Working Together to Read Better: The Effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading and Student Perceptions

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) on undergraduate students' reading comprehension and their perceptions. CSR is an instructional approach that integrates cooperative learning with reading comprehension strategies, designed to enhance students' understanding of texts through collaborative group work. A quasi-experimental study is used in this investigation, and it is conducted using two distinct classes. The pretest and post-test was focused to investigate the impact of CSR on students' reading comprehension skills and students' perceptions gathered through questionnaire. The average mean score of the post-test for students in the experimental group is 81.16 and the control is 74.92. The means score of collaborative strategic reading has a positive effect on students' achievement in experimental class compared to the conventional learning of the control class. The results indicate that students who engaged in CSR, significantly improved their reading comprehension compared to those who used conventional reading strategies. The result of the independent sample t-test shows significant differences at the significance level of 0.05, (0.00 < 0.05), which indicates the difference being statistically significant. Additionally, the result of the questionnaire revealed positive student perceptions of CSR. Students reported that the collaborative nature of CSR made reading more engaging and less intimidating. They appreciated the structured approach to tackling complex texts and valued the peer support and interaction inherent in the strategy. Overall, the findings suggest that CSR not only enhances reading comprehension but also positively influences students' attitudes towards reading, making it a promising instructional strategy at the undergraduate level.

Keywords: Collaborative Strategic Reading, reading comprehension, cooperative learning, instructional strategy, students perception, undergraduate learning.

Reading comprehension is a crucial component of literacy and education, serving as a foundational skill that significantly impacts students' academic success and lifelong learning (Alharbi, 2021; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Herda, Setiawan et al., 2023; Özdemir & Akyol, 2019). Understanding and interpreting texts not only enhances knowledge acquisition but also contributes to cognitive development, critical thinking, and the ability to engage with complex ideas. Given its importance, educators and researchers have long sought effective strategies to improve reading comprehension skills, especially among students who struggle with this essential ability. Collaborative Strategic Reading, or CSR is a prominent strategy that has

gained much popularity in recent years. It is an instructional strategy that is founded on research and combines reading comprehension strategies with cooperative learning (Amjadi & Talebi, 2021; Herda, Margana, et al., 2023; Mendieta et al., 2015; Rajaei et al., 2020; Topalov 2023). Collaborative Strategic Reading is grounded in the principles of social constructivism, which emphasizes how social interaction plays a part in the learning process. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) underpins the approach, suggesting that students can achieve higher levels of understanding when they collaborate with peers and receive guidance from more knowledgeable individuals (Alqarni, 2015; Amjadi & Talebi, 2021). CSR is designed to harness this collaborative potential by engaging students in structured group activities where they apply specific reading strategies to comprehend texts.

The correlation between reading comprehension and CSR interests educators and researchers because it offers insights into how cooperative learning environments can enhance individual cognitive processes. CSR involves students working together in small groups to practice four primary procedures: previewing, clicking and clunking, getting the gist, and wrapping up (Klinger et al., 2012). These are systematically taught and reinforced, enabling students to tackle various challenges in understanding and interpreting texts. The collaborative aspect of CSR is integral to its effectiveness, as it fosters an environment where students can share ideas, clarify misunderstandings, and build on each other's knowledge. The correlation between CSR and reading comprehension has been investigated by several research studies, demonstrating that students who engage in CSR tend to show significant improvements in their ability to understand and analyze texts (Herda et al., 2023; Herda, Setiawan, et al., 2023; Mendieta et al., 2015; Topalov, 2023).

The collaborative nature of CSR allows for differentiated instruction, where students can receive immediate feedback and support from their peers, making it particularly effective for diverse classrooms with varying levels of reading proficiency. Moreover, CSR promotes active engagement with the text, encouraging students to be more mindful and deliberate in their reading processes, which in turn enhances comprehension. The implementation of CSR in classrooms has been exposed to positively impacting not only students' reading comprehension but also their overall academic performance and motivation to learn (Amjadi & Talebi, 2021; Herda, Setiawan, et al., 2023). The interactive nature of CSR contributes to the development of a learning environment that is more welcoming and encouraging, one in which students exhibit increased self-assurance when it comes to expressing their thoughts and asking questions. This sense of community and shared responsibility for learning contributes to deeper understanding and retention of material, as students are more likely to internalize the strategies they practice during CSR sessions.

