A Phenomenological Study of the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method in Grade 6

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill essential for academic success. However, many learners struggle to comprehend narrative texts because they find it difficult to organize information, connect it to prior knowledge, and recall important events. To address these persistent challenges in functional literacy, this study explored the lived experiences of Grade 6 students utilizing the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method as a reading scaffold for narrative texts. Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design, the researchers collected data through semi-structured interviews with ten purposively selected participants to examine how students make sense of story maps before, during, and after reading. The findings revealed four superordinate themes: (1) Story Maps as Catalysts for Reading Readiness, (2) Story Mapping as a Framework for Meaning Construction, (3) Story Mapping as a Framework for Narrative Reconstruction, and (4) Story Maps as Empowering Reading Scaffolds for Independent Comprehension. Story mapping supported students' reading comprehension by preparing them before reading, guiding meaning construction during reading, and facilitating organized, confident narrative reconstruction after reading. Throughout the reading process, story mapping also emerged as an empowering scaffold that helped students build greater confidence and independence in comprehension. Ultimately, the study concludes that the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method transcends a simple worksheet to become a vital cognitive and instructional tool that fosters independent and meaningful reading comprehension. Based on students' lived experiences, the study developed a proposed Instructional Manual to guide educators in implementing this visual scaffold effectively in the classroom.

Keywords: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Narrative Retelling, Reading Comprehension, Story Mapping, Three-Phase Study Map

INTRODUCTION

In elementary language education, reading comprehension instruction often struggles to bridge the gap between basic textual decoding and deep, analytical storytelling. The Three-Phase Story Mapping Method—a structured framework that guides learners through pre-reading orientation, mid-reading tracking, and post-reading synthesis—offers a promising pedagogical intervention. However, little is known about how young learners internalize and navigate it. Results from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 showed that only 24% of Filipino 15-year-old students reached Level 2 or higher in reading literacy, compared with the OECD average of 74% (OECD, 2023). At this minimum proficiency level, students are expected to identify the main idea of a moderately long text, locate information based on explicit criteria, and reflect on a text's purpose and form when explicitly directed. The relatively small proportion of Filipino learners reaching this level indicates ongoing challenges in developing the reading skills needed to understand and interpret texts. The report showed that the Philippines scored significantly below the global average, reflecting persistent learning gaps in literacy development. Likewise, UNESCO (2023) warned that many learners worldwide are experiencing learning poverty, particularly in reading, where children struggle to read and comprehend age-appropriate texts. The World Bank (2022) also reported that learning losses from educational disruptions have intensified literacy challenges in developing nations, including the Philippines. At the national and local levels, literacy concerns remain alarming. The 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) reported that

although Central Visayas (Region VII) has high basic literacy rates, a significant gap remains in functional literacy, suggesting that many learners can decode words but fail to comprehend what they read fully. This issue is evident in Talisay City, Cebu, where local reading assessments identified many struggling readers.

According to the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), many learners remain at the frustration level despite school-based reading interventions. To address these challenges, educators have introduced various reading strategies, including story mapping. Story mapping is a visual instructional strategy that helps learners organize narrative information by identifying story grammar elements such as characters, setting, conflict, plot, and resolution. Recent studies support story mapping as a strategy for improving learners' comprehension. Beyhatın and Özdemir (2023) found that story mapping supported first-grade elementary students' reading and listening comprehension. Their study shows how visually representing story information can give young learners structured support for constructing meaning from narrative texts. Similarly, Abobo et al. (2026) reported improved reading comprehension after learners used story mapping. Al-Ghamdi (2025) further highlights its potential contribution to inferential comprehension by making relationships within narrative texts more visible.

Limited research explores how learners describe activating prior knowledge before reading, interacting with story grammar elements during reading, and synthesizing ideas after reading. Aini (2024) has also identified implementation challenges in using story maps. Some students struggle to understand how story maps work, while others experience difficulty organizing information systematically or determining which details are most relevant to include. These difficulties may affect learners' engagement and reduce the strategy's effectiveness without proper guidance. Students' perceptions of ease of use and effectiveness matter because positive learning experiences often increase motivation, engagement, and willingness to use reading strategies independently. Examining these lived experiences can help educators identify both the strengths and limitations of story mapping as a reading scaffold.

To address these gaps, this study explores the lived experiences of Grade 6 students using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method for reading comprehension. The research addresses the need for reading strategies that fit learners' needs and experiences by conducting the study in a local Philippine school setting. Specifically, it examines how students use prior knowledge before reading, identify and understand story elements during reading, and organize and understand the story after reading. It also examines their experiences with the story maps, including how easy they are to use and how helpful they are in improving reading comprehension. Using an interpretative phenomenological approach, this study goes beyond test scores and focuses on the students' actual experiences and personal views. It aims to understand how students use the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method to make meaning from what they read.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study is anchored in interrelated theoretical frameworks that explore Grade 6 students' lived experiences through the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method in reading comprehension. It is also guided by Martin Heidegger's interpretative phenomenological philosophy, particularly his concept of *Dasein* or "being-in-the-world," which emphasizes that human understanding is always shaped by lived experience and context. The study focuses on how learners actively interpret and make sense of their reading environment as they engage with story mapping before, during, and after reading, recognizing that meaning is co-constructed through their continuous interaction with the text and the classroom setting. Schema Theory serves as the primary foundation of this study because it explains how learners activate prior knowledge to understand new information from texts. Story Grammar Theory explains how readers understand narratives by identifying essential story elements such as characters, setting, problem, events, and resolution.

Graphic Organizer Theory emphasizes using visual tools to help learners organize, represent, and retain information more effectively. Social Constructivism Theory highlights that learning occurs through interaction, collaboration, and shared meaning-making. Together, these theoretical frameworks provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding how the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method supports students' reading comprehension and meaning-making processes. They collectively show that comprehension is an active process involving prior knowledge activation, narrative structuring, visual organization, and social interaction in constructing meaning from texts.

Schema Theory is a major foundation of this study because it explains how learners construct meaning by connecting new information to their prior knowledge and experiences. Bartlett (1932) introduced the concept of schema, describing how individuals use existing mental structures to interpret and organize new information. In reading comprehension, this perspective suggests that readers do not process texts in isolation; rather, they draw on what they already know to understand, interpret, and connect ideas presented in a text. Recent studies continue to support the role of schema activation in reading comprehension, particularly in helping learners interpret narrative texts and make meaningful connections with new information (Omollo et al., 2025; Samudera & Lolita, 2025).

