

## **Fostering Reading Habits in Secondary Students through English Literature Supplementary Texts**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This applied research examines the impact of using English literature supplementary texts to nurture reading habits in Year 8 students. The intervention aimed to increase students' independent reading hours by incorporating engaging literature into the English curriculum. The quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-intervention surveys, revealing a significant 56% increase in independent reading hours after the intervention. This growth indicates that supplementary texts can effectively enhance students' interest in reading outside the classroom. The qualitative data from student interviews and focus groups supported these findings. Students reported greater enjoyment and interest in reading, attributing it to the engaging nature of the supplementary texts. Many also noted improvements in their comprehension and analytical skills. In conclusion, incorporating English literature supplementary texts has successfully nurtured reading habits among Year 8 students. The significant increase in independent reading hours and positive feedback highlight the potential of this approach to foster a lifelong love for reading and improve literacy skills. Future recommendations include continued use of diverse supplementary texts and regular assessments to monitor long-term impacts.

**Keywords:** supplementary texts, independent reading, reading engagement.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of supplementary English literature texts into literacy activities on the interest in reading among secondary students. In addressing this critical educational issue, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the impact of such interventions, drawing on insights from vetted educational experts and underscoring the significance of this topic in the context of secondary-level English teaching. The incorporation of English literature texts into literacy

activities holds the potential to enhance not only language proficiency but also critical literacy skills among secondary students.

Literacy activities that involve engaging with authentic texts, such as literature, are fundamental in developing a deeper understanding of language structures and fostering higher-order thinking skills (*Think literacy: Cross-curricular approaches*, n.d.). The power of connecting students with meaningful and culturally relevant texts to stimulate interest and engagement in reading highlights the motivational aspect of incorporating literature into language learning (Dev, 2019). Understanding the motivational factors is crucial for tailoring interventions that resonate with the unique needs and interests of the students. As the educational landscape undergoes transformation post-pandemic, the interest in reading among secondary students becomes particularly pertinent. The disruptions caused by the pandemic may have contributed to changes in students' reading habits and attitudes. It is hoped that examining the impact of incorporating English literature texts serves as a targeted response to address potential challenges and revitalize reading interests of students in secondary schools.

The chosen secondary school for this applied research is located at a suburban area, nestled within the community housing complex. It is a private school that is dedicated to providing quality education to its diverse student body. This school setting serves as the backdrop for a research initiative aimed at exploring how the incorporation of English literature texts into literacy activities influences the reading interests of secondary students. This private school is characterized by its close-knit community, fostering an environment that values both academic excellence and the nurturing of students' character. The school is relatively small, comprising 14 dedicated teachers, three school leaders, and five support staff members. With a total number of less than 200 students spanning Years 7 to 9, the school caters to the formative years of students aged 12 to 16. The small size of the school fosters a sense of familiarity and community, allowing for personalized attention to each student's academic and emotional needs. The school has also been hailed as a training ground for character-building.

Despite its size, the school is committed to providing a diverse and enriching curriculum that aligns with both academic standards and the values embedded in the faith-based foundation. The English-speaking student population, a vital component of the school's community, brings a unique dimension to the learning environment, enriching the cultural tapestry within the classrooms. In this intimate educational setting, the decision to investigate the influence of incorporating English literature texts into literacy activities stems from a nuanced understanding of the school's dynamics. The size of the school allows for a more in-depth exploration of individual student experiences, enabling a comprehensive examination of the potential impact of the chosen intervention.

As a practicing English teacher at secondary level, the significance of

this topic is deeply personal. The daily interactions with students have highlighted the evolving dynamics of language learning, and the challenges posed by the pandemic have underscored the need for innovative and effective strategies to maintain and enhance students' interest in reading. This study aligns with the commitment to providing a rich and engaging learning experience for students, recognizing literacy as a gateway to academic success and broader life skills. The choice of investigating how the incorporation of English literature texts influences secondary students' interest in reading is not only interesting but also highly relevant to the broader education field. In a globalized world, where linguistic and cultural diversity is celebrated, understanding effective approaches to literacy development for learners contributes to inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogies (Cummins, 1979). Moreover, the study addresses a gap in the current literature by focusing on a specific intervention—using English literature texts—and its potential impact on reading engagement among secondary students, providing valuable insights for educators and researchers alike.

This research aims to determine how the integration of supplementary English literature texts into literacy activities impacts secondary students' reading engagement in English class, specifically by examining changes in the frequency of independent reading sessions over a specified period. This research seeks to explore secondary students' experiences and perceptions regarding the supplementary English literature texts used in literacy activities, and to understand how these experiences influence their interest in reading.

