

From Strategy Explanation to Independent Application: A Document Analysis of a Grade 3 Reading-Comprehension Module

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Abstract

This study examined the instructional design of Increasing Reading Power 3, a 102-page self-learning resource containing ten Grade 3 reading-comprehension modules. A structured document analysis coded each module for curriculum alignment, strategy explanation, vocabulary and background support, guided and independent practice, formative feedback, transfer tasks, accessibility, and editorial quality. All ten modules included explicit objectives, a brief comprehension-strategy explanation, activation of prior knowledge, vocabulary preparation, a reading selection, learner reflection, three stages of practice, an answer key, and an open-ended application task. The skill sequence covered noting details, sequencing, main idea, cause and effect, prediction, conclusion, inference, comparison, fact and opinion, and fantasy and reality. These competencies substantially correspond to the Philippine Grade 3 English curriculum and progress from text retrieval toward inferential and critical classification. Strengths included a predictable learner-friendly routine, contextualized stories, graphic organizers, self-monitoring prompts, and frequent written transfer. Limitations included the absence of readability evidence, expert validation, classroom field testing, rubrics for open responses, differentiated or accessible alternatives, and action-oriented feedback. Recurrent mechanical and labeling errors and inconsistent selection-level attribution also require correction. The module is best viewed as a promising instructional-design case, not evidence of effectiveness. A revised edition should undergo professional copyediting, copyright and source verification, expert review, readability

assessment, accessibility revision, and pilot testing with Grade 3 learners.

Keywords: document analysis; formative assessment; Grade 3; instructional materials; reading comprehension; self-learning module

Introduction

Reading comprehension is an active process in which readers coordinate word recognition, language knowledge, prior knowledge, strategic thinking, motivation, and the purposes and demands of a text. The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) described comprehension as an interaction among reader, text, and activity within a sociocultural context. For primary learners, instruction therefore needs to do more than ask questions after reading. It should build vocabulary and knowledge, make comprehension processes visible, provide guided practice, invite discussion and writing, and gradually support independent use of strategies (Duke et al., 2021).

The Philippine Grade 3 English curriculum includes competencies directly related to recalling important details, sequencing events, distinguishing reality from fantasy, inferring characters' feelings and traits, identifying cause-and-effect relations, drawing conclusions, and making predictions. It also connects reading with vocabulary, writing, oral language, and prior-knowledge activation (Department of Education [DepEd], n.d.). A well-designed self-learning module can make these expectations manageable by using a stable lesson routine and by moving learners from explanation and modeling toward application.

Instructional consistency is particularly useful in independent or home-supported learning. When learners recognize the recurring sequence of goals, preparation, reading, practice, and review, less effort is spent figuring out how to navigate the material. Consistency alone, however, does not ensure learning. Tasks must align with stated objectives; practice should progress in cognitive demand; feedback should help learners understand what to improve; and materials should provide equitable ways to access information and express understanding. Universal Design for Learning emphasizes multiple means of engagement, representation, and action or

expression, together with explicit goals and supports for monitoring progress (CAST, 2024).

The module *Increasing Reading Power 3*, authored by Gee Ann E. Serdena, is a substantial teacher-developed resource organized around ten comprehension skills. Its length and repeated instructional pattern make it suitable for a systematic design analysis. However, the supplied document contains no learner sample, pretest or posttest, field trial, or validation report. It would therefore be inappropriate to manufacture an intervention study or to claim that the module improves achievement. A document-analysis design offers a defensible scholarly contribution by identifying how the material is structured, how it aligns with curriculum expectations, and what should be revised before efficacy is tested.

Purpose and Research Questions

This study evaluated the instructional architecture of *Increasing Reading Power 3*. It asked: (1) What comprehension skills and cognitive processes are represented across the ten modules? (2) Which instructional supports occur consistently? (3) How do the activities move from preparation to independent application? and (4) Which design, assessment, accessibility, editorial, and evidence gaps should be addressed before the module is used in research or large-scale publication?

Methods

Design and Corpus

The study used structured qualitative document analysis with descriptive content counts. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing recorded materials to identify meaning, patterns, and evidence (Bowen, 2009). The corpus was one 102-page PDF titled *Increasing Reading Power 3*. Pages 2-99 contained ten instructional modules; pages 100-102 contained the reference list. The module, rather than a learner or classroom, was the primary unit of analysis.

Analytic Framework

A codebook was developed before final coding. Categories were informed by the DepEd Grade 3 English competencies, contemporary comprehension-instruction guidance (Duke et al., 2021), formative-assessment principles (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and the CAST (2024) Universal Design for Learning Guidelines. Each module was coded for: explicit objectives; strategy explanation; prior-knowledge activation; vocabulary support; reading text; reflection or self-monitoring; staged practice; answer key; open-ended transfer; scoring guidance or rubric; differentiated/accessibility options; source attribution; and evidence of readability, validation, or field testing.

The ten target skills were also classified by their dominant comprehension demand: retrieval and organization, relational or inferential reasoning, and critical classification. These labels describe the principal demand of each lesson, not a fixed hierarchy; authentic reading tasks can involve several processes simultaneously.