Story Grammar Theory provides another important theoretical foundation for this study because it helps explain how organizing story components improves comprehension, retention, and interpretation of literary texts. Rumelhart (1975) presented an influential account of story structure, while Mandler and Johnson (1977) and Stein and Glenn (1979) further explained how narrative components contribute to comprehension and recall. In the present study, the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method provides a structured way for learners to identify characters, setting, problem, climax, resolution, and theme, and to understand how these elements contribute to story development. Recent studies support the value of structured narrative instruction. Villarta-Mendoza et al. (2025) found that story grammar improved reading performance, supporting explicit instruction in story structure for elementary learners. Similarly, Venneker et al. (2025) discovered that comprehension and recall were related but distinct processes, highlighting the importance of organizing narrative information for both understanding and remembering.

Social Constructivism Theory, developed from Vygotsky's (1978) work, serves as another theoretical foundation of this study because it views learning as a socially mediated process supported by interaction, guidance, and collaboration with a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). In this study, teacher guidance and story mapping scaffold learners' ability to identify story elements, organize information, construct meaning, and gradually become more independent readers. Recent studies support the role of social interaction and scaffolding in reading comprehension. Galanida and Ciruela (2025) found significant improvements in reading comprehension with the use of a story map, showing how guided, collaborative learning can support learners within their ZPD. In the present study, participants described how guided story-mapping activities helped them understand difficult texts, organize ideas, and gain reading confidence. Teacher explanations, questions, and guidance served as scaffolding, while gradual use of the story map encouraged greater independence in identifying and organizing information. Thus, Social Constructivism explains how guided support and interaction can facilitate comprehension and help learners progress from assisted performance toward greater independence in understanding and reconstructing narratives.

Moreover, this study is grounded in Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) philosophical stance, particularly his concept of Dasein, or "being-in-the-world," which emphasizes that human understanding is always shaped by lived experience and context. In this study, participants' experiences in using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method are understood as situated within their actual reading environment, where meaning is constructed through interaction with texts, peers, and learning processes. Heidegger's idea of the hermeneutic circle further supports this study by explaining that understanding is developed through a continuous movement between the parts and the whole of experience. This is reflected in how students interpret story elements while relating them to the text's overall meaning through story mapping. Furthermore, this study is also grounded in Heideggerian phenomenology, which views understanding as shaped by lived experience and interaction with the world (Heidegger, 1962).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research design, a qualitative approach that explores how individuals understand and make sense of their lived experiences of a specific phenomenon. To investigate the lived experiences of the student-participants with the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method as a narrative reading scaffold, this study employed an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design. IPA was specifically selected for its double hermeneutic foundation, enabling researchers to explore not only how Grade 6 learners assign personal meaning to their comprehension processes before, during, and after

reading, but also how they make sense of their cognitive and affective development. According to Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009), IPA examines the meanings people assign to their experiences and how they interpret them within their personal and social contexts. This design is particularly appropriate for the present study because it explores Grade 6 participants' lived experiences of reading comprehension using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method.

The study was conducted at Adventist Academy-Cebu, Inc. (AAC). It is a private boarding school for both boys and girls, owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The school is located on an eight-acre campus along N. Natalio Avenue in Talisay City, Cebu. Founded in 1930, AAC has a long history of providing a well-rounded education. The Southern Asia Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventist schools recognizes the school. It is also fully accredited by the Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA), the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities (ACSCU), and the Private Education Assistance Committee (PEAC). This study included 10 Grade 6 students enrolled at Adventist Academy Cebu during School Year 2026–2027. They were selected because they had firsthand experience using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method in their English learning activities and could provide meaningful accounts. A purposive sampling technique was employed based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) being officially enrolled as Grade 6 students, (2) having prior exposure to the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method, and (3) being willing to participate in in-depth interviews. The sample size of 10 participants aligned with the panel members' recommendation during the proposal stage, and data saturation was reached at 10 participants. Ten Grade 6 students were selected using purposive sampling based on their active participation in guided narrative reading sessions utilizing the three-phase mapping strategy. Primary qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews designed to evoke rich descriptions of the students' interactions with the visual scaffold. Data analysis followed the systematic iterative protocol of IPA to capture the depth and nuance of the participants' experiences. The transcripts were analyzed through multiple readings, initial exploratory annotation, and the development of emergent themes for each case before cross-case analysis.

Participants’ direct experience with the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method enabled them to provide rich, relevant accounts. Their firsthand experience was essential to the interpretative phenomenological approach, which seeks to understand how individuals make sense of their lived experiences; participants who had directly used the method also ensured the data closely aligned with the study's purpose and research questions. Their experiences served as the primary data source for understanding how the method supported their reading comprehension in the classroom context.

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide designed to gather rich qualitative data on Grade 6 participants' lived experiences using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method for reading comprehension. The semi-structured format allowed participants to describe their thoughts, feelings, and experiences freely while providing enough structure to address the research questions. This format suited phenomenological inquiry because it encouraged participants to provide detailed, reflective accounts of their experiences. The researcher conducted individual semi-structured interviews in a quiet, comfortable environment to ensure participants could express their thoughts freely without distractions. The interviews used open-ended questions, allowing students to describe their experiences fully using story maps. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants’ permission to ensure accurate data collection, while field notes were taken to document non-verbal cues and additional observations. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to preserve the participants’ exact words and intended meanings. Participants were allowed to review and confirm their responses, a process known as member checking, to ensure accuracy. This helped enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data before analysis began.

The collected data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), following the framework developed by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009). This analytic approach was appropriate because it allows an in-depth exploration of how Grade 6 participants make sense of their lived experiences using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method (before, during, and after reading) to enhance their reading comprehension. The analysis followed a systematic and iterative process. First, the researcher organized and transcribed all interview transcripts and narrative responses verbatim to ensure data accuracy and completeness. This initial step provided a reliable textual foundation for analysis and allowed the researcher to maintain closeness to the participants’ actual words. Second, the researcher repeatedly read and re-read the transcripts to become fully

immersed in the data. During this stage, the researcher identified and highlighted significant statements, key ideas, and meaningful descriptions, particularly those reflecting students' experiences using story mapping as a reading strategy. This process helped the researcher better understand how students constructed meaning before, during, and after reading activities. Third, the researcher conducted initial noting, making detailed annotations on the data. These notes included descriptive comments (what students experienced), linguistic observations (how they expressed their experiences), and conceptual reflections (preliminary interpretations of meaning). This step ensured that the analysis captured both surface-level responses and deeper interpretations of students' experiences. Fourth, I developed emergent themes by clustering related notes into meaningful patterns. These themes reflected recurring experiences such as improved comprehension, easier identification of story elements, enhanced engagement with texts, and better organization of ideas through the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Three-Phase Story Mapping Method served as the study's central phenomenon for understanding these experiences. This instructional strategy helped students visualize and organize narrative elements across three distinct stages in the reading classroom: a before-reading phase for introducing graphic organizers and making predictions; a during-reading phase in which students actively identified key textual elements; and an after-reading phase for summarizing and synthesizing the text. The interview data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), introduced by Jonathan A. Smith (1996), to understand how students made sense of their experiences. IPA is deeply committed to examining personal lived experience in detail, making it an ideal methodological framework for capturing the subjective ways students recalled and interpreted their interactions with the story maps.

