SCAFFOLDING STRATEGIES FOR GRADE 7 LEARNERS FOR HEIGHTENING THEIR ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract*:* Scaffolding is the support given to a learner by a facilitator of learning throughout the learning process. This support is specifically tailored to each learner; this instructional approach tends learners to experience student-centered learning, which tends to facilitate more efficient learning than teacher-centered learning.

The study targeted to validate the effectiveness of scaffolding strategies in heightening the zone of proximal development of Grade 7 learners. The scaffolding strategies cover different competencies under the major reading text prescribed in the Learning Material provided by the Department of Education (DepEd) for Grade 7 in K TO 12. It was conducted at Morong National High School during 2018-2019.

The research study utilized purposive sampling to identify the participants under the Grade 7 learners in Morong National High School. The result of the pretest serves as the equating factor. There was an increase in the performance of the group in the pretest and posttest in terms of the different strategies in English. The group gained additional knowledge and skills in the different lessons after using the scaffolding strategies. There was a significant difference in the performance of Grade 7 learners concerning the pretest and posttest.

In conclusion, the scaffolding strategies contributed to the performance of the learners in the different learning competencies with an increase. It was found out that the performance of the group was found to be significantly different before and after the exposure to scaffolding strategies. Also, scaffolding strategies are useful learning material in facilitating, improving, and a teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Grade 7, Scaffolding Strategies, Different competencies, Zone of Proximal Development, Learning material

Introduction

In the process of learning, teaching strategy is a great tool for better understanding and comprehension. The individual differences of learners and the advent of core-standards are indeed a challenge both to the teacher and learner. It is said that educators must support the use of a second language that leads to comprehension and eventually to comprehension in literature text. This may tend to focus on supportive instruction may be on grammar, vocabulary, and text modification.

This study was based on the observation on the Pretest result of Grade 7 learners concerning reading, it was notable in the said result of the Philippine Reading Inventory the (PhilIri) that learners hardly understand literary text due to certain factors in reading and comprehension, which is also noticeable in the reflected grades in English subject. This was shown that there are learners who are diagnosed as frustration readers or struggling readers who experienced difficulty in reading. It is because of speech and language difficulties and specific learning difficulties. The learners who are categorized as frustration readers have relatively low self-esteem and failure in analyzing text structures.

The teacher is the facilitator of learning can contribute much to the success of the target performance level. To improve students' reading comprehension teachers should cater to cognitive strategies in teaching. It is remarkable also to note the learning disability in reading comprehension which likely involves difficulty with processing as well as visual reasoning.

According to some notable observation the teacher's scaffolding is widely considered to be an essential element of effective teaching, and all teachers should come up with effective and innovative ways, methods, strategies, and instructional materials to achieve meaningful and competent instruction. It helps the students to become independent learners and self-regulating learners.

It is noted in the recent survey conducted by Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2019), administered every three years that is used to measure which countries are best preparing their students for the future. The Philippines has the largest percentage of low performers in reading among socio-economically

disadvantaged students, it is also showed low proficiency level respectively, in math, science, and reading text.

Concerning this, the Department of Education joined the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 as part of the Quality Basic Education Reform plan and move towards globalizing the Quality of Philippine Basic Education. The results manifest the degrading level of quality education in the country, hence the need for addressing issues and gaps in this situation must be quickly fixed but seemed that our educational system must recognize the urgency of addressing specific issues and gaps in attaining quality of basic education in the Philippines.

As a teacher of English, the researcher observes in almost all classes that learners have difficulty in reading as well as in comprehensions, such as language level, cultural background, and other issues in the contexts of the literature and its origin.

Those concerns in the literary appreciation challenge and motivate the researcher in making the learners appreciative of the literary texts they read. In this regard, the researcher aims to support the educational system with a learning material which can guide students in studying and understanding literary text independently.

The use of various forms of instructional scaffolding in teaching is a tool and often bridge learning gaps. It is an educational technique of delivering content gradually to support high-quality teaching and learning, these instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and ultimately greater independence in the learning process, when learners are given the support they need while learning something new, they stand better a better chance of using that knowledge independently.

One of the main targets of scaffolding is to reduce the negative emotions and self-perceptions that students may experience when they get frustrated, intimidated, or discouraged when attempting a difficult task without the assistance, direction, and guidance.

These were the rationale behind the researcher's decision to conduct this study to contribute to the enhancement of the learning process of the students.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored from two theories. First theory related to Scaffolding strategy is Bruner's theory of scaffolding, this emerged around 1976 as a part of social constructivist theory, and it was particularly influenced by the work of a famous Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. According to him, people learn best in a social environment, where they construct meaning through interaction.

Second is the Sociocultural theory. Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy in the educational system originates from Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). "The zone of proximal development is known as the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance" (Raymond, 2000, p.176).

Moreover, the study of Mahaguay (2020), findings of the study revealed that parents' contribution to their children's education has a consistent and positive effect on academic achievement and the self-concept.