Despite its effectiveness, the success of CSR largely depends on several factors, including the teacher's ability to facilitate group activities, the student's willingness to engage in cooperative learning, and the complexity of the texts being studied. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling the strategies, guiding discussions, and providing scaffolding to ensure that all students can participate meaningfully in the process (Kamali & Fahim, 2011; Liu, 2017; Wilson, 2016). Additionally, selecting appropriate texts that match the student's reading levels and interests is essential for maintaining engagement and fostering comprehension. In conclusion, the correlation between reading comprehension and Collaborative Strategic Reading underscores the importance of combining cognitive and social learning strategies to enhance students' literacy skills. CSR offers a structured and supportive approach to reading that improves comprehension and builds students' confidence and motivation to learn. As a result of the ongoing changes in the educational

environments, the continuing study and refinement of CSR will be critical in addressing the diverse needs of students and preparing them for the demands of an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

The quasi-experimental study investigated the effect of collaborative strategic reading teaching on the reading comprehension of undergraduate students. The research questions are:

1. Is there a significant difference in reading comprehension obtained using collaborative strategic reading?

2. What are the students' reflections on using CSR in the reading comprehension class?

Literature Review

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in teaching learning process (Amumpuni, 2021) that lies at the heart of education and personal development, and It is a multifaceted, interactive process that utilizes skills and sophisticated strategies to create meaning (Lestari & Anugerahwati, 2022). It is the process by which a reader interprets, understands, and derives meaning from the text. This ability extends beyond mere word recognition to encompass a deep engagement with the material, requiring the reader to integrate prior knowledge, make inferences, and critically analyze the information presented (Gani et al., 2016).

The significance of reading comprehension in education cannot be overstated. Without solid reading comprehension skills, students struggle to grasp complex concepts, follow instructions, and participate meaningfully in discussions. As such, reading comprehension is often viewed as a predictor of academic success, and its development is a crucial focus of educational curricula worldwide. However, despite its importance, reading comprehension can be a challenging skill to develop, particularly for students who face difficulties in decoding, have limited vocabulary knowledge, or lack the

background knowledge needed to understand certain texts fully. Furthermore, students who are learning to read in a second language or who come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds may face additional challenges in achieving reading comprehension proficiency. These challenges highlight the need for targeted instructional approaches that address the specific needs of individual learners. In response to these challenges, educators are responsible for the strategies used by the students (Brevik, 2019).

In conclusion, reading comprehension is a compound and varied skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. It involves a sequence of cognitive processes, previous knowledge, and contextual factors that work together to allow readers to understand and engage with the passage. Given its importance, developing effective instructional strategies to support reading comprehension remains a critical priority for educators. As the nature of reading continues to evolve in the digital age, ongoing research and innovation in this field will be essential to ensure that all students can achieve their full potential as proficient and engaged readers.

Reading Comprehension and Collaborative Learning

Mastery of reading comprehension is not only crucial for academic success across all subjects but also plays a significant role in personal and professional development. Given its importance, educators and researchers have continuously sought effective methods to enhance students' reading comprehension abilities. Among the various approaches explored, collaborative learning has emerged as a promising strategy (Vaughn et al., 2013). In education, "collaborative learning" refers to instructional methods that integrate students working together in small groups to accomplish a common objective. In contrast to traditional, individualistic learning methods, collaborative learning emphasizes interaction, communication, and the sharing of knowledge among peers. This approach is grounded in the

theories of social constructivism, particularly the work of Vygotsky, who argued that social interaction plays a critical role in cognitive development (Li et al., 2022).

The intersection of reading comprehension and collaborative learning presents an intriguing study area, as both cognitive and social processes are engaged simultaneously. Collaborative learning environments allow students to engage in discussions, share different viewpoints, and co-construct meaning from texts. Students can cultivate advanced cognitive abilities through these interactions, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. Moreover, collaborative learning allows for the differentiation of instruction, where students with varying levels of reading proficiency can support each other, thereby reducing the achievement gap. The learning process's collective nature produces a sense of belonging among students, which can enhance their confidence and willingness to participate in reading activities.

Research has shown that collaborative learning can significantly improve reading comprehension, mainly when structured and guided effectively. Techniques such as Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), literature circles, and peer-assisted learning strategies have demonstrated positive outcomes in various educational settings. These approaches combine the strengths of collaborative learning with specific reading strategies, allowing students to engage with texts while benefiting from peer support actively. By working together, students can tackle challenging texts, identify key ideas, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the material.