The data analysis followed Smith's inductive approach to iterative coding and thematic analysis, applied strictly to the transcribed interview narratives. First, I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews verbatim. During the initial familiarization phase, I took exploratory notes focusing on participants' cognitive and emotional reactions. I then systematically transformed these notes into specific phrases that captured the psychological essence of the students' reflections through iterative coding. Thematic analysis then organized these significant statements into emergent themes, which were clustered into broader superordinate themes reflecting the shared meanings of participants' lived experiences. The findings remain grounded in students' narratives through representative verbatim excerpts. The chapter is organized according to the five research questions. The first four sections discuss the participants' experiences before, during, and after reading, as well as their perceptions of the story map as a reading scaffold. The final section presents the proposed Instructional Manual on the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method, developed from the study's findings to help teachers enhance students' reading comprehension.

The lived experiences of the Grade 6 participants are central to the analysis and interpretation of the findings, with the data presented in a structured format. Every section includes a thematic development matrix that systematically traces the students' statements from their original accounts to the researcher's interpretative codes and emerging themes. This process provides a clear and transparent connection between the students' experiences and the themes developed from the data. It also helps readers understand how learners' challenges, insights, and positive experiences contributed to the study's major themes. These meaningful accounts provide an empirical basis for developing an instructional manual that is responsive to the specific learning needs and experiences of students in the local classroom.

Theme Development Matrix

This presents an interpretative phenomenological analysis of participants' lived experiences using the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method to activate prior knowledge before reading. The analysis uncovers the meanings participants attached to story mapping as they prepared themselves to engage with narrative texts.

The superordinate theme emerged: **Story Maps as Catalysts for Reading Readiness** through this iterative interpretative process. This theme describes how participants viewed story mapping as more than a graphic organizer. It served as mental and cognitive preparation that shaped how they approached reading. The story map's visual structure sparked curiosity and interest. Participant 4 shared, *"Seeing the structure, the setup made*

me curious about the character or secrets [that were] going to be reveal[ed] next in the plot." The story map helped students connect the new text with their own experiences. Participant 6 explained that the map *"allows me to relate the events and characters to familiar situations... and it makes my reading more meaningful."*

Four related emergent themes formed this superordinate theme: (1) Curiosity in reading, (2) Reading Motivation, (3) Purposeful Reading, and (4) Reading Connection. These themes show that students experienced story mapping as a process that prepared them emotionally, mentally, and personally for reading. It helped create interest, provided clear guidance, and allowed them to connect the story with what they already knew and had experienced.

Table 1. Participants' Experiences using Story Maps

Participants Excerpt	Initial Code	Researcher's Interpretation	Emergent Theme	Superordinate Theme
"It made me curious what will happen next" (P2) *"Looking at the boxes, the pictures, and guide questions made me read more."* (P3)	Curiosity	The participant experienced heightened anticipation, suggesting that the story map stimulated intrinsic motivation before reading.	Curiosity in Reading	Maps as Catalysts for Reading Readiness
"It made the story easier to follow and understand... reading became more engaging and enjoyable." (P5)	Reading engagement	The participant linked the story map's organized format to increased enjoyment and a greater willingness to keep reading.	Reading Motivation	Story Maps as Catalysts for Reading Readiness
"It helped me identify the characters, setting, problem, solution, and theme." (P3) *"It serves as my roadmap, which made reading easier."* (P7)	Comprehension	The participant viewed the story map as a cognitive organizer that directed attention toward essential narrative elements.	Purposeful Reading	Story Maps as Catalysts for Reading Readiness
"It reminded me of the things I already knew. It helped me connect the story to real-life situations." (P4) *"Looking at the map made me think of the books I have read or the movies I watched that have similar themes."* (P5)	Activating prior knowledge	The participant connected prior knowledge, reading experiences, and personal memories to the new story to build a meaningful understanding.	Reading Connection	Story Maps as Catalysts for Reading Readiness

Emergent Theme 1: Curiosity in Reading

Participants described their engagement with the story map as an experience that stimulated curiosity and encouraged them to explore the narrative more actively. Their accounts suggest the story did not begin with reading the text; instead, the story map's visual structure created an initial point of interest that shaped how they approached the narrative. Within their lived experiences, the boxes, pictures, and guide questions appeared to invite anticipation about the characters, events, and possible developments in the story. Curiosity was experienced not merely as an emotional response but as an initial orientation toward discovering meaning in the text.

Participant 2 described this experience: *"It made me curious what will happen next."* This statement reveals how the participant personally experienced the story map before and while approaching the narrative. The participant's curiosity focused on the story's unfolding events, suggesting the organizer created an expectation to keep reading and discover what would happen next.

Participant 3 described a similar but distinct experience, stating, *"Looking at the boxes, the pictures and guide questions made me read more."* For this participant, curiosity was linked to the story map's specific visual and structural features. The boxes provided spaces that directed attention, while the pictures and guide questions gave the participant concrete points from which to approach the story. The participant experienced these features as prompts that encouraged further reading.

Although Participants 2 and 3 expressed their experiences differently, their accounts reveal a shared experiential meaning. Participant 2 emphasized curiosity about what would happen next, while Participant 3 emphasized how the map's visual features encouraged continued reading. In both accounts, however, the story map appeared to create an initial orientation toward the narrative that encouraged active engagement. Their curiosity connected to the organizer's structure and to the possibility of discovering meaning through continued reading. The participants therefore experienced the story map not simply as a recording tool but as something that shaped their initial encounter with the text.

