

THE EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING ON THE EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) on the reading comprehension of eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Palembang. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design was used with 50 students from two intact classes, comprising 25 students in the experimental group and 25 in the control group. The experimental group received CSR-based instruction for eight meetings, while the control group received conventional instruction. Data were collected using a 25-item multiple-choice reading comprehension test with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.935. The experimental group's mean score increased from 40.00 to 79.84, whereas the control group increased from 53.76 to 73.04. An independent-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the posttest scores, $t(48) = -3.825$, $p < .001$. The findings indicate that CSR was associated with higher reading comprehension performance in the studied context.

Keywords: *Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR); reading comprehension; recount text; EFL reading; junior high school*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32502/ecj.v10i2.11602>

Introduction

Reading is a central language skill in English learning because it enables students to obtain information, interpret messages, and construct meaning from written texts. In an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, reading comprehension involves more than recognizing vocabulary and individual sentences. Readers need to identify important information, establish relationships among ideas, infer meaning, and develop an overall interpretation of a text. Reading therefore involves strategic and cognitive processes in which students actively construct meaning from written input (Grabe & Stoller, 2020).

The development of reading comprehension is particularly important at the junior high school level, where students encounter different text types and are expected to understand both explicit and implicit information. One text type used in the instructional context

of the present study is recount text. Recount texts present past events or experiences in chronological order and generally consist of orientation, a sequence of events, and reorientation (Anderson & Anderson, 2003). Understanding this type of text requires students to follow the sequence of events, identify relevant details, and determine the main idea.

However, reading comprehension can be difficult when students have limited vocabulary, experience difficulty identifying main ideas, or do not use effective strategies while reading. A teacher-centered lesson that primarily asks students to read a passage and answer questions may provide limited opportunities for students to discuss difficult information, monitor their understanding, and construct meaning collaboratively. Reading instruction therefore benefits from strategies that combine explicit comprehension

processes with active student participation.

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is one strategy that integrates strategic reading and cooperative learning. Tiana et al. (2025) describe CSR as a collaborative reading approach that integrates strategic reading processes to support students' comprehension of texts. Recent evidence from an Indonesian junior high school context also shows the use of CSR to develop students' reading comprehension through strategic reading instruction (Khairi & Alfaresi, 2025). The four major stages are Preview, Clicks and Clunks, Get the Gist, and Wrap Up. Preview activates prior knowledge and encourages prediction; Clicks and Clunks helps students identify information they understand and parts that remain difficult; Get the Gist directs attention to the main idea; and Wrap Up requires students to synthesize and summarize what they have learned. Through these stages, CSR provides students with a clear sequence for monitoring and improving comprehension.

Previous studies have reported generally positive findings concerning CSR, but they also show that the evidence has been produced in different instructional and methodological contexts. Walidaini et al. (2021) compared CSR with the Cooperative-Discussion-Question strategy and examined the role of students' cognitive learning styles, while Lestari and Anugerahwati (2022) compared CSR with Scaffolded Reading Experience and found that classroom environment, teacher experience, and student ability could influence reading outcomes. Syafii (2022) reported improvement through classroom action research, and Siahaan et al. (2022) examined CSR in relation to students' cognitive styles. Oktorianisarry et al. (2023) investigated CSR with

narrative texts, whereas Sarshogh et al. (2024) extended the focus beyond comprehension by examining reading motivation and metacognitive awareness. More recent studies have also examined CSR among junior high school students (Sari, 2024), EFL university students (Aldossary, 2024), and students in quasi-experimental settings (Tiana et al., 2025; Ayudiwa, 2025). Taken together, the current state of the art suggests that CSR has been studied using classroom action research, pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, and comparative designs, with different text types and student populations. However, fewer studies have simultaneously addressed an intact-class comparison at the junior-high-school level, a recount-text instructional context, and an instrument that was screened through item validity, reliability, and readability procedures before the main intervention.

The research gap addressed by the present study is therefore located at the intersection of instructional context, research design, and measurement procedure. Much of the recent CSR literature has focused on university students, single-group interventions, classroom action research, or comparisons among alternative reading strategies. The present study instead examines two intact eighth-grade classes at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Palembang, with one class receiving CSR and the other receiving conventional instruction, while the reading test was developed through an initial 50-item tryout from which 25 valid items were retained and the instrument reliability was examined. Its novelty lies in providing context-specific quasi-experimental evidence on CSR for recount-text reading at the junior-high-school level while explicitly documenting the instrument screening process. This combination does not establish that CSR is universally superior, but it adds evidence from an

Indonesian junior-high-school context that can be compared with findings from other grade levels, text types, and instructional designs.