In conclusion, the relationship between reading comprehension and collaborative learning highlights the importance of combining cognitive and social processes to enhance students' literacy skills. Collaborative learning provides a robust framework for engaging students in meaningful interactions with texts, promoting a more profound understanding and

retention of information. As the educational landscape evolves, ongoing research and practice will be essential in refining collaborative learning strategies and maximizing their potential to increase reading comprehension for all students.

Collaborative Strategic Reading

Collaborative Strategic Reading, also known as CSR, is an instructional teaching strategy supported by evidence and intended to lead to improvements in reading comprehension. (Klingner et all, 2012; Vaughn et al., 2011, Ziyaeemehr., 2012;mSa'adah et al., 20023; Rajeai et al., 2020; Bermilo& Merto., 2022) . Collaborative approaches to teaching reading can be effective and suitable, especially when paired with interactive activities where students work with their peers to understand reading material and complete assignments. (Anwar, 2020; Limeranto & Subekti, 2021). CSR integrates cooperative learning with proven reading strategies. The approach is grounded in the idea that students can significantly enhance their comprehension skills by working collaboratively, engaging in metacognitive practices, and applying specific reading strategies.

The theoretical framework of CSR is a constructivist approach within cognitive theory. (Clark, 2018), it emphasizes learning through interaction with peers, which is particularly relevant in higher education. Undergraduate students often engage in group discussions, projects, and collaborative learning activities, making CSR a natural fit for enhancing these interactions and deepening comprehension (Gao & Bintz, 2019; Bada & Olusegun, 2015). The following four essential strategies are at the core of CSR: preview it, click and click, get the gist of it, and then wrap it up. (Klingner et all, 2012). The preview's purpose is to allow students to develop interest and activate background knowledge to anticipate what they will eventually learn from the text. (Mendieta et al., 2015).Click and clunk is the phase after each paragraph, providing continuous feedback by

deciding whether to "click" (meaning "I get it") or "clunk" (meaning "I don't get it")(Mendieta et al., 2015). Get the gist where the students started employing this strategy by thinking out loud and asking themselves questions about the main idea of the entire text, the primary concept of each paragraph, and the fundamental idea of the entire text (Amjadi & Talebi, 2021). And the last is the wrap-up where students are taught to learn how to generate questions and review text after reading a whole paragraph independently (Bermillo & Merto, 2022). These strategies help students make predictions, identify comprehension difficulties, summarize information, and reflect on their learning. By systematically applying these strategies in small, cooperative groups, not only do students enhance their comprehension of the subject matter, but they also progress in their ability to think critically and communicate ability. CSR is particularly effective in content areas like science and social studies, where students encounter dense, information-rich texts. Its flexibility allows teachers to adapt the approach to various reading levels and educational contexts, making it a valuable tool for promoting literacy and academic success in diverse classrooms. As a result, CSR has gained widespread recognition as a powerful method for fostering reading comprehension, academic engagement, and collaborative learning.

Research Methods

Research Design

By using a quasi-experimental design, this study aimed to provide a robust evaluation of the impact of CSR on reading comprehension and to capture students' subjective experiences and perceptions of the intervention. It was conducted using a quasi-experimental design with two groups: an experimental group that received CSR and a control group that did not.

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in two different classes at a university.

One class was assigned as the experimental class (n = 25), and the other as the control class (n = 25). Both groups were similar in terms of demographics and baseline reading comprehension levels. The experimental group participated in a semester-long CSR intervention, which included training on specific reading comprehension strategies and structured cooperative learning activities. The control group continued with their regular reading instruction without the CSR intervention.

Instrument of the data

1. Reading Comprehension Test: Multiple choice reading comprehension that consist of 30 questions with validated reliability and validity. Pre-test: Administered at the starting point of the semester to both groups to assess baseline reading comprehension levels. Post-test: conducted at the end of the semester to measure any changes in reading comprehension.

2. Questionnaire: A Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to the experimental group last semester to gather students' perceptions of CSR. The survey included items on engagement, understanding, and collaboration.

Data Analysis

The differences in reading comprehension between the experimental and the control groups were analyzed with independent sample t-tests, and SPSS Version 22 was used for the analysis. The questionnaire results were evaluated using a Likert scale and analyzed according to Buphate and Esteban (2022) in Table 1.

Table 1 Likert Scale Interpretation

Score	Significance
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly agreed with the statements.
3.51 – 4.50	Agreed to the statements.
2.51 – 3.50	Neutral to the statements
1.51 – 2.50	Disagreed with the statements.
1.01 – 1.50	Strongly disagreed with the statements

Source : Buphate and Esteban(2022)

This study aimed to provide a robust evaluation of the impact of CSR on reading comprehension and to capture students' subjective experiences and perceptions of the intervention.