The participants' experiences further suggest that curiosity developed through interaction with the story map's visual and organizational structure. The map provided visible points of attention that encouraged students to anticipate, question, and explore the narrative. Curiosity therefore extended beyond simply wanting to know what would happen next. It involved paying closer attention to the story and being more willing to engage with its developing events.

A common pattern emerged across these experiential accounts: students experienced the story map as a structure that stimulated curiosity and encouraged continued engagement with the narrative. Their reflections converged on the idea that visual elements and guiding features shaped how they approached the story, although each participant experienced this process differently. For Participant 2, curiosity emerged through anticipation of future events, whereas Participant 3 experienced curiosity through interaction with boxes, pictures, and guide questions.

These lived experiences suggest that participants interpreted story mapping as a catalyst for reading curiosity. The organizer appeared to create an initial sense of anticipation that encouraged students to approach the narrative with greater interest and willingness to explore. Its visual and organizational features provided entry points into the text, allowing curiosity to develop through anticipation, attention, and continued reading. Thus, the participants experienced story mapping as more than a graphic organizer for recording information. It helped them orient to the narrative and become actively interested in discovering its meaning.

Participants made sense of their experiences by describing how the story map made them curious, eager to know what would happen next, and motivated to read more. The researcher then interpreted these accounts as an experiential shift in how students approached the narrative. The resulting interpretation is that story mapping served as a catalyst, transforming the initial encounter with the text into a more exploratory reading experience. This interpretation remains grounded in the participants' own descriptions rather than treating curiosity as a predetermined effect of the strategy.

Recent studies on story mapping and graphic organizers support these findings. Beyhatin and Özdemir (2023), in a study involving elementary school students, found that story mapping was associated with improved reading comprehension and positive changes in students' reading attitudes. Similarly, Krishnan and Low (2024) found that graphic organizer instruction helped learners identify important information and connect textual information with existing mental schemas, suggesting that visual organization can provide meaningful entry points into comprehension. More recently, Özkara et al. (2025) reported that story mapping supported primary school students' ability to determine the main idea of narrative texts, further demonstrating the value of structured visual representations in helping learners attend to important aspects of a story.

While these studies primarily examine the instructional or comprehension-related outcomes of story mapping, the present findings extend this perspective by showing how students personally experienced the beginning of that engagement. The participants did not simply report that the story map improved their comprehension. Their accounts revealed that the visual structure first captured their attention, generated curiosity, and encouraged them to continue reading. Thus, the present IPA findings suggest that story mapping can be understood not only as a tool for organizing narrative information but also as an experiential catalyst that prepares students to enter the reading process with interest and anticipation.

Emergent Theme 2: Reading Motivation

Participant 5 described the story map as an experience that made reading easier to follow and more enjoyable, stating, *"It made the story easier to follow and understand... reading became more engaging and enjoyable."* This account reveals a change in how the participant experienced the reading activity. The participant appeared to find the text more accessible because the story map provided a structure for following its development, rather than experiencing it as a sequence of information to be understood. The participant's emphasis on the story becoming "easier to follow and understand" suggests that clearer narrative organization influenced how the participant approached the reading task. The statement that reading became "more engaging and enjoyable" further indicates that a more positive reading experience accompanied improved understanding. The participant experienced the story map not only as a tool for organizing information but also as a support that made continued engagement with the text more meaningful.

Participant 5's account suggests that motivation was connected to understanding the narrative. As the story became easier to follow, the participant appeared more willing to remain engaged with the reading activity. The story map provided an organized representation of the narrative that helped the participant recognize how the story progressed and how its parts were related. A consistent pattern across the narratives showed that reading motivation appeared to develop through their interaction with both the story map and the narrative. The participants' experiences suggest that engagement strengthened when the organizer's structure helped them understand what they were reading. The story map therefore appeared to influence not only what participants noticed in the text but also how they experienced reading itself. As participants identified and organized narrative elements, they could approach the story with greater direction and continue exploring its events and meanings. Motivation, in this sense, came from actively making sense of the narrative rather than from external encouragement to read.

As a result, the story map shaped participants' reading experience by making the narrative more approachable and understandable. Reading was not only a classroom task but an activity in which participants could follow the story's development and become more engaged with its meaning. The difficulties of understanding a narrative did not necessarily disappear; instead, the organizer appeared to give participants a structure through which they could work through those difficulties. Participant 5's account particularly shows how increased clarity in understanding the story was associated with greater enjoyment and engagement. The story map therefore appeared to function as an interpretative scaffold that supported participants in moving from simply following the text toward becoming more actively involved in understanding it.

These interpretations are consistent with recent research showing that story mapping and graphic organizers can support participants' engagement and comprehension by providing visual structures for organizing and understanding narrative information. In a study of 420 elementary school students, Li et al. (2024) found that reading motivation made a unique contribution to reading comprehension across Grades 2 to 4, highlighting the

importance of affective factors in children's reading development. Their findings support the present participants' experiences in which greater clarity and understanding of the narrative were accompanied by a more positive and engaging reading experience. In a related study, Mehari et al. (2026) found that graphic organizers significantly enhanced behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement among Grade 5 EFL learners. Students also described reading activities supported by graphic organizers as more interesting, interactive, and meaningful. These findings support the view that visual organization may boost engagement by making reading more manageable and meaningful for learners.

Emergent Theme 3: Purposeful Reading

Participants consistently described the story map as providing direction during reading. Their accounts suggest that the organizer helped them identify important aspects of the narrative and approach the text with a clearer purpose. Participants described the story map as a framework that directed their attention to meaningful information, rather than reading without knowing which details to focus on.

Participant 3 stated, *"It helped me identify the characters, setting, problem, solution, and theme."* This account suggests that identifying story elements helped the participant determine what mattered in the narrative.

Participant 4 explained, *"It gives me a heads-up on what to look for while reading, so I was not just simply reading or guessing, but I was comprehending."* The contrast between *"guessing"* and *"comprehending"* shows how the participant shifted toward more intentional reading.

Participant 7 reinforced this interpretation by describing the story map as *"my roadmap which made reading easier."* The "roadmap" metaphor conveys the participant's experience of having guidance while navigating the narrative.