Procedure and Trustworthiness

Analysis proceeded in three passes. The first inventoried module titles, objectives, texts, and activity sequences. The second applied the codebook to all ten modules and recorded presence or absence of each feature. The third checked negative evidence and quality concerns, including objective-task mismatches, feedback limitations, mechanical errors, attribution, and accessibility. Findings were tied to observable page-level features, and statements about design were separated from untested claims about learner outcomes. Because one analyst coded one document, no inter-coder agreement coefficient was calculated; this is acknowledged as a limitation.

Results

Skill Coverage and Progression

The module addresses ten recognizable comprehension targets. The opening units emphasize locating and organizing information. The middle units focus on relationships and inference, while the final units ask learners to compare categories and distinguish evidence-based from imaginative or opinion-based claims. The sequence

therefore broadens the learner's work from identifying what a text says toward interpreting and evaluating how information functions.

Table 1

Module Sequence, Core Text, and Independent Application

No.	Skill	Core text	Dominant demand	Application task
1	Noting details	Jack and the Beanstalk	Retrieval	Five-sentence value paragraph
2	Sequencing events	The Kitten	Organization	Sentences about caring for a pet
3	Main idea	Birds	Integration	Main idea with supporting details
4	Cause and effect	Hitting the Pot	Relational	Complete a cause-effect flowchart
5	Predicting outcomes	What Will the Weather Be?	Inference	Family prediction activity
6	Drawing conclusions	The Wise Dog	Inference	Conclusions from family work events
7	Making inferences	The Lion and the Mouse	Inference	Complete situational inferences
8	Compare and contrast	The Cow and the Carabao	Relational	Compare two familiar foods
9	Fact and opinion	Down with Cats!	Critical classification	Write facts and opinions
10	Fantasy and reality	Why Is the Sea Salty?	Critical classification	Draw and explain both categories

The selection of texts mixes familiar international tales, animal narratives, informational passages, and Philippine cultural materials. Hitting the Pot uses a traditional Filipino game, The Cow and the Carabao is presented as a Philippine legend, and Why Is the Sea Salty? is presented as a Philippine myth. This combination supports familiarity while introducing different text purposes. The third activity in every module moves beyond the focal story by asking for writing, drawing, a graphic organizer, a home or family interaction, or application to a new topic.

A Stable Instructional Routine

All ten modules follow a strongly recurrent structure: objectives; a short explanation of the target strategy; a motivational statement; a “Ready...Set...Read!” transition; activation of background knowledge; “tricky words” or vocabulary preparation; a core text; reflection; Activity 1 practice; Activity 2 think-and-practice; and Activity 3 proofread-and-write or another transfer task. Answer keys and score bands allow learners to check many closed-response activities. The routine is a major design strength because it offers predictable navigation and repeated opportunities to encounter, practice, and apply a strategy.

Table 2

Prevalence of Instructional-Design Features Across Ten Modules

Feature	Modules	Interpretation
Explicit learning objectives	10/10	Goal is visible at lesson opening
Strategy explanation	10/10	Target process is introduced directly
Prior-knowledge activation	10/10	Topic is connected with learner experience
Vocabulary preparation	10/10	Key words are introduced before reading
Core reading selection	10/10	Strategy is placed in a text context
Reflection/self-rating	10/10	Learner monitors perceived understanding
Three-stage practice sequence	10/10	Practice moves toward application
Answer key/score guidance	10/10	Closed responses can be self-checked
Open-ended transfer task	10/10	Learner writes, draws, organizes, or applies
Analytic rubric for open response	0/10	Quality criteria are not supplied
Readability/validation/field-test evidence	0/10	No development evidence is reported
Differentiated or accessible alternatives	0/10	No explicit accommodation pathway

Curriculum Alignment

The module's skill coverage substantially overlaps the Grade 3 English competencies listed by DepEd. The curriculum includes prior-knowledge activation, noting details, sequencing events, distinguishing real from make-believe, inferring character feelings or traits, identifying cause and effect, drawing conclusions, and proposing predictions. The module also integrates vocabulary and short composition, consistent with the curriculum's treatment of reading comprehension as connected to oral language, vocabulary development, and writing. This content alignment supports the module's relevance, although formal alignment should also map each objective and item to an exact competency code and expected performance standard.

Scaffolding and Transfer

The design repeatedly prepares learners before asking them to read. Vocabulary support reduces one barrier to comprehension, and brief questions connect the text with experiences such as pets, weather, games, family, and food. Strategy explanations and organizers make invisible thinking more concrete. Later tasks require learners to transfer the strategy to a new context—for example, predicting during a family movie, drawing conclusions from a parent's account of work, comparing favorite foods, or classifying facts and opinions about dinosaurs. These are stronger indicators of intended transfer than repeated recall alone.

The progression is not consistently gradual at item level, however. Some activities move quickly from a short explanation to independent production without worked examples, teacher prompts, or partially completed models. A revised edition could make the release of responsibility clearer by including one modeled example, one guided example with prompts, and one independent task for every target skill.

