The effectiveness of question-and-answer relationship as a remediation technique in improving reading comprehension of grade three pupils at Angono Elementary School for SY 2019-2020

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Abstract

This study aimed to present the effectiveness of QAR Technique, as a remediation tool in improving comprehension of grade three pupils of Angono Elementary School. The respondents of the study were forty-seven (47) grade three pupils who were found out to be non-readers in the conduct of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The study used the descriptive research design that utilized Question-Answer-Relationship (QAR) Technique in improving Reading Comprehension. This study used the Pre-Test and Post Test Reading materials from Phil-IRI. The result of such test was used to determine the reading performance of each pupil. The content of the pretest was the same with posttest in such a way that the reading skills were measured. Focus of the evaluation is more of the determination of pupils' comprehension level. The researcher employed the four phases of the Question-and-Answer Relationship namely: Phase 1: Introduction and Model QAR, Phase 2: Phase 2: Model QAR with Subcategories, Phase 3: QAR with Just Right Text, and Phase 4: QAR with Sample Reading Assessment. Action plan crafted based upon the result of the study and from the suggestions and recommendations drawn in the course of implementation. When it was permitted, the researcher personally administered the research instrument to the subject as well as the remediation. After the pretest/posttest, data were tabulated and processed. Appropriate statistical tools were applied. Data were analyzed and interpreted. Summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Keywords: Phil-IRI, question-answer-relationship, reading performance, reading comprehension level, non-readers

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1. Context and rationale

Teaching in the Third Grade is quite challenging in a sense it is where pupils are expected to be proficient readers. Moreover, it is a testing year. With the Department of Education's Testing Program coined as LAPG (Language Assessment for Primary Grades), expectations for the Grade 3 pupils brings a very challenging role for all teachers handling the level. If pupils are to pass a national assessment, it is an imperative that they have developed proficiency in reading, not only in word recognition but more so in comprehending the text or questions posted in the assessment.

Reading comprehension is the ability of readers to get meaning from text. How does this happen? By asking adult good readers to think aloud as they read, researchers have determined that these readers actively coordinate a number of conscious processes before, during, and after reading (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Good readers are aware of how their reading is going and why. They know, for example, when a text is difficult to read because it contains many new ideas and when it is difficult to read because it is poorly written. They are adept at using their prior knowledge as they read to make predictions about what might happen next and to understand ideas as they encounter them (Moore 1998). Reading is a highly strategic process during which readers are constantly constructing meaning using a variety of strategies, such as activating background knowledge, monitoring and clarifying, making predictions, drawing inferences, asking questions and summarizing. Strategies are used in combination to solve problems, to think about text and to check understanding.

Consequently, teaching comprehension strategies should focus on thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000), problem solving and monitoring understanding. "Being strategic is not a skill that can be taught by drill; it is a method of approaching reading and reading instruction. Much more is required than knowing a strategy; becoming strategic calls for coordinating individual strategies. This coordinating involves altering, adjusting, modifying, testing, and shifting tactics as is fitting, until a reading comprehension problem is solved" (Trabasso &Bouchard, 2002, p. 186). While, Chou et al. (2012) used a balanced reading instructions to promote reading comprehension in young children. Importantly, reading strategically is higher order thinking. Binoya (2021) also incorporated the Phil-IRI assessment and academic performance of the Grade 5 pupils in the two language subjects- English and Filipino with positive findings. It involves transforming information and ideas. For example, summarizing requires evaluating and synthesizing information; making predictions involves combining facts and ideas and making inferences to formulate a type of hypothesis; making connections necessitates making generalizing; and clarifying require identifying problems and developing solutions. Some also used the ABRC modules to increase the reading comprehension of Grade 5 students (De Belen, 2021).

In a recent conduct of the Phil-IRI for my Grade 3 class, I have found out that all have the ability to recognize and read the words; but sadly, all forty-seven (47) pupils find the difficulty in answering comprehension questions. These findings caused confusion and frustration on my part. How could this happen? How could my pupils, who displayed growth and proficiency in word recognition failed to answer the comprehension questions? The following week, I asked the feedback from my pupils, and some of them responded that the questions were too hard in a sense that answer is not found in the reading material. Then I realized the problem. It wasn't the reading material that my pupils were having difficulty understanding. It was the questions. Thus, I realized I need to teach strategies for navigating the questions, not the text. I need to provide a tool that would support their literary development and help them answer reading comprehension questions even in standardized test.

