

Suggestopedia: Effects on Students' Reading Comprehension

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15400945

Jomar M. Banua

Graduate Student, Jose Rizal Memorial State University

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-2345-6789> | jomarbanua@jrmsu.edu.ph

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effects of suggestopedia on the reading comprehension performance of high school students at Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Main Campus during the school year 2024–2025. Recognizing the persistent challenges in reading comprehension within the Philippine education system, as reflected by recent PISA results, the researcher aimed to assess the effects of this innovative method. The study utilized a quasi-experimental design, dividing participants into two groups: a control group taught through traditional methods and an experimental group taught using Suggestopedia. Pretests and posttests were administered, focusing on key reading comprehension topics such as determining the author's tone, examining bias, persuasive strategies, and propaganda techniques. Findings revealed that the experimental group, which experienced Suggestopedia, significantly outperformed the control group in posttest assessments. The method's emphasis on creating a relaxed, supportive, and stimulating learning environment contributed to lower affective filters, thereby improving students' cognitive engagement and information retention. The results suggest that Suggestopedia is an effective strategy for enhancing reading comprehension skills and could serve as a valuable tool in addressing literacy challenges in the Philippines. The study recommends further exploration of innovative, learner-centered teaching approaches to support national educational reforms aimed at improving reading literacy.

Keywords: suggestopedia, reading comprehension, affective filter, innovative teaching methods, Philippine education

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a vital academic skill that supports critical thinking, effective communication, and success across all subject areas. According to Julianti et al. (2020 as cited in Aminah et al., 2024), clear comprehension enhances a reader's ability to interpret and derive meaning from texts. However, many Filipino students continue to struggle with this skill, impacting their academic performance and overall learning development.

National assessments such as the National Achievement Test (NAT) and international evaluations like the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reflect this concern. The Philippines scored 347 in reading literacy—well below the OECD average—with only 24% of students demonstrating basic reading proficiency (Custodio, 2024). While programs like *Brigada Pagbasa* and ECARP aim to address this issue, their effectiveness is hindered by inconsistent implementation, lack of teacher training, and socio-economic barriers (Olabiyi et al., 2025).

Given these challenges, there is a pressing need for alternative, evidence-based teaching strategies. One such approach is Suggestopedia, a method developed by Georgi Lozanov that creates a positive and low-anxiety learning environment using music, art, and suggestion techniques. Suggestopedia aims to enhance learning by lowering emotional barriers and encouraging student motivation and receptivity (Arulselvi, 2017; Wang, 2023).

This method aligns with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that students learn better when anxiety is reduced and confidence is built. A supportive classroom atmosphere allows for improved comprehension, especially in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1986, as cited in Gonzales, 2020). As Espia and Cortezano (2023) emphasized, improving reading comprehension is critical for lifelong learning, not just academic success.

This study investigated the effects of Suggestopedia on the reading comprehension performance of Grade 8 students at Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Main Campus. By comparing outcomes between students taught using traditional methods and those taught with Suggestopedia, the research aimed to offer practical insights that may help address the ongoing reading literacy crisis in the Philippines.

Literature Review

Reading comprehension is a multifaceted cognitive process that goes beyond decoding words; it involves constructing meaning, analyzing content, and synthesizing information from a given text (Chin et al., 2024; Alhazmi, 2024). According to Dalimunthe (2024), reading comprehension is essential not only for academic achievement but also for informed decision-making and lifelong learning. Despite its critical role, Filipino students continue to demonstrate low proficiency. For instance, Gadiano et al. (2023) noted that Philippine students ranked among the lowest in reading in both the 2018 and 2022 PISA assessments, reflecting systemic gaps in foundational literacy skills.

Several factors contribute to weak comprehension skills, including limited vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, poor working memory, and low motivation (Li, 2021). Furthermore, socio-economic issues, inadequate reading materials, and ineffective teaching strategies compound the problem (Mule, 2014 as cited in Gadiano et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting shift to modular learning further hindered reading development, particularly for learners without adequate parental or instructional support (Caasi & Pentang, 2022 as cited in Gadiano et al., 2023). As such, identifying effective, learner-centered approaches to teaching reading is crucial in the Philippine context.