Purposeful reading emerged through three related experiences: identifying essential story elements, knowing what to attend to, and having a clear guide while reading. Their accounts converged in showing how the story map helped them approach the narrative more deliberately, though participants described these experiences differently. The organizer appeared to support their ability to direct attention and organize information, rather than serve as a classroom activity. These interpretations align with recent research showing that graphic organizers can provide learners with structured support for identifying and organizing information during reading. Mannag and Dagdag (2024), in a study involving Grade 8 students in the Philippines, found that graphic-organizer instruction significantly improved students' reading performance. Their findings suggest that visually organizing information can give learners a clearer structure for processing textual content. This supports the present participants' accounts that the story map helped them identify key narrative elements and focus on what matters while reading. Similarly, Seekiew (2024), who examined sixth-year elementary school students' use of graphic organizers with folktale texts, found a significant improvement in reading comprehension following instruction using graphic organizers. This finding is particularly relevant to the present study because the participants were at a comparable elementary grade level and worked with narrative texts. Together, these studies support interpreting the story map as a structure that helped participants approach narrative texts with greater direction and organize the information needed for comprehension.

Emergent Theme 4: Reading Connection

Another experiential pattern emerged in participants' descriptions of connecting the stories they read to their previous experiences. Their accounts showed that comprehension extended beyond the information presented in the text, as they drew on personal memories, familiar situations, and stories from books and films to interpret narrative events. These connections suggest that story mapping helped participants approach reading as an interaction between the text and their lived experiences.

Participant 4 shared, *"It reminded me of the things I already knew. It helped me connect the story to real-life situations."* This account illustrates how familiar experiences served as reference points for understanding the narrative.

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Participant 5 explained, *"Looking at the map made me think of the books I have read or the movies I watched that have similar themes."* The participant's reflection highlights how previous encounters with narratives shape interpretation of a new story.

Participant 10 reflected, *"It reminded me of the stories I have read in the past and my experiences, which helped me connect to the story more."* This account demonstrates how personal memories and previous encounters with stories contributed to a more meaningful reading experience.

This experiential pattern highlights the role of personal connections in constructing meaning during reading. Through story mapping, participants appeared to interpret narratives by drawing upon experiences that already held significance in their lives. Such connections helped them relate textual information to familiar situations and develop interpretations grounded in their existing knowledge. Within their accounts, story mapping served as a reflective aid that made reading more personally meaningful. These findings indicate that connecting prior knowledge and personal experiences was an important dimension of participants' reading experiences. Alongside stimulating curiosity before reading and providing direction during reading, story mapping encouraged participants to relate narrative events to their own lived realities.

This interpretation suggests that the method supported reading readiness not only by directing participants' attention toward the text but also by helping them draw upon knowledge and experiences relevant to what they were about to read. This interpretation is consistent with recent research emphasizing the role of background knowledge and its activation in reading comprehension. Smith et al. (2021) found that background knowledge contributes to children's reading comprehension and explained that readers integrate information from a text with their existing knowledge to construct a meaningful representation of the text. Hattan et al. (2024) further emphasized that activating students' existing knowledge and experiences before, during, and after reading can support comprehension. Additionally, he identified multiple evidence-based approaches for activating prior knowledge, including open-ended prompts, visual representations, and other instructional supports. More recent meta-analytic evidence from Kim and Cao (2025) likewise showed a positive relationship between content knowledge and comprehension and found that instruction designed to increase content knowledge can improve reading comprehension.

Table 2: Participants' Synthesis and Retelling Using Story Map

Participants' Excerpt	Initial Code	Researcher's Interpretation	Emergent Theme	Superordinate Theme
"The story map helped me organize the main events... retelling became easier, clearer, and more accurate." (P1) *It serves as my guide in retelling the story in order. (P2)* *"It made retelling super easy... like an organized script." (P6)* *"It helped me organize the story... I could explain it from beginning to end." (P10)*	Guided retelling	Participant experienced the story map as a comforting guide that turned the challenging task of remembering a story into a simple, step-by-step process. The story map provides a clear visual layout that helped them easily trace the events from start to finish without feeling overwhelmed. Having this structured outline cleared their minds, allowing them to retell the story naturally,	Structured Retelling	Story Mapping as a Framework for Narrative Reconstructio n

		accurately, and with much greater ease.		
'I wrote them in order... I could easily recall what happened." (P1) *It is a helpful tool that helps me remember the sequence of events easily. (P2)* *"It helped me recall the important events... beginning, middle and end, the ideas stuck in my mind" (P5)* *"It helped me organize the story... I could explain it from beginning to end." (P10)*	Sequential recalling	Participants found the story map to be a highly practical tool that made remembering the story's details much easier. By mapping events in a clear timeline from start to finish, they felt the core ideas naturally stuck in their minds. This visual structure eased the pressure of memorization, making recall feel natural and effortless.	Effective Recalling	Story Mapping as a Framework for Narrative Reconstructio n
"It guided me... my explanation became more logical... I shared my story confidently." (P1) *"It kept me from scrambling my words." (P6)* *"Everything is comprehensible... to my audience." (P8)* *"I separate what belongs to other elements... my explanation would be easy and clear." (P10)*	Guiding Explanation	Participants felt comfortable and assured because the story map gave them a dependable structure to lean on while speaking. The tool kept them from feeling overwhelmed or jumbling their words during the retelling by clearly separating the story's details beforehand; their logical, easy-to-follow explanations helped them share their stories with genuine confidence.	Confidence Building	Story Mapping as a Framework for Narrative Reconstructio n

Emergent Theme 1: Structured Retelling

Retelling a story requires readers to identify important events and arrange them in a meaningful sequence to communicate their understanding of the narrative. Participants' accounts revealed that retelling involved more than reproducing remembered events; it also required connecting those events into a coherent narrative. Participants described the story map as a visible framework that helped them determine how to present the story from beginning to end. Their descriptions suggest that the organizer made retelling more manageable by providing a structure they could follow while reconstructing the narrative.

Participant 1 explained, *"The story map helped me organize the main events... retelling became easier, clearer, and more accurate."* The emphasis on "organize the main events" suggests the participant experienced retelling as arranging information rather than merely listing what happened.

Participant 2's statement: *"It serves as my guide in retelling the story in order."* The word "guide" is particularly significant because it positions the map as a reference point during retelling. The participant could follow the organizer's arrangement rather than determine the narrative order entirely while speaking. This account suggests that retelling became more navigable with a visible structure.

Participant 6 described the story map as *"an organized script."* This comparison suggests that the participant experienced the map as an outline for presenting the story. A script ordinarily provides a sequence to follow, and the participant's choice of this comparison conveys the perceived usefulness of having an established structure.