This research also aims to fill in the gaps in the previous research and unexplored potential. For one area, diverse representation has been unattended. Many previous studies have focused on the general benefits of supplementary reading materials but have not adequately addressed the importance of diverse representation within these texts (Behrman, 2006). There is a lack of research on how multicultural and diverse perspectives in supplementary reading materials can impact students' empathy, cultural understanding, and global awareness (Dupuy, 2021; Delina 2023). For the unexplored potential, previous research often takes a top-down approach, focusing on materials selected by educators or curriculum designers without sufficient input from the students themselves (Choo, 2016). The potential benefits of involving students in the selection process to increase their engagement and motivation have not been thoroughly investigated. Student-centered selection has been involved in the compilation of the supplementary English literature texts used in literacy activities.

The English-speaking secondary students, comprising a significant portion of the student body, represent a diverse range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Understanding how the incorporation of English literature texts influences their interest in reading is crucial for tailoring literacy activities that resonate with their unique experiences and fostering

a deeper connection to the broader curriculum. Moreover, the faith-based aspect of the school adds an additional layer of complexity and richness to the study. The exploration of how literature, as a vehicle for language development, aligns with the values and ethos of the faith school, providing insights into the integration of cultural and spiritual dimensions into literacy practices. As the school endeavors to provide a holistic education that prepares students not only academically but also ethically and culturally, this research initiative becomes a crucial step in aligning pedagogical practices with the evolving needs and interests of EFL secondary students within the unique context of private faith school in a suburban setting.

According to Krashen, language acquisition is most effective when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current proficiency level. English literature, with its diverse vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and nuanced expressions, provides an ideal source of rich and challenging language input for EFL learners (Krashen, 1985). Integrating literature into literacy activities is thus a strategic approach to elevate language proficiency and stimulate critical thinking skills among EFL secondary students. The incorporation of English literature texts also adds a personal and cultural dimension to literacy activities. As discussed by Guthrie and Davis (2003), personalized and meaningful content has a significant impact on student motivation and engagement. By selecting literature that reflects the cultural diversity of EFL students, educators can create a learning environment that resonates with students' experiences, fostering a deeper connection to the material and, consequently, an increased interest in reading (Astriani et al, 2022).

Research by Allington and McGill-Franzen (2013) underscores the importance of fostering a love for reading as a key factor in developing lifelong literacy habits. By exposing EFL secondary students to the enjoyment and intellectual stimulation derived from literature, educators can contribute to the cultivation of a positive attitude toward reading that extends beyond the classroom setting. In addition, the student population in secondary schools often faces the challenge of navigating academic content while simultaneously developing language skills. English literature, through its narrative richness, offers a bridge between academic language proficiency and cultural competence. As argued by Cummins (1979), integrating language and content in a culturally relevant context is essential for the academic success of English learners.

Conducting this research has the potential to positively impact secondary students on various levels. By gauging the influence of English literature on their reading interests, educators can tailor literacy activities to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of students, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Improved interest in reading can contribute to enhanced language skills, academic success, and personal development. For the school level, the findings of this research can inform

curriculum development and instructional practices within the school. School leaders can use the insights gained to support teachers in selecting literature that aligns with the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, promoting a curriculum that is not only academically rigorous but also culturally responsive. This, in turn, contributes to a positive school culture and community engagement. On a broader scale, the research addresses a significant educational challenge—ensuring the literacy development of learners in an increasingly diverse global landscape. It is believed that the findings can be disseminated to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers, providing evidence-based strategies for fostering literacy skills among students ((*Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices*, 2008). Ultimately, the research contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective pedagogical practices for diverse learner populations, promoting inclusivity and cultural responsiveness in education.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The private faith school setting introduced an additional layer of significance to the topic. Mardiani and Baharuddin (2023) suggest that literature, when integrated into education, can serve as a vehicle for moral and ethical discussions. The exploration of English literature texts allows educators to intertwine language development with discussions on faith-based values, fostering not only linguistic competence but also moral and ethical growth. The Year 8 students' stage in secondary education was critical for shaping reading habits and attitudes. Mardiani and Baharuddin (2023) also highlight the importance of motivation in reading development. The incorporation of literature into literacy activities offered an opportunity to cultivate a love for reading, fostering intrinsic motivation among students. This, in turn, contributed to their academic success and personal growth (Astriani et al, 2022).

The primary beneficiaries of this study were the ESL secondary students themselves. Through the integration of English literature texts, they stood to gain improved language proficiency, cultural enrichment, and increased motivation for reading. These benefited not only align with their academic pursuits but also contribute to their overall personal and linguistic development. Educators and school leaders also benefited from a more enriched and culturally responsive pedagogical approach. Insights gained from the research informed instructional practices, curriculum development, and the creation of a supportive learning environment tailored to the needs of ESL students in a faith-based context. It is also believed that the research contributed to the academic community by providing evidence-based insights into effective literacy interventions for ESL students in private faith school settings. Policymakers can draw on these findings to inform decisions related to curriculum development, language education, and culturally responsive teaching practices on a

broader scale (*Think literacy: Cross-curricular approaches*, n.d.).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition, the power of connecting students with meaningful and culturally relevant texts to stimulate interest and engagement in reading highlighted the motivational aspect of incorporating literature into language learning (Dev, 2019). Understanding the motivational factors is crucial for tailoring interventions that resonate with the unique needs and interests of ESL students. As the educational landscape undergoes transformation post-pandemic, the interest in reading among ESL secondary students becomes particularly pertinent. The disruptions caused by the pandemic may have contributed to changes in students' reading habits and attitudes. It is hoped that examining the related literature reveals the impact of supplementary English literature texts serves as a targeted response to address potential challenges and revitalize reading interests. The organization of literature review began with the sources of the current level of interest in reading among ESL secondary students post-pandemic, followed by the review of related literature on the incorporation of English literature texts into literacy activities that influence ESL secondary students' interest in reading. Lastly, the perceived barriers and facilitators that were related to ESL secondary students' engagement with English literature texts in literacy activities and how these factors influence their overall interest in reading.

