



Reading Competencies of Senior High School Students and Teaching Strategies in the City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas

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Abstract

Reading is a lifelong skill that strengthens memory, expands vocabulary, builds a strong knowledge foundation, and enriches one's understanding of life. Through effective reading instruction, students are not only taught how to read but also how to identify key ideas, comprehend texts, make inferences, and interpret meaning across different subject areas. In this context, the study aimed to determine the relationship between the reading competencies of Senior High School students and the teaching strategies employed in the City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas.

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered from 81 Senior High School English teachers through a stratified sampling technique. A researcher-made questionnaire and interview guide were used to assess students' reading competencies, the extent of utilization of teaching strategies, and the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, composite mean, weighted mean, Pearson's *r*, and ranking were used for data analysis.

The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' level of reading competencies and the teaching strategies employed by teachers with a *p*-value of 0.4076, indicating that instructional approaches have a meaningful influence on students' reading performance. The study further emphasized the importance of guided teaching strategies and sustainable classroom activities in strengthening reading competencies, as well as the need for continuous professional development among teachers.

In terms of students' reading competencies, results showed that critical text analysis was at an above average level, with an overall mean of 2.82. This indicates that students are generally capable of identifying key ideas, evaluating information, recognizing biases, and relating textual insights to real-life situations. Similarly, literary comprehension also obtained an above average level with a mean of 2.94, showing that students can generally understand texts and identify characters within reading materials. Moreover, literary appreciation recorded an above average rating with a mean of 2.92, suggesting that students are able to understand and appreciate literary works and establish meaningful connections with the texts.

With regard to teaching strategies, the findings revealed that teachers utilized various strategies to a moderate extent, including translation tasks (mean = 3.42) and the use of technology (mean = 3.31). These strategies were found to support students' comprehension, vocabulary development, engagement, and critical thinking skills. Meanwhile, task-based instruction was implemented to a great extent (mean = 3.52), indicating that teachers frequently engaged students in active participation rather than passive listening.

However, teachers also encountered several challenges in teaching reading, including student-related factors, family and personal problems, time limitations, limited resources, socio-emotional factors, and lack of training. In response to these challenges and to further enhance students' above-average reading performance, sustainable instructional activities such as dialogue drama, theme exploration, figurative language identification, and digitalized learning activities were proposed.

The study concluded that teaching strategies play an important role in improving students' reading competencies. It highlighted the need for effective instructional practices, continuous teacher training, and the use of engaging classroom activities to further enhance students' reading skills.

Keywords: *reading, teaching strategies, reading instruction, proposed activities, reading competencies*



Introduction

This study examined the relationship between reading competencies and teaching strategies among Senior High School students in the City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas during the school year 2025-2026. Reading is an important skill that helps students understand, interpret, and evaluate texts, but many still struggle with deeper comprehension such as analysis and critical thinking.

In response to these challenges, the study focused on how teachers' strategies affect students' reading skills. It looked at different approaches such as translation tasks, task-based instruction, and the use of technology. The study aimed to determine if these strategies are related to students' reading performance and to identify ways to improve reading instruction.

The research was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the level of reading competencies the students as assessed by the teacher-respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 critical text analysis;
 - 1.2 literary comprehension; and
 - 1.3 literary appreciation?
2. To what extent is the utilization of teaching strategies as assessed by the respondents relative to:
 - 2.1 translation tasks;
 - 2.2 task-based instruction; and
 - 2.3 use of technology?
3. Is there any significant relationship in the assessments on the level of reading competencies of the students and on the extent of the utilization of teaching strategies?
4. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching reading?
5. Based on the analysis of the study, what sustainable activities may be proposed?

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a **descriptive-correlational research design**. The design aimed to assess the relationship of students' level of reading competencies and utilization of teaching strategies in City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas. According to Creswell (2021), descriptive-correlational research design is used to describe variables and determine the relationship between them without manipulating any factors, focusing only on the degree of association rather than cause-and-effect.

Participants

The participants were 81 selected Senior High School English teachers from public and private schools in the City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas. A stratified random



sampling technique with proportional allocation was used to ensure representation from each school. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire and interview guide were designed and validated by experts. The tools measured:

- Students' reading competencies (critical-text analysis, literary comprehension, and literary appreciation)
- Extent of teaching strategy utilization (translation tasks, task-based instruction, and use of technology)
- Challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading
- Supporting qualitative insights from interviews

A combination of **Likert-scale**, and **open-ended** questions were used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

Data Collection Procedure

Approval was first secured from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) of the City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas through a formal request letter and research proposal. Upon approval, permission was obtained from school principals, and questionnaires were distributed to selected teacher-respondents. Informed consent was secured before data collection, ensuring participants were aware of the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time. The research protocol was also reviewed and approved by the appropriate ethics committee, and all data were handled in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used:

- **Cronbach's Alpha** – to determine the reliability of the questionnaire
- **Frequency and Percentage** – to describe distribution of responses and performance levels
- **Weighted Mean** – to analyze Likert-scale responses
- **Composite Mean** – to determine overall results across variables
- **Ranking** – to compare responses based on importance or frequency
- **Pearson's r** – to determine the relationship between reading competencies and teaching strategies
- **Thematic Code Analysis** – to analyze interview data and identify common themes on challenges in teaching reading.