The present study consequently focuses on a comparison between an experimental class receiving CSR-based instruction and a control class receiving conventional instruction. The comparison is important because earlier studies have produced evidence from varied designs and populations, whereas a controlled comparison between two intact eighth-grade classes provides a more direct basis for examining differences in posttest reading comprehension within the same school context. The research question was whether there was a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension performance between the two groups. Accordingly, this study aimed to examine the effect of CSR on the reading comprehension performance of eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Palembang.

The classroom context described in the thesis provides a concrete reason for selecting CSR. Interviews with the English teacher and several students indicated four recurring difficulties: low motivation to read English texts, limited vocabulary, limited participation in collaborative reading activities, and the absence of effective strategies for dealing with difficult words or sentences. Students tended to read individually and, when they encountered unfamiliar language, often skipped the difficult parts instead of using context, rereading, or peer discussion to construct meaning. These conditions suggest that the problem was not simply a lack of exposure to English texts, but also a lack of structured procedures for approaching a text strategically.

CSR addresses these difficulties through a sequence that makes the reading process visible and manageable.

Preview activates what students already know and creates a purpose for reading. Clicks and Clunks directs attention to comprehension monitoring and vocabulary problems rather than allowing students to ignore them. Get the Gist requires students to distinguish central information from supporting details and to express the main idea in their own words. Wrap Up then asks students to consolidate information and formulate a summary. Thus, the strategy connects before-reading preparation, during-reading monitoring, main-idea identification, and after-reading synthesis within one collaborative routine (Tiana et al., 2025).

The focus on recount text is also relevant to the instructional setting. Recount texts present past experiences or events in chronological order and commonly involve an orientation, a sequence of events, and a reorientation (Anderson & Anderson, 2003; Widiati et al., 2018). Students therefore need to identify who was involved, when and where an event occurred, what happened first and next, and which details are central to the overall account. The CSR stages provide a practical sequence for processing these demands: students predict the topic, clarify unfamiliar expressions, identify the gist of paragraphs, and finally combine the important information into a coherent summary.

Accordingly, the research question was whether there was a significant difference in reading comprehension performance between eighth-grade students taught through CSR and those taught through conventional instruction at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Palembang. The study was intended to provide empirical evidence that could inform English teachers about the use of a structured collaborative strategy in reading lessons, while also providing a context-specific reference for further

research on CSR at the junior-high-school level.

Research Method

This study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest comparison between an experimental group and a control group. The thesis describes the selection of two existing classes and explicitly indicates that the classes were not equated by individual randomization. Therefore, the design is reported here as quasi-experimental rather than true experimental. Both groups completed a pretest before instruction and a posttest after the instructional period. The experimental group received Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), whereas the control group received conventional reading instruction.

Participants

The population consisted of all eighth-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Palembang in the 2026/2027 academic year. The population comprised 129 students distributed across five classes. Two classes were selected as the research sample: VIII B, consisting of 25 students, served as the control group, and VIII D, consisting of 25 students, served as the experimental group. The total sample was therefore 50 students. The thesis reports class-level randomization sampling in selecting the two classes.

The study used two variables. The independent variable was the use of Collaborative Strategic Reading, while the dependent variable was students' reading comprehension performance as measured by the test. The control group received conventional reading instruction, whereas the experimental group received CSR-based instruction. Both groups completed the same pretest and posttest so that changes in performance could be examined within

each group and the final performance could be compared across groups.

The sampling information in the thesis shows that the target population comprised five eighth-grade classes: VIII A (25 students), VIII B (25), VIII C (26), VIII D (25), and VIII E (28), for a total of 129 students. Two intact classes were selected at the class level: VIII B was assigned as the control group and VIII D as the experimental group. Each group contained 25 students. Because the students remained in their existing classes, the design is treated in this article as quasi-experimental rather than fully randomized at the individual-student level. This study indicates that the two classes were not equated by individual randomization. This distinction is important when interpreting the findings because the comparison demonstrates a statistically significant group difference within the study setting, but does not by itself establish universal causal generalization to all eighth-grade students.

Instrument and Data Collection

Data were collected through a reading comprehension test consisting of 25 multiple-choice items with four answer options. The items measured students' ability to identify main ideas, locate specific information, understand word meanings from context, make inferences, and comprehend the overall content of a text. The same test format was administered as a pretest and posttest. The thesis reports a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.935. The research was conducted in ten meetings: one meeting for the pretest, eight meetings for treatment, and one meeting for the posttest.