Suggestopedia, developed by Georgi Lozanov, is an alternative teaching method designed to create a relaxed, joyful learning environment that reduces anxiety and enhances student engagement (Arulselvi, 2017; Wang, 2023). This method incorporates music, drama, visualization, and positive reinforcement to stimulate holistic learning and tap into learners' subconscious abilities. Lozanov's theory rests on three main principles: the pleasure of learning, unity of consciousness, and suggestive social interaction, all aimed at reducing the psychological barriers that hinder learning (Wang, 2023).

Empirical studies have shown that Suggestopedia can significantly improve students' reading comprehension. Deny et al. (2016) reported a notable increase in students' posttest scores after exposure to Suggestopedia, while Venkanna (2015) found the method effective in improving reading comprehension and student motivation in ESL contexts. Similarly, Asriani (2015) and Egamberganovna (2022) emphasized its role in enhancing narrative text comprehension and developing students' confidence and engagement.

The effectiveness of Suggestopedia is supported by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that emotional factors—such as anxiety and lack of confidence—can block the acquisition of language input (Krashen, 1986 as cited in Gonzales, 2020). Suggestopedia reduces this affective filter, making it easier for students to process and retain information. In this way, the method not only addresses the cognitive aspect of reading comprehension but also supports learners' emotional and psychological readiness.

The reviewed literature demonstrated that while traditional approaches to reading instruction remained prevalent, alternative methods like Suggestopedia provided a promising solution to address both cognitive and emotional learning barriers. This study built upon existing research by evaluating the effects of Suggestopedia on the reading comprehension of junior high school students in a Philippine setting. The findings contributed to the body of evidence supporting affective teaching strategies as effective tools in improving literacy outcomes.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a non-equivalent pretest-posttest control group setup to determine the effects of Suggestopedia on students' reading comprehension. The participants were 40 Grade 8 students from Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Main Campus, School Year 2024–2025, divided into two groups: 20 in the control group and 20 in the experimental group. The experimental group received instruction using the Suggestopedia method, which integrated music, positive suggestion, dramatized reading, and a relaxed classroom atmosphere. In contrast, the control group was taught through traditional teacher-centered strategies such as lectures and textbook-based discussions.

Both groups studied the same four reading topics: determining the tone of the author, examining author bias, persuasive strategies, and propaganda techniques. Pretests were administered to assess baseline comprehension, followed by several sessions of instruction based on their assigned method. After the instructional period, posttests were conducted to evaluate improvements in reading comprehension. The same test materials were used for both assessments to ensure consistency and comparability of results.

Results

The findings revealed notable differences in the reading comprehension performance of students exposed to different teaching methods. In the pretest, both the control and experimental groups showed comparable scores, indicating no significant difference in their initial reading comprehension levels. However, posttest results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group taught using Suggestopedia, while the control group showed only minimal gains. Statistical analysis confirmed that the posttest mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group. Furthermore, a comparison of the pretest and posttest scores within each group revealed that while both groups improved, the experimental group's gain score was significantly greater. These results suggest that the use of Suggestopedia had a positive and statistically significant effect on students' reading comprehension performance.

Discussion

The study revealed that while both the control and experimental groups had similar reading comprehension levels at the start, the experimental group, taught using Suggestopedia, showed a significant improvement in their posttest scores. The control group, which followed traditional methods, showed only minimal gains. These results suggest that Suggestopedia had a positive and significant effect on students' reading comprehension, with the experimental group demonstrating a notably greater improvement.

The findings indicate that Suggestopedia's immersive environment, incorporating music and relaxation, likely reduced students' anxiety and helped them better engage with the reading material. This emotional and cognitive engagement appears to have contributed to enhanced comprehension, while traditional methods did not yield comparable results. These implications suggest that innovative teaching strategies like Suggestopedia can be more effective in promoting reading comprehension, especially by addressing students' emotional and motivational needs.