### **1. The current level of interest in reading among ESL secondary students post-pandemic**

Mardiani and Baharuddin (2023) discussed a study conducted with EFL undergraduates. The study was relevant to support a research question about the current level of interest in reading among ESL secondary students post-pandemic and how it compared to pre-pandemic levels. The research findings provided insights into the impact of the pandemic on students' interest in reading extensively on the internet. The study indicated that incidental exposure to e-learning sessions during the pandemic positively influenced students' interest in online extensive reading. This information was used to frame a research question about the changes in ESL secondary students' interest in reading post-pandemic compared to pre-pandemic levels. By comparing the data from this study to pre-pandemic levels, researcher assessed whether there were significant shifts in students' reading habits and interests. Additionally, the study's findings on the reasons that motivated students to engage in online extensive reading during the pandemic informed the development of research questions related to the factors influencing post-pandemic reading interests among ESL secondary students (Ounissi et al, 2023).

Furthermore, the study's analysis of the time spent on online



extensive reading during the pandemic provided a basis for comparing the current level of interest in reading among ESL secondary students post-pandemic to pre-pandemic levels. The data on the number of hours students spent per day on online reading during the pandemic can be compared to pre-pandemic reading habits to identify any changes in reading behavior among ESL secondary students. This comparison helped researchers understand the potential long-term effects of the pandemic on students' reading interests and habits.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic had tremendous effects on lifestyle and behavior. In this study by Alomari et al (2023), changes in reading habits during the pandemic were scrutinized through an online survey about sociodemographic and reading habits during COVID-19. They identify the findings related to changes in reading habits in terms of age, education, job type, and income. The study contributed valuable information for educators and policymakers seeking to address the pandemic's impact on literacy. This article provided a starting point for understanding the broader context of ESL secondary students' reading habits post-pandemic, which becomes a suitable balance for the study of Ounissi et al (2023).

The possible wider subject areas of these studies included educational technology. The study explored the impact of incidental exposure to e-learning on students' interest in reading extensively on the internet, which fell within the realm of educational technology research. Furthermore, second language acquisition is also relevant. The study focused on ESL (English as a Second Language) students and their reading habits, which was related to the field of second language acquisition and language education. Student engagement was also a related study, examining students' engagement in online extensive reading, which contributed to the broader area of research on student engagement in educational settings. Reading habits and motivation delved into students' interest in reading widely on the internet and the factors that motivated them, which aligned with research on reading habits and motivation among students. These wider subject areas demonstrated the interdisciplinary nature of the study, encompassing educational technology, language education, student engagement, pandemic effects on education, and reading habits and motivation.

## **2. The incorporation of English literature texts into literacy activities**

In his article, Amer (2012) discusses the benefits of using literature in second language learning, including its impact on language acquisition, cultural understanding, and critical thinking skills. The key features of the Story Grammar Approach and the Reader Response Approach for teaching narrative texts in second language classrooms are also explored. However, the study may depend on the diversity of the ESL student population. As a teacher, considering the cultural relevance of literature choices further

enhanced the effectiveness of such interventions.

Amer (2012) applies Story Grammar Approach (SGA) as a cognitive approach focusing on the structural elements of a story, such as setting, characters, problem, action, and resolution. It is used to enhance comprehension of narrative texts and can be implemented through techniques like story maps, which visually display key information in the story. Additionally, guiding questions based on the story grammar, such as those related to setting, characters, problem, action, resolution, and theme, can be used to direct learners' attention to the story structure.

On the other hand, Amer (2012) also emphasizes the application of Reader Response Approach (RRA) for the affective aspect of learning, focusing on the reader's feelings, emotions, free expression, and opinions. It is used to encourage learners to engage with the text on a personal level, promoting a deeper understanding and connection with the story. This approach complements the SGA, especially for advanced learners, by encouraging them to express themselves freely and share their interpretations of the text. Both SGA and RRA are effective in teaching narrative texts in second language classrooms, with the SGA focusing on cognitive aspects and the RRA focusing on affective aspects of learning.

Suliman and Sa'eed (2021) investigate the impact of teaching English literature on the performance of EFL learners. The study found that teaching English literature significantly improves the performance of EFL learners in English language, particularly in terms of vocabulary and overall performance. The study recommended that teachers should employ effective methods and strategies for teaching English literature to enhance EFL learners' performance in English. Additionally, the study highlighted the awareness among teachers regarding the impact of teaching English literature and recommends the encouragement of students to read more literature.