Research Results and Discussions

Research Result

Descriptive statistics highlight the differences in the mean scores between learners taught using Collaborative Strategic Reading and those taught through conventional methods. These statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic

	Kelas	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Reading Comprehension	Kelas A	25	81.1600	1.77200	.35440
	Kelas B	25	74.9200	4.48070	.89614

Source: Author

The table above shows the mean score of post-test of an experimental class (CSR) and control class (conventional). The mean score of the experimental class is 81.16 and the control class is 74.92 Based on the mean score of both classes, it can be considered that both classes have different mean scores, and it can be said that the two classes are significantly different.
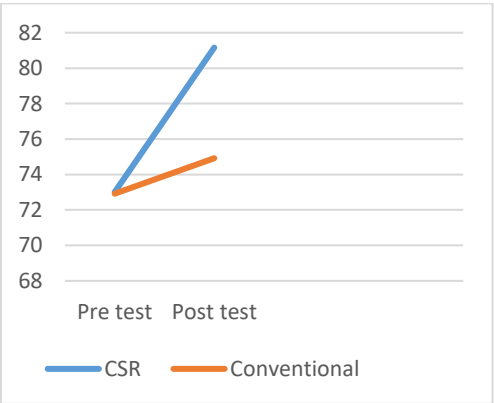

Figure 1. Graphic of the differences in reading comprehension test overall mean scores pre- and post-test CSR and Conventional Class

In addition, to investigate the significant difference between the two classes, an independent sample t-test is applied in Table 3 with a significance level of 0.05.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
										95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Reading Comprehension	Equal variances assumed	19.043	.000	6.475	48	.000	6.24000	.96367	4.30240	8.17760

			6.475	31.328	.000	6.24000	.96367	4.27541	8.20459
	Equal variances not assumed								

Source : Author

According to the outcome of the independent t-test given that the significance level (Sig., 2-tailed) is 0.000 in an independent t-test comparing the impact of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) with a conventional method in a reading class which is less than the level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means there is a significant difference in reading outcomes between the two teaching methods. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) has a statistically significant impact on reading performance compared to the conventional method.

According to the results reported, the two classes had different mean scores. Experimental group students obtain the highest scores. They have sufficient information in their task. Therefore, both groups have a strong mutuality of receiving data from reading topics while completing their task. The average mean score of post-test for students in CSR group is 81.16 and control is 74.92. It means Collaborative Strategic Reading has a positive effect on the achievement of students of the CSR class compared to the conventional learning of the control class. Also, it can be seen from the result of the independent

sample t-test of post-test, that there are significant differences at the level of significance of 0.05, the significance of the value of equal variances assumed is 0.000, which is lower than $\alpha = 0.05$ (0.00 < 0.05), which reveals that there is a significant difference between the two groups of students with the regard to their understanding of the material. The result indicates that CSR and the conventional method have different impacts on reading outcomes, with the difference being statistically significant. The students who taught by using CSR have better in reading comprehension than those with conventional strategy.

The impact of collaborative strategic reading in reading comprehension helps students improve their knowledge. The students of the experimental class can improve their understanding by sharing information. This is supported by the result of a previous study that stated that learning management systems make it easier to get information. The conclusion shows that students taught using CSR outperform those taught in conventional ways. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that using CSR as an instructional strategy for teaching reading comprehension might be successful.

Table 4. Students' Perspectives on CSR

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
1	Previewing strategy help me make prediction of the text	52%	44%	0%	4%
2	Fix up strategies are helpful to me in overcoming challenges when the words become hard to understand	48%	40%	4%	8%
3	I can find the most important information of the text using CSR	40%	60%	0	0
4	I can interact with other students at every reading stage through CSR.	56%	40%	0	4%
5	CSR assistance to identify information because every reading phase has sequence in activities	52%	48%	0	0

Source : The students' questionnaire

Table 4 presents the questionnaire findings on students' views on the implementation of CSR

in reading courses. None strongly disagree in answering the question. The students viewed the

previewing strategy to help them predict the text because 52% strongly agree, 44% agree and 4% choose neutral. Additionally, the students said that fix-up strategies help them overcome the difficult words because 48% of the students answer strongly agree, 40% agree, 85 neutral and 4% disagree with the statement. The third statement reported that the students find the most important information of the text by using this strategy. The questionnaire results indicate that those who agreed or strongly agreed comprised more than half of the total participants. Furthermore, the students showed their capability to participate at every reading step through CSR, with 56% of the 25 strongly agreeing, 40% agreeing, and 4% remaining neutral. Students perceived CSR as highly procedural due to the sequential of activities in each phase 52% strongly agree, and 48% agree with this statement.