While the study's results are promising, limitations such as sample size and intervention duration should be considered. Future research could explore these factors further, as well as the long-term impact of Suggestopedia across different subjects and student groups. Overall, this study supports the potential of Suggestopedia as an effective tool for improving reading comprehension and highlights the need for further exploration of its broader applications.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated the significant effect of Suggestopedia on improving reading comprehension among high school students. The experimental group, exposed to Suggestopedia, showed remarkable improvements in key areas such as identifying tone, recognizing bias, analyzing persuasive strategies, and detecting propaganda techniques, all of which exceeded the hypothetical mean. These findings underscored Suggestopedia's potential as a highly effective instructional strategy that promoted deeper cognitive engagement and critical thinking. However, the study had several limitations, including a relatively small sample size and the short duration of the intervention, which may not have allowed for the observation of long-term effects. Furthermore, the study focused on high school students and specific aspects of reading comprehension, limiting its generalizability to other student populations or subject areas. To build on these findings, future research could explore the long-term effects of Suggestopedia on reading comprehension, as well as its applicability across various educational levels and disciplines. Additionally, examining how Suggestopedia could be combined with other teaching methods to enhance its effectiveness could provide valuable insights into its broader potential. Overall, this study laid a foundation for further exploration of innovative instructional strategies that could significantly enhance student learning outcomes.

References

- Abbas, S. G. (2023). Investigating the Impact of Digital vs. Traditional Reading Habits on Comprehension and Engagement Among Middle School Students. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 4664–4672. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i6.7835>
- Adani, S., & Efendi, Z. (2022). A Review on Teaching English by Using Suggestopedia Method. *El-Hekam*, 7(2), 310. <https://doi.org/10.31958/jeh.v7i2.8699>
- Agao-Agao, A. M. A. (2023). Effectiveness of DRTA Strategy in Improving the Reading Skills. *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal*, 4(1), 96–102. <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v4i1.635>
- Alhazmi, K. (2024). Relationship between reading speed and comprehension among EFL learners. <https://doi.org/10.61707/ntg9ma25>
- Altun, M. (2023). Suggestopedia: A Relaxed and Immersive Language Learning Environment. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 10(2).
- Arulselvi, E. (2017). Desuggestopedia in Language Learning. *Excellence in Education Journal*. Volume 6, Issue 1, Winter 2017.
- Asriani, T. (2015). The Effectiveness of Suggestopedia on Students' Reading Comprehension in Narrative text.
- Astuti, N. S., Syatriana, E., & Jumiaty, A. A. (2024). Using Suggestopedia Method in Reading Comprehension. *English Language Teaching Methodology*, 4(1), 7588. <https://doi.org/10.56983/eltm.v4i1.336>