Results

Table 1: Level of Students' Reading Competencies on Critical Text Analysis

<i>Senior High School students...</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. are able to identify the main idea and supporting details in complex texts.	2.85	AA	3
2. are able to distinguish fact from opinion within academic and literary texts.	3.06	AA	1
3. can analyze the author's purpose, tone, and perspective.	2.76	AA	7
4. are able to evaluate the credibility and reliability of sources used in texts.	2.83	AA	5
5. can interpret figurative language, symbolism, and literary devices.	2.70	AA	10
6. can understand what they read and make logical conclusions.	2.71	AA	9
7. can compare and contrast themes, arguments, or viewpoints across texts.	2.75	AA	8
8. are able to recognize biases, assumptions, and judgements in written materials.	2.84	AA	4
9. can take information from different texts and form a clear explanation.	2.80	AA	6
10. uses critical reading to think about real-life and social issues	2.92	AA	2
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.82	AA	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=**High**, 2.50-3.49=**Above-Average**, 1.50-2.49=**Below Average**, 1.00-1.49=**Low**

Students showed an above-average level of critical text analysis (overall mean = 2.82), indicating that they can identify key ideas, evaluate information, recognize biases, and relate texts to real-life situations. The highest skill was identifying fact from opinion (mean = 3.06), showing strong ability to distinguish objective information from opinions. However, the lowest was interpreting figurative language and literary devices (mean = 2.70), suggesting this skill still needs improvement. Overall, the results show that while students have satisfactory critical reading skills, further enhancement—especially in literary devices—is still needed through effective teaching strategies.

Table 2: Level of Reading Competencies of Students on Literary Comprehension

<i>Senior High School students</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. are able to identify the identify the main characters and setting of the story.	3.40	AA	1
2. can summarize the plot of a story accurately.	3.11	AA	3
3. are able to understand the author's message or theme in a text.	2.99	AA	4
4. can make connections between the text and real-life situations.	3.15	AA	2
5. can identify symbolism or figurative language in a text.	2.81	AA	6
6. can analyze the author's use of language and tone.	2.81	AA	6
7. can identify biases or stereotypes in a text.	2.75	AA	9
8. can make judgements about the credibility of a text.	2.72	AA	10
9. can appreciate the literary qualities of a text, such as its themes or character	2.87	AA	5
10. can evaluate the effectiveness of the author's writing style.	2.78	AA	8
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.94	AA	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=**High**, 2.50-3.49=**Above-Average**, 1.50-2.49=**Below Average**, 1.00-1.49 =**Low**

Students demonstrated an above-average level of literary comprehension (overall mean = 2.94), meaning they can generally understand texts and identify key elements. The highest skill was identifying main characters and setting (mean = 3.40), showing that students are strong in recognizing basic story elements like characters, setting, and events. However, the lowest skill was judging text credibility (mean = 2.72), indicating difficulty in evaluating whether information is reliable or biased. Overall, the findings suggest that while students are good at understanding basic story structure, they still need improvement in higher-order critical reading skills such as evaluating and analyzing texts.

Table 3: Level of Reading Competencies of Students on Literary Appreciation

<i>Senior High School students...</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. show enjoyment and interest when reading different literary works.	2.88	AA	6
2. can appreciate the beauty of language and style used by authors.	2.80	AA	9
3. are able to relate literary themes to their personal experiences.	3.11	AA	1
4. can recognize the cultural and historical value of literary texts.	2.83	AA	8
5. show respect for different genres and traditions in literature.	3.09	AA	3
6. can express their emotions and ideas after reading literary works such as stories, articles, fictions and nonfictions.	3.10	AA	2
7. are able to appreciate the creativity and originality of authors.	2.95	AA	4
8. can connect literature to social and civic issues.	2.86	AA	7
9. show openness to different perspectives and interpretations of texts.	2.94	AA	5
10. continue to enjoy reading literature even outside of school.	2.65	AA	10
COMPOSITE MEAN	2.92	AA	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=**High**, 2.50-3.49=**Above-Average**, 1.50-2.49=**Below Average**, 1.00-1.49 =**Low**

Students demonstrated an above-average level of literary appreciation with an overall mean of 2.92, meaning they can be able to understand and appreciate literary works and establish meaningful connections with the texts. The highest skill was able to relate literary themes to their personal experiences with a mean of 3.40. However, the lowest skill was the students continue to

enjoy reading literature even outside the school, indicating that students were not consistently read any reading materials for daily basis. Overall, the finding suggests that although the students possessed above average-level of reading competencies in literary appreciation, the willingness to read for leisure and personal reasons to sustain the progress of students' reading competencies.