Furthermore, the study reflected on the positive impact of teaching English literature on the performance of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. It emphasized the improvement in vocabulary and overall English language performance as a result of teaching English literature. Additionally, the study highlighted the awareness among teachers regarding the impact of teaching English literature and recommends the encouragement of students to read more literature, along with the development of effective teaching methods. The study also emphasized the need for teachers to develop effective methods and strategies for teaching English literature to enhance the performance of EFL learners in English.

The possible wider subject areas of this study could include applied linguistics, language education, literature education, and language acquisition. Additionally, the study could also be relevant to the fields of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching and learning, curriculum development, and language pedagogy. The impact of teaching English



literature on EFL learner's performance in English could also be of interest to researchers in the fields of language assessment and educational psychology.

### **3. The perceived barriers related to students' engagement with English literature texts and the related factors influencing interest in reading**

In his research article, Ugwu (2022) discusses the challenges faced in teaching Literature-in-English in Nigerian secondary schools. The study highlights issues such as shortage of textbooks, misconceptions about the value of literature, and lack of parental support. The research emphasizes the need for urgent interventions to improve the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English in Nigerian schools. Together with Xiaomei Sun's study (2023), they provide interventions and recommendations to address the challenges identified in the study and improve the English teaching and learning using English literature.

The possible wider subject areas of the study could include the effects of instructional materials on students' academic performance in literature, the impact of language proficiency on learning outcomes, and the influence of career guidance on students' subject choices and aspirations. Additionally, the study could also be related to the broader field of curriculum development and educational policy, particularly in the context of senior secondary education in Nigeria.

Xiaomei Sun's article discusses the use of literature in secondary EFL classes in China, based on case studies of four experienced teachers' reading programs. The study explores different pedagogical approaches and teacher perceptions. The study highlights the need for teacher training in implementing this pedagogical approach and provides implications for future practice and research. The implications for future practice and research are relevant to the study as they include the need to develop implementation frameworks and concepts such as literary literacy, critical literacy, visual literacy, and critical cultural.

The possible wider subject areas of this study may include applied linguistics, language education, literature education, and language acquisition. Additionally, the study could also be relevant to the fields of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching and learning, curriculum development, and language pedagogy. The impact of teaching English literature on EFL learner's performance in English could also be of interest to researchers in the fields of language assessment and educational psychology.

## **METHOD**

### **1. Pre-Interventions**

One intervention involves selecting texts that were culturally relevant to the students' backgrounds. Evans et al (2014) emphasize the importance

of cultural relevance in engaging ESL students with reading materials. By incorporating literature that reflects their cultural contexts, educators can enhance students' interest and motivation to engage with the texts. Nevertheless, the challenge was the limitation in vocabulary when some reading texts, although the topics might be appealing for the students, were not accessible for some due to diction.

Differentiated reading groups were also taken as a prior intervention. Tailoring reading activities to individual or small-group needs has been explored as a strategy to address varying proficiency levels among ESL students. According to Hiebert (2017), differentiated instruction allows educators to provide targeted support to students at different language proficiency levels. This approach recognizes the diversity within ESL classrooms and seeks to accommodate varying levels of linguistic competence.

## **2. Post-Interventions**

While various interventions have demonstrated positive outcomes, it is crucial to acknowledge challenges and gaps in the existing literature. The effectiveness of interventions may vary based on contextual factors, including the diverse linguistic backgrounds of ESL students, school culture, and available resources. Additionally, few studies provide a comprehensive examination of long-term effects, necessitating further research to assess sustained interest and the development of lifelong reading habits among ESL learners.

The significance of exploring the impact of supplementary English literature texts into literacy activities for ESL secondary students in a private faith school was underscored by its potential to enrich language skills, align with academic aspirations, foster moral development, and enhance reading motivation. The research stood to benefit not only the students but also educators, parents, the community, and the wider academic and policy communities invested in effective ESL education.

In the context of a small, private faith school situated in a suburban area, the population under consideration comprises ESL secondary students, specifically the Year 8 cohort, totaling 41 students aged 13 to 15. These students primarily came from middle-class families, and there was a shared aspiration among their parents for them to pursue higher education abroad. The unique characteristics of the school, with 14 teachers, 3 school leaders, and 5 staff members, created an intimate and closely-knit community.

For ESL students in a private faith school, where cultural diversity was celebrated, the incorporation of English literature texts aligned with the school's commitment to providing a holistic education. Mardiani and Baharuddin (2023) emphasize that exposure to diverse literary works enhances cultural understanding and linguistic competence. Integrating literature into literacy activities offers a unique avenue for cultural and

linguistic enrichment, contributing to the students' overall development. Given the parents' aspirations for their children to pursue higher education abroad, the enhancement of English language proficiency is paramount. Gibbons (2002) underscores the role of extensive reading in language development. The incorporation of English literature, with its linguistic intricacies and rich vocabulary, serves as an effective means to bolster language skills, aligning with the students' academic and future professional aspirations.