- Bahuguna, P. (2022). Challenges of reading comprehension in early primary classrooms of India. *English Language Teaching and Linguistics Studies*, 4(4), p1. <https://doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v4n4p1>
- Budianto, L., & Yuniar, R. F. (2023). The effect of Suggestopedia method on Indonesian EFL learners' reading achievement. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning (JETLE)*, 4(2), 56–69. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jetle.v4i2.20573>
- Castrodes, A. (2024). Enhancing Literature Teaching through Suggestopedia: A Pedagogical Approach. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*. Retrieved <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382913457>
- Cataylo, E. T., Arao, H., Barra, S., Guarte, N., Macasling, R. M., Mohammad, J. A., ... & Zaldy, R. (2023). Reciprocal Teaching: A Metacognitive Strategy to Bridge Reading Comprehension Difficulty. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 15(10), 981-988.
- Cristopher et al., (2024). Innovative Education: Merging MOOCs with Traditional Teaching Methods. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381249269_Innovative_Education_Merging_MOOCs_with_Traditional_Teaching_Methods
- Custodio, F. B. (2024, April 23). Reading comprehension levels among Filipino students. *SunStar Pampanga*. <https://www.pressreader.com/philippines/sunstar-pampanga/20240423/281672554999424>
- Darici, N. (2022). Suggestopedia: an effective way to teach and learn a foreign language. *ScienceRise*, 3, 67–72. <https://doi.org/10.21303/2313-8416.2022.002565>
- Deny, V. S., Ys, S. B., & Fajrina, D. (2016). Suggestopedia method on improving students' reading comprehension. *Research in English and Education Journal*, 1(2), 129-136.
- Dizon, E. C., & Sanchez, R. D. (2020). Improving select grade 7 Filipino students' reading performance using the eclectic model. *Journal of World Englishes and Educational Practices*, 2(2), 216-221.
- Duroha et al., (2021). Interactive and Conventional Teaching Approaches to Optimizing Reading Comprehension Performance. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/reader/3466ef5cb3dfc3e041d7ace92afc593fe839b2d0>
- Espia, E. B. A., & Cortezano, G. P. (2023). Reading Comprehension and academic performance in English among Grade Seven learners. *APJAET - Journal of Asia Pacific Journal of Advanced Education and Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.54476/apjaet/09498>
- Fadila, N. L., Dalimunthe, N. S. A., & Siagian, N. N. (2024). Strategies to Improve English Reading Comprehension. *Fonologi Journal Ilmuan Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris*, 2(3), 16–25. <https://doi.org/10.61132/fonologi.v2i3.774>
- Gonzales, V. (2020, September 22). What Is the Affective Filter, and Why Is it Important in the Classroom? *Seidlitz Education*. <https://seidlitzblog.org/2020/09/22/what-is-the-affective-filter-and-why-is-it-important-in-the-classroom/>
- Hue, B. T. H. (2024). Cultivating Reading Comprehension Habits to Promote Autonomous English Language Learning among Students at Tuyen Quang School for Excellence (TSE). *Deleted Journal*, 1(3), 328–334. [https://doi.org/10.59324/ejahss.2024.1\(3\).28](https://doi.org/10.59324/ejahss.2024.1(3).28)
- Idulog, M. V., Gadiano, R., Toledo, E., Hermosada, M., Casaldon, H., Mariposa, M., Geron, C., Dequito, E., Genanda, J., Malipot, M. A., Pentang, J., & Bautista, R. (2023). Filipino Students' Reading Abilities: A Note on the Challenges and Potential Areas for Improvement. *International Journal of Education and Teaching Zone*, 2(2), 233–242. <https://doi.org/10.57092/ijetz.v2i2.128>
- Kai, Z., Yann, W. L., Fung, Y. M., & Sim, N. B. (2024). Reading Comprehension Problems in Chinese among Children in a Malaysian International School. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v13-i3/21828>
- Kharismawati, R. (2014). Suggestopedia method in the teaching and learning process. *RETAIN: Journal of Research in English Language Teaching*, 2(1).