The Zone of Proximal Development theory, it is where we can learn more in the presence of a knowledgeable another person, this became the template for Bruner's model. According to Bruner, he believed that when children start to learn new concepts and ideas, they need help from teachers and other adults in the form of active support and assistance. As they begin, they are dependent on their adult support, but as they become more independent in their thinking and acquire new skills and knowledge, by then the support can be gradually faded. In this form of structured, there was an impact interaction between the child and the adult is reminiscent of the scaffolding that supports the construction of a building. Teachers need to provide opportunities for the learner to constantly learn new things. Some of those may be highly complex and challenging and will require systematic support.

On the other hand, teachers need to be aware of the developmental state of each of the children in their care and should provide scaffolding that is appropriate to the learner.

The scaffolding teaching strategy caters individualized support based on learner's ZPD (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002).

According to sources, scaffolding instruction is a more knowledgeable other provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner's development. These scaffolds facilitate a student's ability to build on prior knowledge, process and internalize new information. The activities provided in scaffolding instruction are just beyond the level of what the learner can achieve alone (Olson & Pratt, 2000). It is said that the more capable other provides the scaffolds so that the learner can accomplish (with assistance) the tasks that he or she could otherwise not complete, thus it is a vital task of a

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teacher to help the learner through the ZPD (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

According to Vygotsky, he defined scaffolding instruction as the "role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to move next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). It is an important aspect of scaffolding instruction is that the scaffolds are temporary. As the learner's abilities increase, the scaffolding provided by the more knowledgeable other is progressively withdrawn and eventually improved.

The present study was related to two (2) theories stated, since the researcher will use Scaffolding strategy as instructional material that could stimulate the mind of the learner to think, and teach them to organize ideas. And through Scaffolding Strategy learner could learn better about new knowledge and information.

Methodology

The study utilized descriptive-experimental using pretest and posttest experimentation in evaluating the level of performance of learners using Scaffolding Strategies.

The first part of the study utilized a descriptive method to evaluate scaffolding strategies. Kowalczyk (2015) explained that a descriptive method of research is used to gather the exact and current information of the respondents and variables

The study also made use of the descriptive-developmental method of research utilizing the questionnaire checklist and used to assess changes in a given period time. According to Zulueta (2006), the descriptive design is a method that involves the description, recording, analysis and interpretation of conditions that exists and includes comparison and contrast of the variables.

Moreover, Rodriguez (2014) the main aim of descriptive research is to attain the objectives of the study which are to develop and validate instructional materials. Such research is intended to provide thorough descriptions, with of view of providing material and generating assumptions and targets for subsequent research.

Experimental research is the only type of research that visualizes the influence of the particular variable and it is the only type that can test hypotheses causes and effect relationship. According to Odle and Mayer (2009), experimental research is generally recognized as the most appropriate method for drawing causal conclusions about instructional interventions.

The study targeted to develop, validate, and utilize a scaffolding strategy for Grade 7 learners in Heightening their Zone of Proximal Development.

The scaffolding strategy covers the prescribed in the Learning Material provided by the Department of Education (DepEd) for Grade 7 in K to 12. This study was based from the observation on the Pretest result of Grade 7 learners concerning to reading, it was notable in the result of the Philippine Reading Inventory the (PhilIri) that students hardly understand literary text due to certain factors in reading and comprehension, which is also noticeable in the reflected grades in English subject. It is shown that there are learners who are diagnosed as frustration readers or struggling readers who experienced difficulty in reading. It is because of speech and language problems and specific learning difficulties. The learners who are classified as frustration readers have relatively low self-esteem and failure in analyzing text structures.

The design of the study was used of a descriptive- qualitative, one set of respondent utilized with a total of 133 students. The133 respondents came from Grade 7 learners. The selection of 63 respondents was based on the result of the pretest. However, to verify the standing of these 63 learners, the researcher has investigated their PHILIRI scores and their grades in Englis. The same set of learners was found out to be in the frustration category. To triangulate the initial findings, their grades in English were collected and discovered that they are the same students who earned low marks in English subject.

The Scaffolding teachers provide the learners with clear direction and confusion concerning the anticipated problems that students may encounter. Also, it develops step by step instructions and explains what a student must do to meet expectations. The teacher clarifies purpose which means it assists the students to realize the reason and the importance of doing a certain task.

The research study utilized purposive random technique to identify the group who shall be exposed to the Scaffolding strategies.

The developed Scaffolding strategies are based on the assigned lessons from the prescribed English module for Grade 7. It covered the period of the second and third quarter. Selected topics in the second and third quarter used scaffolding strategies and every strategy had its objectives and direction to serve as a guide to answer the Scaffolding strategy. Five (5) master teachers validated the acceptability of the developed Scaffolding strategy in English for Grade 7.