### **3. Intervention**

The intervention for nurturing reading habits in Year 8 students involved the implementation of a Literature Circle Enrichment Program. This program is designed to enhance students' engagement with English literature texts through structured group activities, fostering a collaborative and immersive reading experience (Allington and McGill-Franzen, 2003). By employing a combination of these assessment methods, the researcher obtained a holistic view of students' comprehension of the new idea introduced through the Literature Circle Enrichment Program. This multi-faceted approach allowed for ongoing monitoring and adjustment of instructional strategies to support students' learning.

#### **a. Intervention and Its Plan**

For the implementation of a Literature Circle Enrichment Program, students were organized into small literature circles, each consisting of 5-7 members. The circle formation ensured a conducive environment for discussion and shared exploration of literature. A curated list of age-appropriate English literature texts, encompassing a variety of genres and themes, were provided, such as a few chapters from Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*, Robert Herrick's *To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time*, and a portion of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and a drama musical *Beauty and the Beast*. Students had the opportunity to choose a text based on their interests, promoting autonomy in their reading selections (Gibbons, 2002).

Trained facilitators, which may include teachers or reading mentors, guided literature circle discussions. These discussions focused on analyzing characters, themes, and plot elements, encouraging critical thinking and deepening comprehension. Students maintained individual reflection journals to record their thoughts, insights, and personal connections to the literature. This practice promoted metacognition and self-awareness, allowing students to track their evolving responses to the texts (Evans et al, 2014).

An interactive online platform was introduced to supplement traditional face-to-face discussions. This platform included a virtual forum for literature circle members to continue conversations, share digital annotations, and engage in collaborative online activities related to the

texts. To instill a sense of achievement and motivation, reading challenges was introduced. Students set personal or group reading goals, and upon successful completion, they received recognition or small rewards. This gamification element aimed to create a positive reinforcement loop for sustained reading engagement.

### **b. The Expected Outcomes**

As for the expected outcomes, the intervention anticipated improvements in students' reading engagement, comprehension, and overall attitudes toward reading. By combining traditional and technology-mediated approaches, the Literature Circle Enrichment Program tried to create a dynamic and inclusive reading environment that resonated with the diverse preferences and needs of Year 8 students. To measure if students fully understood the new idea introduced through the Literature Circle Enrichment Program, a comprehensive assessment strategy was implemented. Facilitators observed literature circle discussions and note students' contributions, questions, and engagement levels. A checklist or rubric was created to assess the quality of their contributions. Facilitators provided specific discussion prompts or questions related to the new idea introduced. Students' responses were analyzed to assess their understanding, application, and ability to articulate concepts (Guthrie and Davis, 2003).

Regularly review students' reflection journals was also another way to measure success. Facilitators looked for evidence of their understanding, personal connections, and reflections on the new idea. A rubric was developed to standardize the assessment of journal entries. If an interactive online platform was used, facilitators assessed students' contributions, comments, and discussions. They monitored the quality and depth of their interactions related to the new idea. Administering short quizzes or quick checks that focused specifically on the new idea as a formative assessment was also implemented. This was done periodically to gauge ongoing comprehension and identify areas that may need reinforcement. Finally, pre and post surveys were included by having specific survey questions related to the new idea in both pre and post-surveys, analyzing the changes in students' responses to measure shifts in understanding over time.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Study Population**

The study population for the research topic of nurturing reading habits for Year 8 students using English literature texts focused on Year 8 students enrolled in a traditional secondary school setting. The selected school was a private faith school located in a suburban area. The study population comprised 41 Year 8 students, aged 13 to 15, attending classes in the school. The population size of the total number of Year 8 students participating in the study was 41 students out of less than 200 students

from Year 7 to Year 9. The study also aimed for a representative distribution of gender. Therefore, it included both male and female students, at 18 students and 23 students respectively. The selected participants fell within the age range of 13 to 15 years. This age group corresponded to the typical age range for Year 8 students. The study focused exclusively on students in Year 8, ensuring homogeneity in terms of the educational level. The socioeconomic status of the participants reflected the diversity within the private faith school. Students came from middle-class families with varying income levels, but mostly financially stable with strong background in entrepreneurship. The study aimed to capture a cross-section of socioeconomic backgrounds. The study population included students with diverse academic abilities. Participants were selected to represent a range of reading proficiency levels, from lower to higher achievers. The study was conducted within the framework of a traditional teaching format, reflecting the conventional classroom setup. The participants engaged in reading activity circles using English literature texts under the guidance of the teacher, adhering to the established teaching methods.