Formative Assessment and Feedback

The module contains several formative intentions: reflection faces or ratings, practice items, answer keys, score bands, encouragement, and invitations to reread. These features can help learners notice whether an answer is correct. Yet formative assessment becomes

most useful when evidence of learning changes the next instructional action (Black & Wiliam, 2009) and when feedback clarifies the goal, current performance, and next step (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Most feedback in the module is evaluative—such as praise, a score category, or a direction to read again—rather than diagnostic. It rarely identifies the specific misconception, points to textual evidence, or gives a targeted follow-up task.

Open-ended writing and drawing tasks have no rubrics or model responses. Consequently, learners and adults supporting them cannot consistently judge whether an answer demonstrates accurate comprehension, adequate evidence, clear organization, or appropriate language. Short analytic rubrics with child-friendly criteria would improve both self-assessment and teacher review.

Editorial, Attribution, and Accessibility Issues

The document requires professional copyediting before publication or validation. Examples include “write or wrong” in the first objective, “wong” in an activity, “take plce” in a strategy explanation, “Proofread” in an activity heading, and an incorrect Module 1 footer labeling a page as sequencing rather than noting details. Spacing, capitalization, punctuation, wording, and answer-key placement are inconsistent. These errors can distract young readers and may unintentionally model incorrect language.

The reference list acknowledges several reading resources, but individual stories, adaptations, quotations, and images are not consistently connected to a specific source or permission statement. Selection-level citations and an image-rights log are necessary before commercial or journal dissemination. The module should also be screened for text and image similarity against every listed source.

The PDF uses visual organizers and illustrations, but it does not state how learners with low vision, decoding difficulty, language needs, or motor limitations can access equivalent content or respond in another way. CAST (2024) recommends options for representation, engagement, and action or expression. A revised edition could add readable digital text, alt text, audio-supported passages, adjustable display, oral-response options, enlarged writing

spaces, and differentiated scaffolds without reducing the comprehension goal.

Discussion

Increasing Reading Power 3 demonstrates thoughtful instructional architecture. Its strongest contribution is the disciplined repetition of a learner-facing routine across ten important comprehension skills. Learners are told the goal, introduced to the strategy, prepared with vocabulary and background knowledge, given a text, invited to reflect, and then moved through several activities toward application. The curriculum coverage and transfer tasks show that the material was designed as more than a collection of worksheets.

The module also reflects several principles emphasized in comprehension research. It teaches strategies explicitly, activates knowledge, builds vocabulary, uses varied text types, encourages writing about reading, and includes motivation and self-monitoring. Duke et al. (2021) caution, however, that effective comprehension instruction is not simply a list of strategies. Knowledge building, text quality, discussion, purpose, engagement, and integration with word reading and oral language also matter. The module could be strengthened by making these connections more systematic and by expanding beyond short written exercises to include oral explanation and evidence-based discussion.

The main weakness is evidentiary rather than conceptual. The document does not report expert validation, readability analysis, item analysis, accessibility review, usability testing, or classroom outcomes. It cannot therefore support claims that it is developmentally appropriate for all Grade 3 learners or that it improves comprehension. Its present scholarly value lies in the analysis of a coherent design case and in the revision agenda that follows.

Recommended Development and Validation Cycle

Table 3

Priority Revisions Before an Effectiveness Study

Priorit y	Action	Evidence produced
1	Professional language and layout edit	Clean master file and correction log
2	Source, quotation, image, and permission audit	Rights and attribution register
3	Competency-to-objective-to-item mapping	Alignment matrix with DepEd codes
4	Expert review by reading, assessment, and Grade 3 specialists	Content-validity ratings and revisions
5	Readability and linguistic review	Grade-level evidence and revised passages
6	Add models, rubrics, and diagnostic feedback	Scored examples and remediation paths
7	Accessibility and UDL revision	Alternative representations and response modes
8	Small usability pilot	Learner/teacher observations and completion data
9	Classroom field test with pre-specified outcomes	Effectiveness, implementation, and equity evidence

The first pilot should examine comprehension accuracy, task completion, time on task, learner confusion, engagement, and the usefulness of prompts and feedback. A later effectiveness study should register its research questions and analysis plan, use validated comprehension measures, report implementation fidelity, and include an appropriate comparison or repeated-measures design. Qualitative interviews or observations could explain how learners use the module and where adult support remains necessary.

Conclusion

Increasing Reading Power 3 is a coherent Grade 3 reading-comprehension resource with ten curriculum-relevant skills and an unusually consistent prepare-read-reflect-practice-apply routine. Its contextualized texts, vocabulary preparation, self-monitoring,

graphic organizers, and transfer tasks are credible design strengths. The module is not yet evidence of learner effectiveness. Publication and research use should follow copyediting, rights verification, exact curriculum mapping, expert validation, readability and accessibility review, improved rubrics and feedback, and staged classroom testing. Presented with these boundaries, the module offers a useful instructional-design case and a strong foundation for subsequent development research.

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