Body/Findings-

Based on the analysis ad interpretation of data gathered, the findings are summarized as follows:

1. On the Identification of Scaffolding Strategies in Teaching English

Table 1 presents the composite table of frequency percentage in the selection of Scaffolding Strategies in teaching English

Table 1
Composite Table of Frequency Percentage in the Selection of Scaffolding Strategies

Basic Scaffolding Strategies	f	%	Verbal Interpretation
Modeling- Vocabulary	8	80%	Always
Bridging- Predicting Outcome	8	80%	Always
Contextualization- Drawing Inferences	8	80%	Always
Schema Building- Sequencing of Events	7	70%	Always
Text Presentation- Analyzing Details	7	70%	Always
Developing Metacognition – Getting the Main Idea	7	70%	Always
Average Frequency Percentage	7.5	75%	Always

The selection of scaffolding strategies based on the result of the survey using questionnaire-checklist shows that the frequency and percentage distributions were higher in Modeling, Bridging, Contextualization, Schema Building, Text Representation,and Developing Metacognition. The selected scaffolding strategies were found applicable and useful.

2. On the Level of Performance of the Grade 7 Learners Before and After the Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies

Table 2
Level of Performance of the Grade 7 Learners Before and After the Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies

Competencies	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	Sd.	VI	Mean	Sd.	VI
Drawing inferences from the information that is implied or inferred	1.91	1.111	FS	4.62	1.457	S
Getting the main idea of a particular selection	2.09	1.164	FS	6.06	1.347	VS
Analyzing important details in a written text	3.44	1.397	FS	7.12	2.267	S
Predicting outcome based on the material read	1.82	1.167	FS	3.76	1.372	VS
Word recognition in determining meaning of unfamiliar words	1.53	1.212	FS	4.53	.861	VS
Sequencing series of events mentioned in the text	5.38	2.270	FS	14.32	2.332	VS
Total	16.18	3.537	FS	40.41	4.418	VS

Table 2 presents the level of performance of Grade 7 learners before and after the exposure of the scaffolding strategies as revealed by the pretest and posttest with respect to the different competencies.

There was an improvement on the performance of Grade 7 learners after the exposure to scaffolding strategies, from "Fairly Satisfactory in all competencies to "Satisfactory" in the two (2) competencies drawing inferences and analyzing details and Very Satisfactory in the four (4) competencies getting the main idea, predicting outcome, word recognition, and sequencing events.

3. On the Significant Difference on the Level of Performance of Grade 7 Learners Before and After the Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies

Table 3, on the following page shown the significant difference on the Level of Performance of Grade 7 Learners Before and After the Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies with respect to Drawing Inferences, Getting the Main Idea, Analyzing Details, Predicting Outcome, Word Recognition, and Sequencing Series of Events.

Table 3
Significant Difference on the Level of Performance of Grade 7 Learners Before and After the Exposure to Scaffolding Strategies

Competencies		Mean	Sd.	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig.	Hₒ	VI
Drawing inferences from the information that is implied or inferred	Before	1.91	1.111	2.706	8.524	33	.000	R	S
	After	4.62	1.457						
Getting the main idea of a particular selection	Before	2.09	1.164	3.971	13.944	33	.000	R	S
	After	6.06	1.347						
Analyzing important details in a written text	Before	3.44	1.397	3.676	8.095	33	.000	R	S
	After	7.12	2.267						
Predicting outcome base on the material read	Before	1.82	1.167	1.941	6.711	33	.000	R	S
	After	3.76	1.372						
Word recognition in determining meaning of unfamiliar words	Before	1.53	1.212	3.000	13.195	33	.000	R	S
	After	4.53	.861						
Sequencing series of events mentioned in the text	Before	5.38	2.270	8.941	17.124	33	.000	R	S
	After	14.32	2.332						
Total	Before	16.18	3.537	24.235	28.628	33	.000	R	S
	After	40.41	4.418						

There was a significant difference in the performance of Grade 7 learners with respect to the pretest and posttest since the p-values did not exceed the 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the

level of performance of Grade 7 learners before and after the exposure to scaffolding strategies, was rejected.

4. Teachers and Learners' Responses on How Scaffolding Strategies Facilitated Learning

Scaffolding teachers revealed that a scaffolding strategy is a tool in heightening the zone of proximal development of the learners as it provides support in the learning process. Despite the challenges in the learner's comprehension skills, the learning difficulty aided through the use of scaffolding strategies. These strategies can be improved for modification depending on the learner's need.

Most learners find strategies interesting and engaging. They mentioned that the material is a great help in their reading comprehension. Also, through the use of scaffolding strategies and reinforcement the level of their interest heighten and in the process their learning skills developed.

Conclusions- In light of the findings of the study, the foregoing conclusions are formulated:

1.The scaffolding strategies contributed to the performance of the learners in the different learning competencies with increase.

2. The performance of the group was found to be significantly different before and after the exposure to scaffolding strategies.

3. The scaffolding strategies are useful learning material in facilitating, improving, teaching-learning process

Recommendations- Based on the cited conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

In light of the conclusions mentioned, the following were recommended:

1. Teacher of English may use Scaffolding Strategies to enhance students' performance in reading. Besides, scaffolding strategies can be further improved and revised.
2. Teachers of English may utilize Scaffolding Strategies as additional instructional materials in teaching English for Grade 7 learners.
3. The school administrators may provide support and motivate teachers to use different scaffolding strategies to promote effective and life-long teaching and learning

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