The selection of Year 8 students in a private faith school for the research study on nurturing reading habits using English literature texts was purposeful and aligned with the specific objectives of the research questions. The justification for this population was grounded in the unique characteristics of Year 8 students and the contextual relevance of the chosen setting. Year 8 marks a crucial stage in the academic and cognitive development of students. At this juncture, students are transitioning from early adolescence to the later stages, making it an opportune time to explore interventions that can positively impact their reading habits (Kuhn, 2008). By focusing on Year 8 students, the study aimed to understand the effectiveness of supplementary English literature texts during a critical phase of their educational journey.

Year 8 students are at an age where exposure to diverse and engaging literature can significantly influence their reading preferences and habits. The research intended to investigate how the incorporation of English literature texts, tailored to their age group, can foster a deeper connection with reading. The chosen population ensured that the content was developmentally appropriate and resonated with the students' cognitive and emotional maturity. Furthermore, selecting students from a specific grade level, Year 8, provided homogeneity in terms of academic curriculum and expectations. This ensured that the impact of supplementary English literature texts could be observed within a standardized academic context, facilitating a more focused analysis of the intervention's effects on reading engagement (Cummins, 1979).

The Year 8 population allowed for a quantitative examination of the impact of supplementary English literature texts on reading engagement. Changes in the frequency of independent reading sessions was measured effectively within the defined age group, providing insights into the

quantitative aspects of reading habits (Hiebert, 2017). Year 8 students, being at a stage where self-perception and subjective experiences are evolving, offered a rich context for exploring qualitative aspects. Their experiences and perceptions regarding the incorporation of English literature texts was meaningfully captured through interviews and reflections, addressing the qualitative dimensions of the research questions.

## **2. Sources of Data**

The research on fostering reading habits for Year 8 students using English literature texts employed a multi-faceted approach to data collection, drawing from various sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact. Data was gathered through student scores on pre- and post-intervention assessments, measuring changes in reading frequency, comprehension, and engagement. These assessments included both traditional paper-and-pencil tests and online platforms tailored to assess different aspects of reading habits. Additionally, surveys and questionnaires were administered to students to capture their self-perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to the incorporation of English literature texts. The surveys were designed to elicit both quantitative data, through scaled responses, and qualitative insights, encouraging students to articulate their thoughts and preferences.

Data was derived from various sources, notably interviews and focus groups. In-depth interviews with selected students provided a nuanced understanding of their individual experiences, allowing for the exploration of personal connections to the literature, changes in reading behaviors, and the perceived impact of the intervention on their overall reading habits. Focus groups, comprised of diverse participants, facilitated dynamic discussions, uncovering shared experiences and generating insights into the social dynamics of reading within the Year 8 cohort. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data from these diverse sources offered a holistic view of the intervention's effects, allowing for a robust analysis of the research questions and contributing to the overall success of the study.

## **3. Instrumentation**

For the quantitative aspect of the research, surveys and questionnaires served as key instruments. These instruments were designed to assess students' reading habits, attitudes, and perceptions before and after the intervention. The span of time for pre-intervention and post-intervention was a period of two weeks each. The surveys incorporated both closed-ended questions with scaled responses, allowing for quantitative analysis, and open-ended questions to capture nuanced qualitative insights. The questions were carefully crafted to explore the frequency of independent reading sessions, changes in interest, and the perceived impact of English literature texts on students' reading



engagement. Closed-ended questions quantitatively measured changes in reading habits and attitudes. Examples include "How often do you read independently each week?" with scaled responses of "(1) Never (2) Rarely (3) Sometimes (4) Often (5) Always", or "How interested are you in reading English literature texts?" with scaled responses of "(1) Not interested (2) Slightly interested (3) Neutral (4) Interested (5) Very interested". Furthermore, open-ended questions allowed for qualitative insights into the reasons behind the students' responses. Examples include "What do you enjoy most about reading English literature texts?", or "How have your reading habits changed since the introduction of the new texts?" By employing surveys and questionnaires, the research aimed to quantify the shifts in students' reading habits and gather rich qualitative data to complement the quantitative findings.

Assessment tools, including pre- and post-intervention tests, were instrumental in measuring changes in students' reading comprehension and skills. The assessments consisted of a mix of objective questions, such as multiple-choice items and short-answer questions, designed to evaluate the students' understanding of the English literature texts used in the intervention. Pre-intervention survey was administered two weeks before the introduction of supplementary texts to establish a baseline, while post-intervention survey was administered after two weeks of the intervention to measure changes in reading habits and attitudes. The number of questions in these assessments were sufficient to provide a comprehensive overview of students' comprehension levels. The selection of this instrument was rooted in its ability to yield quantitative data that directly aligned with the research questions, enabling a robust analysis of the intervention's impact on students' academic performance and comprehension skills. Objective questions were multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions. Multiple-choice questions were to test comprehension and retention of the English literature texts. For example, "What is the main theme of the story 'X'?"

Short-answer questions were given to evaluate deeper understanding and critical thinking. For example, "Describe the character development of 'Y' throughout the story." The pre-intervention test was administered before the introduction of the supplementary texts to gauge initial comprehension levels, while the post-intervention test was given after the intervention to assess improvement in comprehension and skills.