- Kheang, T., Chin, P., & Em, S. (2024). Reading Motivation to Promote Students' reading Comprehension: A review. *International Journal of Languages and Culture*, 4(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.51483/ijlc.4.1.2024.1-8>
- Le, V. H. (2021). Common Difficulties of Reading Comprehension Experienced by Vietnamese Students. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3481056.3481073>
- Li, Q., & Zhou, Y. (2023). Enhancing EFL Class Design: Affective filter hypothesis in action. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 9(3), 38–40. <https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v9i3.10161>
- Megalakaki, O., Ballenghein, U., & Baccino, T. (2019). Effects of valence and emotional intensity on the comprehension and memorization of texts. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 179.
- Meza, S. D. M., Zambrano, C. M. Z., & Villafuerte-Holguin, J. (2024). Innovation of Teaching Methodology for Improving English Language Skills: Suggestopedia for Teaching Reading and Writing.
- Morwa, B., & Ndilito, N. (2024). The Benefits of Reading: A reflection on Nyerere's contributions to education and reading culture. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(3), 1293–1300. <https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.5.3.110>
- Nguyen, L., & Nga, N. (2024, October). Applying Suggestopedia to Improve Students' Listening Skills in the English Language at Swinburne Vietnam. In *VietTESOL International Convention Proceedings (Vol. 4)*.
- Norhayati, N. (2022). Context Clues in Reading Text for Improving EFL Students' Reading Skills. *Journal of English Education Linguistics and Literature*, 2(2), 83–87. <https://doi.org/10.33654/enlit.v2i2.1922>
- Nuraeni, N., & Aisyah, S. (2022). Contextualisation of Direct Instruction Method in Teaching Reading Comprehension Skills: The Literature Review. *Seltics Journal Scope of English Language Teaching Literature and Linguistics*, 5(1), 43–50. <https://doi.org/10.46918/seltics.v5i1.1401>
- Olabiyyi, W., Shaon, J., & Rebecca, G. (2025). Investigating the impact of national reading programs on literacy development in the Philippines. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388908222_
- Olifant, F. M. (2024). Breaking the cycle of poor critical reading comprehension: A strategy-based intervention. *Literator*, 45(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v45i1.2080>
- Oré Vivar, J. I. (2021). Suggestopedia method.
- P, S. B., & Selvaraj, V. (2023). The role of affective filters in ESL classrooms: fostering effective learning environments. *ResearchGate*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376782180>
- Pham, T. L., & Nguyen, T. H. M. (2023). Using Blended Learning in Improving Reading Comprehension Skills for Secondary Students. *European Modern Studies Journal*, 7(3), 183–189. [https://doi.org/10.59573/emsj.7\(3\).2023.18](https://doi.org/10.59573/emsj.7(3).2023.18)
- Ruhe, F. (2022). Challenges of Teaching Critical Reading Comprehension at the Secondary Levels in Bangladesh. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364342765>
- Rozimova, N. E., Allaberganova, U. M., & Polvonov, D. J. (2022). The effectiveness of using suggestopedia method to increase students' supporting details of reading comprehension in learning english. *International Journal of World Languages*, 2(6).
- Saeheng, P. (2017). A study of e-learning, blended learning, and traditional teaching methods to motivate autonomous learning in English reading comprehension of Thais learners. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 1–20.
- Safitri, D. M., & Novita, D. (2020). Suggestopedia method as an effective method in teaching reading comprehension for senior high school. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 3(1), 98–101.
- Sanchez, D. T., Duroha, J. H., Manayon, R. M. U., Nocillas, J. B., Mangolari, J. L. R., & Yabo, J. F. (2021). Interactive and Conventional Teaching Approaches to Optimizing Reading Comprehension Performance. *Revista geintec-gestao inovacao e tecnologias*, 11(3), 1848–1858.
- Saravanakumar, A. & Varghese, R. (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384629776>

- Sawchuk, S. (2024, February 15). Reading Comprehension Challenges and opportunities, in charts. Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/reading-comprehension-challenges-and-opportunities-in-charts/2024/01>
- Sun, Y. (2023). The application of 'Suggestopedia' in English teaching. Journal of Education Humanities and Social Sciences, 13, 21–29. <https://doi.org/10.54097/ehss.v13i.7849>
- Suparman, S., & Sani, H. (2024). Improving English Reading Skills through the Audiovisual Text Media. Journal Ilmiah Mandala Education, 10(2), 477. <https://doi.org/10.58258/jime.v10i2.6846>
- Tomarong, L., Abendan, C. F., Kilag, O. K., Apas, M., Undalok, V., & Alcorcon, J. J. (2023). The Lindamood-Bell Reading Intervention: A Pathway to Enhanced Reading Skills in Pupils. Excellencia: International Multidisciplinary Journal of Education (2994-9521), 1(5), 322-332.
- Tularam, G. A., & Machisella, P. (n.d.). Traditional vs Non-Traditional Teaching and Learning Strategies the Case of E- Learning. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1189617>
- Venkanna, K., & Glory, A. (2015). Use of Suggestopedia as an Innovative Strategy for promoting Effective Reading Comprehension abilities in English at the ESL Level: An Experimental Study. International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities, 3(3), 128-149.
- Wang, S. (2023). Suggestopedia and its application in different types of learners. OALib, 10(11), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1110863>
- Yen, S. (2023). Benefits of reading and how to promote reading habits among Cambodians. Cambodian Journal of Educational Research, 3(2), 91–103. <https://doi.org/10.62037/cjer.2023.03.02.06>