Instrument development involved an initial tryout of 50 multiple-choice items. Item validity was evaluated by comparing the obtained item correlation with the reported *r*-table value of 0.433. Twenty-five items met the stated

criterion and were retained for the research instrument, while 25 items were excluded. The final 25-item test used four response options and covered five reading-comprehension indicators: identifying the main idea, locating specific information, interpreting word meaning from context, making inferences, and understanding the overall content of a text. This process was intended to ensure that the test represented the reading outcomes targeted in the classroom intervention.

The reliability analysis reported in the thesis produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.935 for the 50-item tryout set, indicating a high level of internal consistency. In addition, a readability check was conducted to consider whether the reading texts were appropriately difficult for the students. The thesis states that the readability of the texts was checked using an online readability test. Together, the item analysis, reliability analysis, and readability check provided supporting evidence for using the selected materials and items in the pretest and posttest.

Table 1. Summary of Reading Instrument Development and Analysis

Instrument development indicator	Result
Initial tryout items	50 multiple-choice items
Validity criterion	r-table = 0.433
Valid items retained	25 items
Invalid items excluded	25 items
Reliability coefficient	Cronbach's alpha = 0.935
Final research test	25 items; 4 options per item
Reading indicators	Main idea; specific information; vocabulary in context; inference; overall comprehension

Source: Researcher's instrument analysis based on the tryout data reported in the thesis.

The instrument evidence is relevant to the interpretation of the statistical findings because the observed differences were based on a test that had undergone item screening and reliability analysis. Nevertheless, the article does

not claim that the instrument is free from measurement limitations; the test remained a 25-item multiple-choice measure administered in one school context.

Instructional Procedure

In the experimental group, CSR was implemented through four stages. During Preview, students examined the title, pictures, and other textual clues and predicted what the text would discuss. During Clicks and Clunks, students identified information they understood and words or ideas they found difficult, then discussed possible meanings using context and peer support. During Get the Gist, students identified the main idea of each paragraph and expressed it in their own words. During Wrap Up, students combined the main ideas and produced a summary of the text. The teacher monitored group work, provided guidance, and gave feedback throughout the activities.

The classroom procedure followed the three-part sequence described in the thesis: pre-activities, main activities, and post-activities. In the pre-activities, the teacher greeted students, checked attendance, activated interest through introductory questions, connected the lesson with previous learning about recount text, stated the learning objectives, and formed small groups of approximately four to five students. This preparation established the collaborative structure before students worked directly with the reading passage.

During Preview, students examined the title, pictures, and other available clues and predicted the content of the recount text. During Clicks and Clunks, students took turns reading and marked information they understood as clicks and difficult words or ideas as clunks. They discussed the meaning of clunks using context or a dictionary, while the teacher circulated among groups and provided assistance. During

Get the Gist, students reread paragraphs, identified their main ideas, and expressed those ideas in their own words. During Wrap Up, each group combined the identified main ideas into a summary, presented the summary, received teacher feedback, and reviewed the strategies used. Post-activities included reflection on group participation, peer feedback, additional recount-text practice, and a concluding review of the lesson.

The eight treatment meetings were therefore designed around repeated use of the same strategic routine rather than a single exposure to CSR. This repetition is important because the intended learning outcome was not simply completion of group work; students were expected to become more familiar with a sequence for approaching an English text. The teacher's role was to model, guide, monitor, and provide feedback while students gradually carried out the comprehension steps with their peers.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the students' pretest and posttest performance. Normality and homogeneity tests were conducted before hypothesis testing. Paired-samples t-tests were used to examine changes within each group, while an independent-samples t-test was used to compare the posttest performance of the experimental and control groups. The significance level was set at 0.05, consistent with the statistical decision framework used in this study (Sugiyono, 2017).

The normality analysis used the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The thesis reported significance values of 0.200 for the control pretest and 0.052 for the experimental pretest; for the posttest, the values were 0.111 for the control group and 0.200 for the experimental group. All reported values were above 0.05, so the thesis treated the

score distributions as normally distributed. Homogeneity was examined before the independent-samples comparison. The reported Levene's test significance was 0.072 for the pretest and 0.591 for the posttest, both above 0.05. These results supported the use of the equal-variances-assumed row for interpreting the posttest t-test.