Participant 10 similarly stated, *"It helped me organize the story... I could explain it from beginning to end."* The phrase "from beginning to end" highlights the importance of continuity in the participant's experience. The participant did not describe the task solely in terms of identifying separate story elements; instead, they emphasized being able to present the narrative as a connected whole.

Across these accounts, participants shared that a visual guide helped them organize and reconstruct the story more easily. However, participants expressed this experience in different ways: Participant 1 emphasized the clarity of the resulting retelling, Participant 2 described the map as a guide, Participant 6 compared it to a script, and Participant 10 emphasized continuity from beginning to end. These differences indicate that the map's significance was not limited to one function. Participants experienced it as a way to organize information, a reference point, and a framework for maintaining narrative flow. These experiences suggest that structured retelling was meaningful because it gave participants a recognizable way to approach the task of explaining a story. The organizer appeared to reduce the burden of deciding how to arrange the narrative while simultaneously presenting it. The experience centered on having a structure through which participants could turn their understanding of a text into an organized oral account.

This interpretation is consistent with research on reading comprehension and instructional support that recognizes the importance of understanding text structures and organizing information. Duke and Cartwright (2021), along with other work on reading instruction and learning supports, provide a broader context for understanding why organizational guidance may be useful. Nevertheless, the present findings are grounded in participants' descriptions of their own experiences; they do not independently establish that story mapping improved retelling performance.

Emergent Theme 2: Effective Recalling

Participants' accounts showed that effective recall came from their ability to remember, organize, and reconstruct story events with support from the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method. Their descriptions suggest that recalling a narrative became more manageable when they arranged its important events in a visible, meaningful sequence. Although participants shared this experience, their individual accounts highlighted different aspects of recall, including remembering events in order, using the story map as a memory aid, retaining the main ideas, and explaining the narrative coherently.

P1's statement, "*I wrote them in order... I could easily recall what happened,*" suggests that arranging story events sequentially helped the participant retrieve narrative information. The phrase "I wrote them in order" highlights the participant's active involvement in organizing the story rather than simply reading and trying to remember its contents.

P2's account, "It is a helpful tool that helps me easily remember the sequence of events," highlights the participant's experience of the story map as a memory aid. Describing the organizer as a "helpful tool" suggests its value was tied to the support it provided during the reading activity. The emphasis on remembering the "sequence of events" indicates that the participant's concern was not limited to recalling individual details but also involved remembering how the events unfolded.

P5's statement, "It helped me recall the important events... beginning, middle and end, the ideas stuck in my mind," reveals a more specific experience of remembering the narrative's major elements. The reference to the

"beginning, middle and end" suggests that the participant used the story's overall structure to organize what needed to be remembered.

P10's account, "It helped me organize the story... I could explain it from beginning to end," extends the meaning of effective recall by connecting remembering with the ability to communicate the narrative. The participant's initial emphasis on organizing the story suggests that recalling events was closely associated with establishing a clear structure for presenting them.

Taken together, these accounts suggest that participants experienced effective recall as an active process of retrieving, arranging, and reconnecting narrative information. P1 emphasized how easy it was to remember events after ordering them, while P2 highlighted the story map's usefulness as a reference for recalling their sequence. P5 focused on remembering important events across the beginning, middle, and end, whereas P10 linked organized recall to the ability to explain the narrative coherently. Despite these differences, all four accounts point to the importance of having a structure that made the story easier to revisit mentally.

This interpretation aligns with Iriyama et al. (2024), whose study examined a narrative-based language intervention incorporating story grammar and structured narrative activities. Gillam et al. (2025) likewise investigated a structured oral narrative intervention and reported improvements in narrative production. These studies support the importance of explicit narrative structure in helping learners organize and communicate story information. The present study offers a different perspective by showing how Grade 6 participants used the story map as a practical aid for remembering event sequences, retaining key ideas, and reconstructing narratives in an organized way.

Emergent Theme 3: Confidence Building

Participants' accounts of confidence building focused on their perceived ability to express their understanding of a story with greater assurance and control. This theme concerned what it was like for participants to communicate their understanding to others. Their descriptions suggest that having a structure to follow helped some participants feel more prepared to explain the story and less likely to lose their train of thought.

Participant 1 stated, *"It guided me... my explanation became more logical... I shared my story confidently."* The explicit reference to sharing the story "confidently" makes this account particularly relevant to the theme. The participant linked the map's guidance to a greater sense of assurance in expression.

Participant 8 stated, *"Everything is comprehensible... to my audience."* This account shifts attention from the participant's explanation to how listeners might understand it. The emphasis on the audience suggests that communicating the story involved more than recalling information.

Recent research supports this interpretation. Spencer (2023) emphasized that students can develop confidence and proficiency in oral storytelling when they receive appropriate support during retelling and gradually move toward more complex narratives. The study specifically recommends beginning with stories that students can retell with support and increasing complexity as their confidence and proficiency develop. This supports the present participants' descriptions because their confidence appeared to develop from having a structure they could rely on while explaining the narrative. Kesevan (2023) likewise found that a written retelling strategy helped Malaysian ESL pupils understand story structure, sequence events, retain information, and develop greater confidence in reading fluency. This is particularly relevant to the present finding because it links narrative organization with learners' perceived confidence. The story map appeared to provide participants with an external reference point that reduced uncertainty, supported organization, and made their explanations feel clearer and more manageable. Participants described the method as contributing to their confidence while retelling and explaining stories**.** This finding aligns with Vygotsky's perspectives on learning support, particularly the idea that assistance can make a challenging task more manageable. In this study, the map may be understood as an external support that participants found useful for organizing and communicating their understanding. Overall, confidence building represents the communicative dimension of participants' experiences with story mapping. Participants did not describe the map only as a way to arrange or remember story information; some also associated it with feeling more prepared to explain what they understood.

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Theme Development Matrix for the ease of use and perceived effectiveness of story maps as reading scaffolds

This section presents participants' experiences using story maps to read and understand narrative texts. This section focuses not only on the participants' reading performance but also on their personal experiences. It examines how they felt at the beginning, how they handled difficulties, and how their confidence improved as they learned to use the strategy. One superordinate theme emerged: **Story Maps as Empowering Reading Scaffolds for Independent Comprehension.**

This theme shows how participants moved from finding reading tasks difficult to feeling more confident in their ability to understand texts. The story map became more than a classroom worksheet. It became a helpful tool that made reading easier, more organized, and easier to understand. Three related emergent themes supported this superordinate theme: Practice Builds Confidence, Structured Visual Guidance, Enhancing Reading Comprehension, and Strategic Reflective Reading.