2. Innovation, intervention and strategy

The QAR Strategy

Question-Answer Relationship is one strategy many teachers already use to help readers locate information in order to answer comprehension questions. QAR Taxonomy, first described by Pearson and Johnson (1978) and further developed by Raphael and Pearson (1985), is a method used to improve reading comprehension by identifying questions according to their relationship to two primary sources of information: the reading material and the reader's background. Using the QAR Strategy, students are able to understand the question type, and that correlates with knowing how find the information to answer the question.

Raphael (1986) categorized QAR questions according to where the answers can be found. In the book questions are literal because the answer is contained in the text. In my Head questions are inferential because the answer requires information not contained in the text. There are four types of question-answer relationship:

Right There: The answer can be found in one place in the text

Think and Search: The answer can be found in a few places in the text

Author and you. The answer cannot be found in the text. The reader must use information in the text and find the answer in their head.

On my own: The answer cannot be found in the text. The answer is developed from the reader's background knowledge.

Teaching in the third-grade level creates a heightened level of pressure for teachers. One must reflect on his instructional practices and make adjustments to increase achievement on reading assessments.

The QAR method of categorizing questions according to their answer source can improve pupils' comprehension and can also help them in improving test scores (Cummins et al., 2012). In the QAR Framework, pupils analyze the questions answer relationship while becoming more aware of their metacognition strategies as a step toward better reading comprehension (Raphael & Pearson, 1985). QAR is a valuable, well-known strategy that can be used to transport pupils to higher levels of literacy and prepare them for high-stakes testing while still focusing on high-level thinking skills.
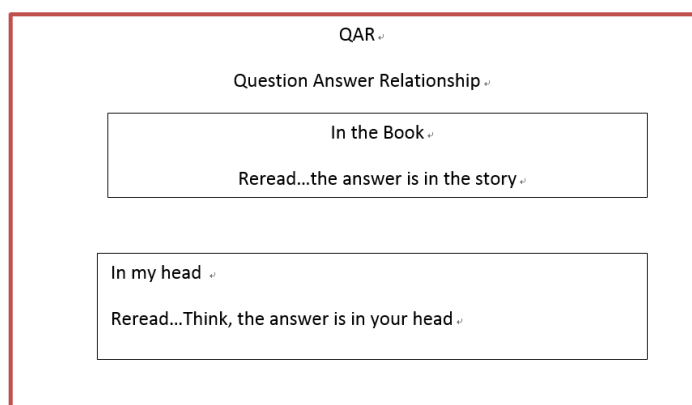
Procedures

In my third-grade class, disappointing Phil-IRI results prompted me to find a strategy I could teach my pupils in a few weeks that would support them in answering reading comprehension questions. My plan was the implementation of an eight-week whole-class intervention using QAR to increase comprehension of text and to help pupils effectively answer questions about the text they read. Each phase consisted of 5 lessons that took place daily during English class. My goal was to increase scores in a reading comprehension test.

2.1 Phase 1: Introduction and Model QAR

First, I introduced the concept of QAR in a mini lesson. I made it clear to pupils that we would be using the strategy to help answer questions on the post Phil-IRI reading test. I explained that answer to reading comprehension questions can be found in two places: in the text and in the reader's mind. I used the QAR anchor chart to initially introduce only the two main categories of QAR. Raphael (1986) suggests introducing the subcategories in the QAR only after the pupils have clear picture of the difference between the categories *In the Book and In my head*. Then, to model QAR, I used the story Learning and Playing. As we read through the test, I periodically stopped, asked questions, and modelled my thinking using the QAR vocabulary as I classified each question.

Initial Question - Answer Relationship Anchor Chart

QAR

Question Answer Relationship

In the Book

Reread...the answer is in the story

In my head

Reread...Think, the answer is in your head

2.2 Phase 2: Model QAR with Subcategories

Next, I included instruction in all four categories of QAR to complete the anchor chart. First, I explained the two categories of *in the Book questions*: Right There and Think and Search. Next, I explained the two categories of *in my Head Questions*: Author and Your and On my Own. Then I modeled creating and answering questions while revisiting Learning and Playing. During the initial step in this phase, I focused on Right There and Think and Search questions, then continued with explicit instruction on author and question.