Extent of Utilization of Teaching Strategies

Table 4: Extent of Utilization of Teaching Strategies on Translation Tasks

<i>As a teacher, I...</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. use my students' first language to explain unfamiliar words found in reading materials.	3.38	ME	5
2. translate selected parts of a text to help students understand the main ideas.	3.53	ME	2
3. switch between English and the students' first language when explaining reading lessons.	3.45	ME	4
4. explain the message of a text in the students' first language rather than translating it word for word.	3.35	ME	9
5. give translated word meanings through vocabulary lists, notes, or other reading supports.	3.37	ME	7
6. let students translate short parts of a text to see if they understand what they have read.	3.38	ME	5
7. use translation to assist students who have difficulty understanding reading passages.	3.31	ME	10
8. promote independent reading by slowly reducing the use of translation.	3.36	ME	8
9. allow students to work with peers to translate and discuss reading texts.	3.60	GE	1
10. use strategies such as direct translation, code-switching, paraphrasing, and vocabulary translation to help achieve the objectives of my reading lessons.	3.50	GE	3
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.42	ME	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=*Great Extent*, 2.50-3.49=*Moderate Extent*, 1.50-2.49=*Slight Extent*, 1.00-1.49=*Least Extent*

The results show that the highest-ranked indicator was allowing students to work with peers in translating and discussing texts (mean = 3.60), indicating that collaborative translation activities help improve understanding and engagement. On the other hand, using translation to assist students in understanding difficult passages had the lowest mean of 3.31, though still at a moderate level. Overall, the findings (overall mean = 3.42) show that translation tasks are a useful strategy in improving students' comprehension, vocabulary, and appreciation of texts, especially when combined with group work and guided instruction.

Table 5: Teaching Strategies in terms of Task-Based Instruction

<i>As a teacher, I...</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. apply task-based instruction in my reading lessons to help students learn through meaningful tasks.	3.48	ME	6
2. explain the purpose of each reading task to students before starting the activity.	3.67	GE	1
3. use information-gap tasks where students share missing details from the text to complete an activity.	3.34	ME	10
4. use reasoning-gap tasks where students draw conclusions or infer ideas from a reading passage.	3.46	ME	8

5. use opinion-gap tasks where students share personal ideas or responses about a text.	3.48	ME	6
6. use problem-solving or creative tasks to let students apply what they read to real-life situations.	3.52	GE	5
7. design tasks that require students to work in pairs or groups to complete reading activities.	3.59	GE	3
8. guide students to organize, list, match, or sequence information from the text as part of reading tasks.	3.46	ME	8
9. provide support and feedback to students while performing reading tasks to help them achieve learning objectives.	3.63	GE	2
10. use task-based strategies to help students understand the text and meet the goals of my reading lessons.	3.55	GE	4
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.52	GE	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=*Great Extent*, 2.50-3.49=*Moderate Extent*, 1.50-2.49=*Slight Extent*, 1.00-1.49=*Least Extent*

The results show that the highest-rated indicator was explaining the purpose of each reading task before starting (mean = 3.67), indicating that clear instructions help students understand what to do. The lowest-rated indicator was encouraging independent reading with reduced guidance and using the first language when needed (mean = 3.34), though still at a high level. Overall, the findings (overall mean = 3.52) show that task-based instruction is widely used and effective in making learning more active. It helps students participate in meaningful tasks, improve comprehension, and develop critical thinking through guided and collaborative activities.

Table 6
Extent of Utilization of Teaching Strategies on Technology

<i>As a teacher, I...</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. use technology to support students' understanding of reading texts.	3.62	GE	1
2. explain to students how online platforms, such as Google Classroom, Padlet, or Edmodo, can support their learning.	3.21	ME	7
3. use digital books or e-texts in my reading lessons.	3.15	ME	9
4. use online quizzes and educational games, like Kahoot!, Quizizz, or Quizlet, to practice vocabulary and comprehension.	2.89	ME	10
5. use videos, audio recordings, slides, or other multimedia tools to make reading lessons more engaging.	3.53	GE	2
6. use online platforms where students can interact, discuss, or work together.	3.19	ME	8
7. plan reading tasks that students can complete individually or in groups using technology.	3.38	ME	4
8. guide students in using online tools for storytelling, research, or analyzing texts.	3.35	ME	6
9. check and give feedback while students use technology to complete reading activities.	3.37	ME	5
10. use technology to help students reach the learning goals of my reading lessons.	3.45	ME	3
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.31	ME	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=*Great Extent*, 2.50-3.49=*Moderate Extent*, 1.50-2.49=*Slight Extent*, 1.00-1.49=*Least Extent*