To delve into the qualitative aspects of the research, interview protocols and focus group guides were developed as instruments for data collection. The interview protocols outlined a set of open-ended questions to be posed during individual interviews with selected students, exploring their personal experiences, connections to literature, and perceptions of the intervention's effects. The purpose of interview protocols was to explore students' personal experiences, connections to literature, and perceptions of the intervention's effects.

The instrument design was open-ended questions to encourage detailed, narrative responses. The example questions were "Can you describe a specific moment from the supplementary texts that resonated with you?", or "How have the new texts changed your view on reading English literature?" There were follow-up prompts to delve deeper into initial responses, such as "Can you explain why that moment was significant to you?" For the implementation, individual interviews were conducted with a select group of students to gather in-depth personal insights. Furthermore, focus group guides facilitated dynamic discussions among groups of students, providing insights into the social dynamics of reading habits. These instruments were chosen for their capacity to unearth in-depth qualitative data, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the research questions.

Through interviews and focus groups, the research aimed to uncover personal narratives, social influences, and the subjective dimensions of how English literature texts impacted Year 8 students' reading habits. The purpose of focus group discussion was to facilitate dynamic discussions among students and gather insights into the social dynamics of reading habits. The discussion topics were to guide the conversation towards relevant themes. Some example topics were "Discuss how the supplementary texts have influenced your reading activities.", "Share your thoughts on the variety and relevance of the new texts." Open-ended questions were also prepared to promote interaction and exchange of ideas, such as "What have you enjoyed most about the new reading materials?", or "In what ways do you think the new texts have helped you understand different perspectives?" Focus group sessions were conducted with groups of 5-8 students to facilitate diverse viewpoints and interactive discussions.

#### **4. Data Collection Procedures**

For surveys, questionnaire development was needed. The researcher developed a structured questionnaire supplementary both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire would cover aspects such as reading preferences, frequency of reading, attitudes towards literature, and perceived impact on language skills. The next step was pilot testing, by conducting a pilot test of the questionnaire on a small sample of Year 8 students to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability. Making necessary adjustments based on pilot feedback was also crucial. As a survey administration, informed consent was involved, ensuring that all participants, or their parents if under 18, had provided informed consent before administering the survey. The researcher administered the survey during scheduled class hours and distributes paper-based or electronic surveys to students, ensuring clear instructions on completion. Monitoring the survey administration process to address any questions or concerns raised by participants was followed. It was to maintain a supportive environment to encourage honest responses. Then, collecting completed

surveys and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of participants were done and perpetuated.

For classroom observations, observation plan was initiated, beginning with selection of classrooms. There are two classrooms from Year 8 where English literature texts were being used as a supplement to the curriculum. For observation criteria, the researcher developed a set of observation criteria focusing on student engagement, participation, and interactions during literature-related activities.

For data collection, the informed consent was obtained from the teachers, students, and parents before conducting classroom observations. During the observation sessions, the researcher attended literature-related classroom sessions to observe student behavior, engagement, and interactions. The researcher also used the predetermined criteria to document observations. Taking detailed field notes was also conducted during each observation session, capturing key behaviors, teacher strategies, and any unexpected observations.

## **5. Data Analysis Procedure**

To analyze the impact of supplementary English literature texts on ESL secondary students' reading engagement quantitatively, the teacher used a pre-post design method. To begin with, the teacher used pre-intervention data collection to measure the baseline frequency of independent reading sessions over a month using student reading logs. Then, the teacher began her intervention implementation by introducing supplementary English literature texts into the literacy activities, followed by the post-intervention data collection to measure the frequency of independent reading sessions for another month using the same reading logs.

To understand ESL secondary students' qualitative experiences and perceptions, the teacher used data collection by conducting semi-structured interviews and focus groups with students at the end of the intervention period. For the interpretation, the teacher interpreted the data to understand how students perceive the texts and how these perceptions affect their subjective interest in reading.

## **6. Results**

It has been found that more than 50% of the 41 students (23 female, 18 male) in the Year 8 ESL class showed significant improvement in their time spent on independent reading sessions due to the introduction of supplementary English literature texts. Data collection was taken from 41 students from the Year 8 ESL class. The measurement period was two times two-week intervals between April and May 2024. The frequency of independent reading sessions was measured over two periods: two weeks before the intervention (pre-intervention) and two weeks after the intervention (post-intervention). The data collection tools are the reading

logs maintained by the students to record the number of independent reading sessions per week.

### a. Descriptive Findings

The findings based on the pre-intervention data were the average number of hours spent on independent reading sessions per week was around 10 hours. For the post-intervention data, the average number of hours spent on independent reading sessions per week increased to almost 16 hours.