The participants' growth in confidence through practice was shown in the experience of participant 1, who shared: *"It was easy for me after I learned how to use it. At first it was confusing, but after practicing, I became more confident in filling out each part of the story map."* This statement shows that practice helped the participant move from confusion to confidence. At first, the story map was difficult to use, but after practicing, the participant became more comfortable with each part of the map. This suggests that guided practice helped participants understand and use the strategy more effectively.

The four emergent themes also show that story mapping was more than a regular classroom activity. It helped participants manage reading difficulties, understand the story better, and build confidence in their reading skills; instead of focusing only on small details, they could see and understand the story as a whole. Participant 6 explained: *"It helped me see the bigger picture instead of getting lost in the words."* This statement shows that the story map helped the participant organize information and understand the story's main idea. These experiences show that story maps helped improve their confidence, comprehension, and use of reading strategies. The findings suggest that a simple visual tool can help participants become more confident and independent when reading and understanding narrative texts.

Table 3: Participants' Lived Experience of Using Story Maps

Participants' Excerpt	Initial Code	Researcher's Interpretation	Emergent Theme	Superordinate Theme
"At first it was a little confusing, but after practicing, I became more confident in filling out each part of the story map." (P1) *"It was hard at first, but I kept on using it so I got used to it, and now it is easy." (P2)* "*It is easier to use because it gives a clear*	Confidence developed through repeated practice.	The participants' responses show that story maps are confusing at first because they are a new way to learn. However, as they practice and use the tool more often, this initial difficulty quickly fades away. In the end, regular practice turns a challenging activity into a helpful guide, making students feel much more confident in their reading skills.	Practice Builds Confidence	Story Maps as Empowering Reading Scaffolds for Independent Comprehension

guide for organizing story details. Some parts are challenging to locate, yet with practice and consistent use of it, it becomes easier and more helpful in understanding the story." (P9)				
"The sections clearly showed what information to write. It guided me in identifying the important parts of the story and organizing them correctly." (P4) "*It is easy to use because it clearly shows exactly what to do and what information I should pay more attention to." (P5)* *"It is helpful because I can use them easily; it is like a tracker while reading the story." (P7)*	Structured guidance in organizing information	The participants' feedback shows that having a clear visual framework makes a big difference in how easily they can process a story. The labeled sections serve as a direct guide, showing them exactly where to focus their attention while reading. This clear organization prevents confusion and makes it simple for students to capture the right information.	Structured Visual Guidance	Story Maps as Empowering Reading Scaffolds for Independent Comprehension
"It helped me see the bigger picture instead of getting lost in the words" (P6) *"It helped me focus on the main ideas, understand the sequence of events, and identify the lesson of the story. It also improved my comprehension and memory of what I read." (P7)* *"It helped me focus on the important details without being distracted by longer words since I can spot the ideas clearly*	Guided Text Comprehension	The participants' responses show that story maps help them filter out difficult words that often confuse them while reading. Instead of getting stuck on long sentences, the tool helps them clearly see the main ideas and how the events connect. As a result, students can grasp the story's overall message more easily, which greatly improves their memory and understanding.	Enhancing Reading Comprehension	Story Maps as Empowering Reading Scaffolds for Independent Comprehension

through the story map" (P10)				
"The most challenging part was identifying the climax... I overcame this by rereading the story, looking for clues, and reviewing my notes." (P3) *"The hardest part is spotting some story elements where I find it hard to look for them. Yet I reread the story, and it helped me overcome it." (P4)*	Reflective thinking	The participants' feedback highlights that while finding complex parts of a story like the conflict or climax can be hard, the story map encourages them not to give up. Instead of skipping difficult sections, the tool prompts them to go back, reread the text, and look closer for clues. This helpful challenge turns them into strategic readers who can navigate difficult texts to reach full understanding.	Strategic Reflective Reading	Story Maps as Empowering Reading Scaffolds for Independent Comprehension

Emergent Theme 1: Practice Builds Confidence

Participants' accounts revealed that their confidence in using the story map developed gradually through repeated engagement with the method. Participants described an initial period of uncertainty, when identifying and organizing story elements was difficult, rather than immediate competence. Continued practice, however, appeared to change how they approached the organizer. What was initially unfamiliar became more recognizable, manageable, and useful. The significance of practice, therefore, was not simply that participants became more familiar with completing the map but that repeated use appeared to change their sense of capability when working with the strategy.

Participant 1 stated, *"After practicing, I became more confident in filling out each part of the story map."* The participant explicitly linked practice to becoming "more confident," suggesting that confidence grew through repeated engagement. The phrase "each part" also suggests that familiarity grew as the participant worked through the organizer's individual sections. The participant gradually became more comfortable with what each component required, rather than approaching the map as an unfamiliar whole. The experience suggests a developing sense of competence as the participant became familiar with the process of completing the organizer.

Participant 2 described the story map as *"hard at first"* but explained that continued use helped them *"get used to it."* The expression "get used to it" conveys a process of becoming familiar with something that initially felt difficult. The participant did not describe the initial difficulty as permanent. Instead, repeated interaction appeared to change the participant's relationship with the task, eventually making it feel "easy." This account suggests that the participant experienced difficulty as part of becoming familiar with a new way of working with story information.

Participant 9 provided a similar but more nuanced account, explaining that some story elements were still *"challenging to locate." At the same time, "with practice and consistent use of it, it became easier and more helpful in understanding [the] story."* The participant's acknowledgment that certain elements remained challenging matters because it shows that practice did not necessarily eliminate difficulty; repeated use made it more manageable. The story map gradually became something the participant could use more comfortably, and this familiarity contributed to the participant's perception that the organizer was helpful.

Purnomo, Ilmi, and Septianto (2023) support the participants' experiences, using a qualitative approach to examine the implementation of graphic organizers in reading instruction. Their findings indicated that graphic organizers could foster students' confidence and motivation in reading classes. This supports the present interpretation that participants' growing confidence was connected to their experience of using a structured reading support. However, the present study adds an experiential dimension by showing how confidence developed through repeated engagement.

Emergent Theme 2: Structured Visual Guidance

Participants experienced the story map as a visible framework that directed their attention during reading. They did not view the organizer as merely a place to record answers after reading; its sections served as cues that helped them identify relevant information and focus on important details. The visual structure therefore conveyed meaning by making the reading task clearer and easier to navigate.