Table 2. Normality and Homogeneity Test Results

Data set/ comparison	Test	Sig.	Interpretat ion reported in thesis
Control pretest	Kolmogorov- Smirnov	0.200	Normally distributed
Exp pretest	Kolmogorov- Smirnov	0.052	Normally distributed
Control posttest	Kolmogorov- Smirnov	0.111	Normally distributed
Experiment al posttest	Kolmogorov- Smirnov	0.200	Normally distributed
Pretest variances	Levene's test	0.072	Homogene ous
Posttest variances	Levene's test	0.591	Homogene ous

After the prerequisite analyses, paired-sample t-tests were used to examine pretest-posttest changes within each group, and an independent-samples t-test was used to compare the posttest means of the two groups, following the logic of comparing means between independent groups described by Ghazali (2015). The significance level was set at 0.05. The independent-samples comparison was treated as the principal between-group test for answering the research question.

Results and Discussion

The descriptive results showed improvement in both groups, but the increase was larger in the experimental group. The experimental group began with a lower mean score than the control group, yet it achieved a higher posttest mean after the eight instructional meetings.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Reading Comprehension Scores

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Control	25	53.76	73.04	19.28
Exp	25	40.00	79.84	39.84

The control group increased from a mean of 53.76 on the pretest to 73.04 on the posttest, representing a mean gain of 19.28 points. The experimental group, in contrast, increased from 40.00 to 79.84, representing a mean gain of 39.84 points. The experimental group therefore showed a larger descriptive improvement despite having a lower initial mean. The standard deviation in the experimental group also decreased from 13.952 on the pretest to 5.942 on the posttest, suggesting that the posttest scores were more concentrated.

The descriptive statistics also show a marked reduction in score dispersion in both groups. In the control group, the standard deviation decreased from 9.938 at pretest to 6.611 at posttest. In the experimental group, it decreased from 13.952 to 5.942. Thus, the posttest scores in both classes were more concentrated around their respective means than the pretest scores. The experimental group's reduction was particularly noticeable because it began with the larger pretest standard deviation. The posttest maximum and minimum values reported in the thesis also indicate that the experimental group moved toward a narrower and higher score distribution after the intervention.

The initial difference between the groups deserves attention. The control group started with a higher mean (53.76) than the experimental group (40.00), a difference of 13.76 points. Therefore, the experimental group did not begin the treatment with a higher average reading score. Instead, after eight treatment meetings, its mean reached 79.84, while the control group reached 73.04. The mean gain was 39.84 points in the experimental group compared with 19.28

points in the control group. Descriptively, the gain in the experimental group was more than twice the gain observed in the control group. This pattern strengthens the interpretation that the instructional period was associated with greater improvement in the CSR group, while also requiring caution because the groups were intact classes with unequal starting means.

The within-group analyses reported in the thesis indicated statistically significant changes in both groups. For the control group, the paired-samples test produced $t = -9.152$, $df = 24$, and $p = .000$. For the experimental group, the corresponding test produced $t = -14.453$, $df = 24$, and $p = .000$. These results show that students in both groups improved during the research period. Consequently, the key evidence for the effect of CSR should be drawn from the between-group comparison rather than from the improvement of the experimental group alone.

For the control class, the paired-sample test produced $t = -9.152$ with 24 degrees of freedom and $p < .001$. The mean difference was -19.280, reflecting the increase from the pretest to the posttest. For the experimental class, the paired-sample test produced $t = -14.453$ with 24 degrees of freedom and $p < .001$, with a mean difference of -39.840. The confidence interval reported for the experimental difference ranged from -45.529 to -34.151. These within-group results indicate that both instructional conditions were accompanied by significant score increases, but the magnitude of change was substantially larger in the experimental class.

Table 4. Independent-Samples t-Test of Posttest Scores

Comparison	Mean Difference	t	df	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Exp – Control	-6.800	-3.825	48	< .001	-10.374	-3.226

The independent-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the posttest scores of the two groups, $t(48) = -3.825$, $p < .001$. The mean difference was -6.800 because the analysis was calculated as control minus experimental in the reported output. The descriptive means indicate that the experimental group obtained the higher posttest mean (79.84) than the control group (73.04). The homogeneity test reported in the thesis produced Sig. = .591, supporting the use of the equal-variances-assumed row for interpretation.