QAR CHART

In the BOOK	
Right There (RT)	Think and Search
In my Head	
Author and Me (AM)	On my Own (OMO)

2.3 Phase 3: QAR with Just Right Text

Once my pupils began to effectively use QAR during our shared reading time, my next step was for them to begin to use the skill on their own, I created a simple graphic organizer they could see during independent reading time to help prompt questioning. Once again, I used my mini lesson and a shared reading text to model how I would complete the graphic organizer with QAR questions both during and after reading. I also began to include the use of QAR during my individual reading conferences and guided reading groups, and I used the information I gathered to analyze my pupils' independence with the strategy.

At the end of the phase, pupils were able to create and answer *In the Book* and *In My Head* questions in their notebook based on the text that I gave. They shared their questions as whole class in pairs. I was amazed at the expertise they displayed, not only in using QAR to create meaningful questions but also in how comfortable and competent they became in using the vocabulary while discussing their peer's questions as well as their own.

2.4 Phase 4: QAR with Sample Reading Assessment

The final phase of this intervention was to use the QAR to classify the questions on standardized reading test. I modeled how to classify the questions using QAR. I shared my thought process involved in classifying a question and then where I would find the answer based on my classification. After I decided a question was an In the Book question, I labeled it RT (for Right There) or T&S (for think and Search). Then, I modeled finding the

answer in the text, underlining the answer, reading the question and reading the answer choices to determine the best answer. I labeled the *In my Head* question as A & Y (Author and Your), then modeled rereading a section in the text that helped me think of the answer, rereading the question, and reading the answer choices to determine the best answer.

2.5 Action Research Questions

➢ What is the comprehension level of Grade 3 pupils in the Pre-test Administration of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory?

➢ Is there a significant difference on the reading level result of the Phil-IRI Pretest and post-test administration in terms of comprehension?

➢ Is the implementation of the Question-and-Answer Relationship Technique effective as a remediation tool in improving reading comprehension among Grade 3 pupils?

3. Action Research Methods

The descriptive evaluative research design was used to achieve the objectives of finding the effectiveness of the Question Answer Relationship as a remediation tool in improving reading comprehension. Padua (2000), revealed that descriptive method focuses at the present condition of person, events, or class and may involve induction, analysis, classification and analysis. Descriptive Method is considered appropriate for the study because the problem calls for the collection of data necessary in making description on how effective the use QAR technique in improving comprehension.

3.1 Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

The study made use of the Phil-IRI Pretest result and the Post –Test result of the Grade Three Chico pupils after the implementation of an- eight-week remediation program using the QAR Technique. In order to determine the comprehension level of the pupils, the researcher used the following:

Score	Reading Comprehension Level
4-5	Independent
3	Instructional
2 and below	Frustration

3.2 Data Gathering Methods

The study was conducted during the 2nd Quarter of the school year 2018-2019 at Angono Elementary School, Angono, Rizal. A permission to conduct the study was sought from the proper authorities. Upon approval, the researcher used the Question-and-Answer Relationship as remediation tool to improve comprehension for a period of eight weeks. The program has four phases with sixteen (16) stories in general. Appropriate statistical tools were used in order to compare the scores from the pretest and posttest and to further determine the effectiveness of the program.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model of the study was based on Coomb's model, the input, process and the output. The first frame which is the input contains Question and Answer Technique (Module/guide), Results of both the Phil IRI Pre-test and Post-test. The second frame refers to the process consist of the pretest, the remediation, post-test, analysis and graphical presentation of the data. The third frame indicates the output of the study which is the improved reading skills in English using Question and Answer Relationship Technique, action plan and recommendation. The line from the output frame connecting both process and input present feedback. This

means that the strategy is a continual process which does not stop after the output was achieved.
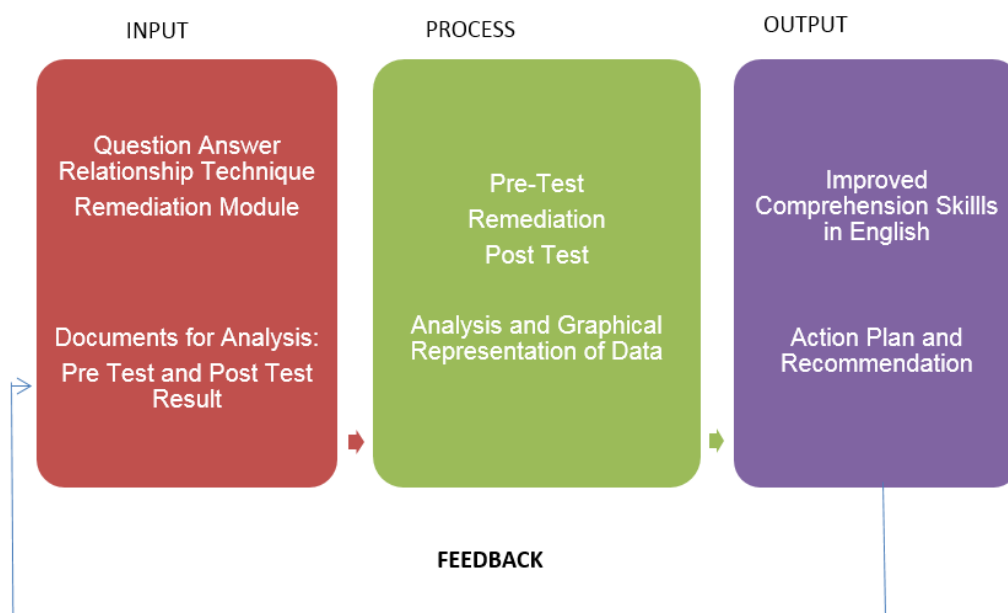
Conceptual Model of the Study