Participant 4 explained that *"the sections clearly showed what information to write."* The participant's emphasis on the sections suggests that the map's organization communicated expectations.

Participant 5 similarly stated that the story map *"clearly show[s] what to do exactly and what information [to] pay attention [to]."* The participant's wording highlights two related experiences: knowing what action to take and knowing what information deserved attention.

Participant 7 described the story map as *"like a tracker while reading the story."* This metaphor provides a particularly meaningful insight into the participant's lived experience.

The experiential significance of this visual guidance is consistent with Imsa-ard's (2022) study of graphic organizers among 64 Thai EFL secondary students. The study examined both reading comprehension and students' opinions toward using graphic organizers in reading instruction, supporting the view of graphic organizers as instructional structures that can shape learners' engagement with reading tasks. In relation to the present findings, this study provides contextual support for the participants' perception that the organizer gave them direction. However, participants in the present study expressed this support more specifically through the language of "sections," "what information to pay attention to," and a "tracker."

The accounts therefore reveal a shared experience of the story map as a source of visual direction, though participants described it differently. Participant 4 emphasized knowing what information to write; Participant 5 emphasized knowing what to do and what to attend to; and Participant 7 experienced the organizer as a "tracker." These variations suggest that visual guidance mattered because it gave participants a clearer sense of where to direct their attention and how to move through the task. From an IPA perspective, *Structured Visual Guidance* represents participants' experience of having an external reference point while reading. The organizer's sections appeared to make the task more recognizable by signaling which aspects of the story required attention.

Emergent Theme 3: Enhanced Reading Comprehension

Participants described the story map as shaping how they experienced understanding a narrative. Their accounts moved beyond identifying individual words or isolated details toward seeing relationships among important parts of the story. Comprehension felt more organized and holistic, particularly when participants used the visual structure to focus on central ideas, events, and the narrative's message.

Participant 6 stated, *"It helped me see the bigger picture instead of getting lost in the words."* The contrast between "the bigger picture" and "getting lost in the words" provides an important insight into the participant's experience.

Participant 7 explained that the story map helped them *"focus on the main ideas, understand the sequence of events, and identify the lesson of the story."* This account demonstrates how the participant experienced comprehension through several connected aspects of the narrative.

Participant 10 stated that the story map helped them *"focus on the important details without being distracted by longer words."* This account introduces another dimension of the comprehension experience.

The experiences described by these participants are supported by Alamsa and Choorak (2025), who examined the use of graphic organizers with Grade 6 students learning English reading comprehension. Their study found significantly higher comprehension performance after instruction using graphic organizers and also reported very high student satisfaction with the learning process. The age and instructional context make this study particularly relevant to the present findings. While their quantitative findings focus on measured comprehension performance, the present study offers a different perspective by showing how participants experienced the organizer as helping them see the "bigger picture," focus on important ideas, and work through the narrative more clearly.

Enhancing Reading Comprehension is therefore not interpreted as a measured increase in comprehension ability; rather, it captures how participants experienced making sense of the narrative when the story map was available. The visual structure appeared to help some participants experience the story as more organized, allowing them to focus on relationships, central information, and the narrative's overall meaning. The present participants' accounts specifically illuminate what such support felt like during reading: seeing the whole story, identifying its important components, and maintaining attention on meaningful information.

Emergent Theme 4: Strategic Reflective Reading

Participants' accounts revealed that encountering difficulty with particular story elements did not necessarily lead them to stop reading or rely on immediate guesses. Instead, they described returning to the text, looking for clues, reviewing information, and concentrating on specific narrative elements. These experiences suggest that difficulty became an occasion for participants to reconsider what they had understood and determine what additional information they needed.

Participant 3 identified the *"climax"* as the most challenging element and explained that they addressed the difficulty by *"rereading the story, looking for clues and reviewing my notes."*

Participant 4 similarly stated, *"I reread the story, and it helped me overcome it."*

Participant 9 described difficulty identifying the *"conflict of the story"* and explained that rereading while *"focusing on the main problem"* helped them complete the story map accurately.

The participants' experiences are supported by Seban, Urban, and Sikl's (2025) study comparing single reading, rereading, and multiple-text reading. Their findings showed that rereading produced somewhat better short-term knowledge-test performance than single reading and, importantly for the present interpretation, participants in the rereading condition showed increasing confidence in their judgments across repeated readings. The researchers also examined metacognitive monitoring, demonstrating that repeated engagement with a text was connected with learners' monitoring of their understanding. This supports interpreting the participants' rereading not as mere repetition but as part of a process of checking and monitoring understanding.

Strategic Reflective Reading captures the meaning participants attached to difficulty during the story-mapping process. Difficulty was not only an obstacle to completing the organizer; for these participants, it signaled that they needed to engage further with the text. Rereading, checking clues, reviewing notes, and focusing on specific information became ways to respond to uncertainty and work toward a clearer understanding. This interpretation is also consistent with Bernardo and Mante-Estacio's (2023) analysis of metacognitive reading strategies among Filipino high school students, which emphasized the role of metacognitive strategies in helping learners draw meaning from texts and address comprehension difficulties. However, because the present theme already includes a directly relevant rereading study in Seban et al. (2025), Bernardo and Mante-Estacio should be reserved for a different section of the thesis rather than repeated here. Strategic Reflective Reading represents an experience of reading in which difficulty prompted further examination, checking, and reconsideration. The story map appeared to provide a structure that helped participants identify what needed clarification, while rereading became a way to return to the text with a more focused purpose.

CONCLUSION

Grounded in the lived experiences of Grade 6 learners, this study shows that the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method goes beyond a conventional graphic organizer, serving as an empowering cognitive and affective scaffold for narrative comprehension. By systematically guiding students through pre-reading orientation, mid-reading meaning construction, and post-reading narrative reconstruction, the approach effectively mitigates cognitive overload while instilling reading self-efficacy and strategic independence. Central to operationalizing these empirical findings is the CHART Guide (*Connect, Highlight, Arrange, Reconstruct, and Tell*), a structured framework that codifies the three-phase mapping process into an accessible, actionable sequence for classroom instruction. Translating phenomenological insights into pedagogical practice, the accompanying Instructional Manual—complete with scaffolded worksheets, application models, assessment checklists, and metacognitive reflection prompts—provides educators with an adaptable roadmap for literacy instruction. Ultimately, when implemented flexibly and with responsive pedagogical judgment, the Three-Phase Story Mapping Method offers a transformative pathway to developing confident, self-regulated, and deep readers in early adolescent education.

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