Discussion

Indeed, collaborative strategic reading benefits undergraduate students by allowing them to solve reading problems together in a well-planned manner. Students, as readers, can actively derive meaning through the interplay of their experiences and concepts during collaborative activities. This collaboration diverges from conventional group work that prioritizes students reading entire texts and responding to questions. This study examines CSR as an extensive process for students, enabling them to recognize the enjoyment and significance of collaborative reading of texts in English. (Herda, Margana, et al., 2023). The results of the current experiment with CSR and conventional teaching reading comprehension showed that CSR increased the students' reading comprehension skills compared to the conventional strategy. This result is consistent with previous studies that verified Collaborative Strategic Reading improved positive effect on student reading achievement (Babapour et al., 2019; Boardman et al., 2016; Gani et al., 2016; Herda, Margana, et al., 2023; Herda, Setiawan, et al., 2023; Lestari & Anugerahwati, 2022;

Mendieta et al., 2015; Nosratinia & Hooshmand Fateh, 2017; Rajaei et al., 2020; Sa'adah et al., 2023; Topalov, 2023; Vaughn et al., 2013)

Based on the result, it can be said that the intervention significantly improves overall reading comprehension. The data shows a difference in post-test scores among students in different groups. Even before the intervention, the experimental group had a slight advantage over the control group, achieving slightly higher scores despite factors like receiving CSR. This advantage helped students perform better on subsequent reading comprehension tests. The intervention, which includes strategies like preview, click and clunk, get the gist and the last is wrap up, helps struggling readers by fostering social interaction. This approach balances what students bring to the learning process with what they achieve and need to reach their full learning potential. (Gani et al., 2016; Mendieta et al., 2015; Nosratinia & Hooshmand Fateh, 2017; Topalov, 2023; Walidaini et al., 2021). As the founders of CSR, Klingner and colleagues (2012) believe that CSR is effective in providing students with opportunities to discuss text content in a low-anxiety, non-threatening environment. Additionally, CSR is an attractive reading strategy because it promotes social interaction while avoiding individual and cultural biases.

The impact of collaborative strategic reading in reading comprehension helps students improve their knowledge. The students of experimental class can improve their knowledge by sharing information. It is supported by a previous study stating collaborative strategic reading make it easier to get the information. The conclusion shows that learners taught using CSR outperform those taught in conventional ways. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that using of CSR as instructional strategy of the teaching reading comprehension might be successful. Through information sharing, collaborative strategic reading aids students in expanding their knowledge. Encouraging students to engage and absorb knowledge from those around them is the

aim of implementing Collaborative Strategic Reading into practice.

As a result, two conclusions are drawn. According to the study, learners who received instructions using collaborative strategic reading outperformed their peers in scoring. Compared to the required reading for instruction, it seems that this instructional strategy offers more reading methods, particularly when it comes to reading class. Additionally, students view that in a positive light. More specifically, click and clunk, get the gist, and wrap up are the phases of this method that work well. This strategy undoubtedly offers fantastic opportunities for students to enhance their affective and inferential reading skills, including the capacity to anticipate and predict. Stated differently, using the appropriate strategy to the students in reading class helps students better in their performance and their ability in understanding the passage.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is increasing the student's reading comprehension skills. Students have a growing awareness and positive perception of CSR as they see it as a reflection of the learning process in reading class. Implementing CSR enhances students' reading comprehension experiences, allowing them to collaboratively deepen their comprehension of English texts, sharpen their reading abilities, and cultivate social competencies essential for 21st-century learning. Student collaboration may enhance critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, and social interaction inside the classroom.

This positive perception is particularly significant as CSR helps them predict the text and overcome difficult word. They can find the most essential information of the text by using CSR by collaborate (working together) at every stage of reading. Overall, the strategic implementation of CSR is effective in fulfilling the questions and building trust and loyalty among the students in the reading class. This study remains constrained by its sample size. The researchers conducted a quasi-experimental study with a limited number of students. Future research should adopt expanded analytical frameworks with a more enormous number of students as sample, and the next researcher can employ classroom action research to gain enhanced insights into reading skills instruction.

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