The independent-samples result provides the direct comparison required by the research question. The posttest mean was 79.84 for the experimental group and 73.04 for the control group, producing a descriptive difference of 6.80 points. The negative sign in the reported mean difference (-6.800) results from the software calculating the experimental-minus-control comparison in the direction used in the thesis output; the substantive point is that the experimental group had the higher observed posttest mean. The 95% confidence interval for the reported difference did not include zero, ranging from -10.374 to -3.226.

The findings are consistent with earlier research showing that CSR can support reading comprehension. Muziatun and Katili (2020) reported significant improvement following CSR instruction, while Agi et al. (2022) found improvement among eighth-grade students. Ermawati and Hastini (2023) likewise reported a significant pretest-posttest difference in a quasi-experimental EFL study. The present study contributes evidence from a

different school context and, importantly, compares CSR-based instruction with a control group.

The instructional pattern also helps explain the observed result. CSR does not merely place students in groups; it organizes group interaction around specific comprehension purposes. Preview prepares students to approach the text by activating prior knowledge and making predictions. Clicks and Clunks encourages students to notice and discuss comprehension problems instead of simply skipping difficult vocabulary or information. Get the Gist directs attention to the main idea, while Wrap Up requires students to integrate information and summarize it. This sequence is consistent with the strategic and collaborative principles of CSR described in recent CSR research by Tiana et al. (2025).

One possible explanation for the pattern is that CSR distributes comprehension work across several manageable actions. Students are first encouraged to anticipate meaning, then identify comprehension breakdowns, isolate the gist of paragraphs, and finally synthesize the text. For students who previously skipped unfamiliar words or sentences, Clicks and Clunks creates an explicit reason to stop and solve a comprehension problem. For students who had difficulty identifying main ideas, Get the Gist provides repeated practice in reducing paragraph-level information to a concise statement. The collaborative element further allows students to compare interpretations before the teacher provides clarification.

The result is also compatible with the characteristics of recount text. Because recounts organize events sequentially, students can use the Preview stage to anticipate the topic, Clicks and Clunks to clarify time expressions and unfamiliar vocabulary, Get the Gist to identify the central event

in each paragraph, and Wrap Up to reconstruct the sequence of events in summary form. The strategy therefore provides a direct bridge between the structure of the text and the cognitive actions required for comprehension.

The findings should nevertheless be distinguished from a claim that CSR alone caused every observed improvement. Both groups showed significant gains, and the control group also increased by 19.28 points. Students may have benefited from continued exposure to English reading, classroom practice, familiarity with the test format, or other instructional factors. In addition, the experimental group began with a lower mean than the control group, so the final difference should be considered together with the pretest imbalance. The quasi-experimental design and the single-school sample limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the studied context.

At the same time, the results should be interpreted within the boundaries of the study. The participants were limited to 50 eighth-grade students from one school, the reading instrument contained 25 multiple-choice items, and the treatment lasted eight instructional meetings. Both groups also showed statistically significant within-group improvement, indicating that factors other than CSR may have contributed to learning during the research period. The findings therefore describe the observed difference in this particular instructional context rather than establishing a universal effect across EFL classrooms. Future research may use larger samples, longer intervention periods, different text types, or additional measures of reading comprehension.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the study involved only 50 students from one junior high school and two intact classes. Second, reading comprehension was measured with 25

multiple-choice items, so the instrument captured selected comprehension indicators rather than every dimension of reading ability. Third, the intervention lasted for eight treatment meetings, which provides evidence of short-term instructional change rather than long-term retention. Fourth, because the classes were not individually randomized, pre-existing differences between groups cannot be completely ruled out. Future studies could address these limitations by involving more schools and classes, using larger samples, extending the treatment period, including delayed posttests, and combining multiple measures of comprehension such as written summaries or open-ended responses.

Taken together, the statistical pattern is consistent across the descriptive and inferential results: both groups improved, but the CSR group showed a larger gain and a higher posttest mean, and the between-group difference was statistically significant. The evidence therefore supports the study's original research question within the boundaries of its sample, design, instrument, and instructional period.

Conclusion

This study found a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension performance between the students who received Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) instruction and those who received conventional instruction. The experimental group increased from a mean of 40.00 on the pretest to 79.84 on the posttest, while the control group increased from 53.76 to 73.04. The independent-samples t-test produced $t(48) = -3.825$, $p < .001$, with the experimental group recording the higher posttest mean. Within the scope of this study, the results indicate that CSR was associated with improved reading comprehension performance.

The structured sequence of Preview, Clicks and Clunks, Get the Gist, and Wrap Up provides a practical framework for combining strategic reading processes with collaborative classroom interaction.

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