Figure 1. Effectiveness of question and answer relationship as a remediation tool in improving reading comprehension skills.

4. Discussion of Results and Reflection

The study determined the significant difference of the Phil-IRI pretest and post-test and also the effectiveness of Question-and-Answer Relationship Technique as a remediation tool to improve reading comprehension.

Table 1

Comparative table of the pre-test and post-test result

	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Reading Level	No. of Pupils	Percentage	No. of Pupils	Percentage
Independent	0	0%	21	44.68%
Instructional	0	0%	18	38.30%
Frustration	47	100%	8	17.02%
Total No. of Pupils	47	100%	47	100%

Table 2

Significant difference on the reading comprehension level in the Phil-IRI pretest and posttest administration

	N	df	M	SD	ss	T-value	Level of Significance	Interpretation
Pretest	47	46	1.23	0.18	8.43			
Posttest	47	46	3.55	1.17	53.62	-13.69	.00001	Significant

Interpretation - An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the reading level in pretest and posttest scores of Grade 3 pupils. There was a significant difference in the scores for pretest (M=1.23) and posttest (M=3.55) with t value=13.69 and p-value = (greater than) .00001. None of the Grade 3 Chico pupils are independent and Instructional readers in the pretest. Forty-seven (47=100%) of the class is on the frustration

level. During the posttest Administration, (21=44.68%) of the class are independent readers, (18= 38.30%) are Instructional readers and only (8=17.02%) of the class are in the frustration level. The results suggest that the QAR strategy employed in carrying out the lesson was effective.

There was a significant difference in the scores for pretest (Independent and Post Test Administration. The reflected t- value of − 13.6902 and p-value of < .00001 at p<.05 indicates that there is significant difference between the reading comprehension level in the Pre-Test and Post-Test result. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It further indicates that the use of Question-and-Answer Relationship Technique as a reading intervention in effective.

Reflections - Upon reflections, I think my pupils who fall under the frustration level, did not benefit from this intervention for many reasons. All were reading below grade level and probably had great difficulty reading the third-grade leveled selections. Also, they were still developing their word solving strategies, which prevented them from being able to develop their thinking at higher levels. Those pupils who fall under the Instructional and Independent level through the Question-and-Answer Relationship technique developed the ability to navigate and interact with the reading material, enabling them to answer the questions easily.

In conclusion, it is imperative that teachers not only focus on skills to further literacy development but also provide for pupils as they navigate the reading materials and questions, QAR instruction, when used effectively in the context of high-quality literacy instruction, can give students another tool in their reader's toolbox. The QAR strategy can advance comprehension and achievement as well.

Recommendations

➢ Thorough training of teachers in using the QAR Strategy should be planned to effectively execute and gain maximum benefits from it.

➢ It is recommended that the strategy be used and implemented in all grade levels.

➢ An in- depth research similar to the project must be made in order to meet the demands and challenges of the present time.

Action Plan

AREA CONCERN	OBJECTIVES	KEY STRATEGIES	TIME FRAME	PERSONS INVOLVED	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Pupils Development	To improve the performance level of grade three learners	Remedial Classes in Reading	August to October	Pupils Teachers Parents	Readers with comprehension
Teachers Development	Train teachers in teaching the QAR	SLAC	June - March	Teachers Principal MT's	100% participation and commitment
Curriculum Development	To enhance and to uplift for the 21st century learners and skills	SLAC	June - March	Teachers Principal MT's	Zero frustration reading levels

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