than those not exposed. The reason for the observed results might be that drills on the three instructional strategies were effective in helping the pupils to find main ideas from a passage. This indicated that the pupils were able to match a series of pictures with the passage or paragraphs they illustrate, match the picture that illustrate the main idea with a paragraph that it illustrated. The present finding is supported by Kuccan, Beek and Mckeoun [2002], who reported that the learner to show that he has comprehended what he has read in a passage, he should be able to at least relate or match the picture that illustrate a main idea

with a paragraph or passage that it illustrates. This ability is an indication that the reader has understood what was read, and that he has been able to get the main idea from the passage.

Further analysis with ANCOVA (Table 8) indicates that the pupils differ significantly in their ability to find main ideas when exposed to the three instructional strategies [Shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity]. The difference occurred in the sense that the post-test mean score for pupils in the Directed listening and thinking activity group was higher than those in other experimental groups. The possible explanation for this result might be that the Directed listening and thinking activity was more effective in assisting the pupils to develop the ability to find main ideas from a passage than other strategies.

### **Pupils Ability to Predict Outcomes When Exposed to the Three Instructional Strategies (Shared Book Experience, Repeated Book Reading and Directed Listening and Thinking Activity)**

Finding revealed that the pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (Shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity) performed better in their ability to predict outcomes from a passage than those not exposed to any of the instructional strategies. This result did not occur by chance. It was expected because predicting outcomes is telling what might possibly happen next in a story or passage read. It has to do with making inference or drawing conclusions based on the information provided by the author in a story or passage just read. Parker (2000) explained that the reader who has the ability to predict outcomes should be able to tell why things happened as they did in a story or passage, and perhaps make up endings for the stories orally or in writing. It requires that the reader should predict what will happen next after having listened to part of the story or account of an experience another pupil has had.

Analysis with inferential statistics (ANCOVA) indicated that there was significant difference in pupils' ability to predict outcomes when exposed to the three instructional strategies. The difference was evident based on the fact that pupils exposed to directed listening and thinking activity ( $x = 9.81$ ) and repeated book reading ( $x = 9.37$ ) had greater post-test mean scores when compared with the post test mean scores of pupils exposed to shared book experience ( $x = 8.94$ ). Directed listening and thinking activity and repeated book reading are advantageous in preparing pupils to develop ability to predict outcomes. With the use of directed listening and thinking activity strategy, pupils are engaged in a text that they could not otherwise read on their own. The pupils are prepared to listen to a story that is read by their teacher. By this strategy, the pupils are given specific information that they are to focus on as they listen. According to Morrow (2009), the teachers use this strategy in an attempt to build on knowledge that the pupils already know and apply it to new information and situations. The learners are provided with a framework to organize and recall information from story books. The directed reading and thinking activity is very effective because once the strategy is mastered, the pupils can become more advanced independent readers.

In a repeated book reading, a pupil reads the same text over and over again until the rate of reading has no errors (Parker, 2000). This strategy can be done individually or in a group setting. Morrow (2009) explains that children enjoy repetitions as it would help them to have firm grasps of the passage and hence is able to easily predict the expected outcomes.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the conclusion reached were that pupils exposed to the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity) performed better in their ability to find main ideas and predict outcomes in a reading comprehension passage. Thus, all instructional strategies could be applied by the teacher in these units of the subject. There was significant difference on pupils' ability to find main ideas and , predict outcomes using the three instructional strategies (shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity).

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should make use of repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity strategies in teaching reading comprehension because these strategies have been found to be useful in helping he pupils to develop abilities to find main ideas, predict outcomes, answer questions, comprehend sentences, make summaries, evaluate critically and follow directions.
2. The Ministry of Education should organize workshop for teachers of English Language to be trained on instructional strategies that will be useful in the teaching of reading comprehension. These strategies should include shared book experience, repeated book reading and directed listening and thinking activity.
3. For shared book experience strategy to be effectively utilized by the teachers, the publishers of Primary English readers should publish big books with fully coloured pictorial illustrations describing messages presented in comprehension passages.
4. The Federal Ministry of Education should recommend English textbooks that present comprehension passages suitable enough for use in the teaching of reading comprehension.

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