The results show that the highest-rated indicator was the use of technology to support students' understanding of reading texts (mean = 3.62), indicating that digital tools such as multimedia resources, online dictionaries, and interactive platforms help improve comprehension

and engagement. Students also tend to be more interested when lessons include visual and interactive materials. However, the lowest indicator was the use of educational games or quizzes like Kahoot! and Quizizz (mean = 2.89), suggesting that gamified tools are not regularly used in reading instruction and are often limited to assessment purposes only. Overall, the mean of 3.31 (moderate extent) shows that technology is used in teaching reading but not yet fully maximized. This means that while digital tools can improve understanding and engagement, their effectiveness depends on consistent use, proper planning, and adequate teacher support.

Table 7: Challenges that Teachers Encountered in Teaching Reading

<i>As a teacher, I...</i>	WM	VI	RANK
1. struggle to complete reading lessons because some students cannot decode words accurately	3.24	A	7
2. find it challenging when students have difficulty understanding the meaning of the texts I assign.	3.28	A	4
3. find it difficult to teach reading because some students read faster while others read very slowly.	3.19	A	8
4. struggle to design activities that meet the needs of students with different learning styles in reading.	3.09	A	10
5. face challenges when students lack confidence and refuse to read aloud in class.	3.25	A	6
6. find it difficult to help students whose family or personal problems affect their reading progress.	3.56	SA	1
7. struggle to finish reading lessons because class periods are too short.	3.14	A	9
8. find it challenging to provide individual support to struggling readers within the available time.	3.33	A	2
9. find it difficult to teach reading when there are not enough books or worksheets appropriate for students' levels.	3.31	A	3
10. struggle to engage students in reading activities when digital tools or online resources are unavailable.	3.28	A	4
COMPOSITE MEAN	3.26	AGREE	

Legend: 3.50-4.00=**Strongly Agree**, 2.50-3.49=**Agree**, 1.50-2.49=**Strongly Disagree**, 1.00-1.49 = **Disagree**

Teachers reported that their main challenge was supporting students affected by personal and family problems (mean = 3.26), which impacts students' focus and motivation in reading. On the other hand, the least challenge was addressing different learning styles (mean = 3.09), although it still requires extra time and effort. Overall, the results show that teaching reading is affected by both emotional factors and diverse learner needs, highlighting the importance of providing both academic and emotional support to students.

Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis that the teaching strategies utilized can significantly enhance the Senior High School students' level of reading competencies. This is consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the teaching strategies utilization with consistency, alignment of learning goals, and responsiveness to students' needs are effective to sustain and enhance their reading competencies and abilities (Villanueva, 2021).



The identified challenges such as difficulty to help students with personal and family problems, problems in providing individual support to struggling readers and difficulty to teach due to lack of materials, time constraints, decoding unfamiliar words, and lack of professional training of teachers encourage the need for activities that are not only accessible but also tailored to the needs of students. The sustainable activities proposed to be a solution, particularly in providing an engaging and effective approach to support students' reading skills and addressing their learning needs.

Finally, the study proposed sustainable activities to sustain the above-average level of reading competencies of Senior High School students. These include the Figurative Language Quest, Detective Duo, Theme Explorer, Storyboard Showdown, and Dialogue Drama—in English instruction as these are designed to make literature learning more interactive, meaningful, and student-centered. These activities guide learners to actively engage with texts by analyzing figurative language, examining characters and story elements, identifying themes, and interpreting dialogues through creative performance and visual representation.

Conclusion

Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The Senior High School students in City Schools Divisions of Tanauan and Sto. Tomas possesses an above average level of reading competencies in terms of critical-text analysis, literary comprehension and literary appreciation in reading texts especially literary pieces.
2. The teachers used different teaching strategies—such as translation tasks, technology utilization in moderate extent, while task-based instruction in great extent.
3. There was a significant relationship between the level of reading competencies and teaching strategies utilized by the teachers.
4. Teachers encountered different challenges in teaching reading such as difficulty to help students with personal and family problems, problems in providing individual support to struggling readers and difficulty to teach due to lack of materials, time constraints, decoding unfamiliar words, and lack of professional training of teachers.
5. The researcher provided different sustainable activities which included Figurative Language Quest, Detective Duo, Theme Explorer, Storyboard Showdown, and Dialogue Drama that aim to sustain students' reading competencies through interactive and collaborative learning. These provided an engaging and effective approach to support students' reading skills and address their learning needs.

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