Table 1:  
 The Raw Data Collection of Independent Reading Sessions

Year 8 Students	Gender	Hours in Week 1-2	Hours in Week 3-4	Difference
Student 1	F	8	13	5
Student 2	F	11	17	6
Student 3	F	10	14	4
Student 4	M	10	15	5
Student 5	M	9	14	5
Student 6	F	13	21	8
Student 7	M	6	15	9
Student 8	F	7	13	6
Student 9	M	12	20	8
Student 10	M	11	12	1
Student 11	F	12	19	7
Student 12	F	10	22	12
Student 13	F	9	19	10
Student 14	M	6	16	10
Student 15	F	14	26	12
Student 16	M	9	8	-1
Student 17	F	15	25	10
Student 18	M	7	10	3
Student 19	M	10	16	6
Student 20	M	14	18	4
Student 21	M	15	17	2
Student 22	M	7	9	2
Student 23	F	5	18	13
Student 24	F	7	19	12
Student 25	F	8	13	5
Student 26	F	16	21	5
Student 27	F	9	23	14
Student 28	F	9	15	6
Student 29	F	6	24	18

Student 30	F	14	10	-4
Student 31	F	14	12	-2
Student 32	F	11	19	8
Student 33	F	14	13	-1
Student 34	M	12	15	3
Student 35	M	14	21	7
Student 36	M	9	9	0
Student 37	M	15	20	5
Student 38	M	9	9	0
Student 39	F	12	12	0
Student 40	M	3	5	2
Student 41	F	8	18	10
Average		10.24390244	15.97560976	5.731707317
Average (rounded)		10.244	15.976	5.732
Standard Deviation		3.160584137	4.906381136	4.747396669
Standard Deviation (rounded)		3.161	4.906	4.747

Table 2:  
 The Average Number of Hours Spent on Independent Reading Sessions and the Gap in Percentage

	Before	After	Increase (in %)
Average	10.24390244	15.97560976	55.95238095%
Average (rounded)	10.244	15.976	56.0%

A significant improvement was defined as an increase of at least 56% in the number of independent reading sessions during the period of observation weeks. As seen from the individual student analysis, out of the 41 students, 23 students showed an increase of more than 50% in their reading sessions. Specifically, these 23 students increased their average sessions from approximately 3 hours per week to 6 or more hours per week. The remaining 18 students either showed no significant change or a less than 50% increase in their reading sessions.

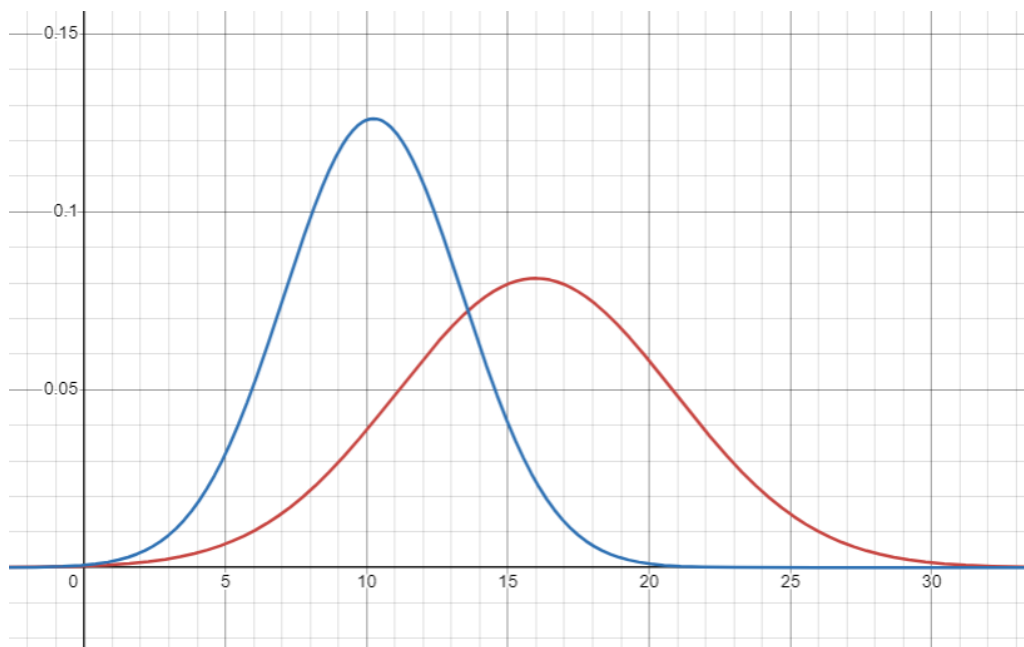
Using the paired t-tests to compare the pre- and post-intervention reading frequencies, it was calculated in terms of means, standard deviations, and significance levels to determine if there was a statistically significant increase in reading engagement. The mean frequency of independent reading sessions was initially 10.244 hours in two weeks (SD = 3.161). During the post-intervention data, after introducing the supplementary English literature texts, the mean frequency of independent reading sessions increased to 15.976 hours in two weeks (SD = 4.906). The

results showed a statistically significant increase in reading sessions with the average of reading hours from 10.244 hours/two weeks to 15.976 hours/two weeks, indicating that the introduction of supplementary texts had a positive impact on students' reading engagement. The critical t-value was 2.423 and t-value was 7.731, showing a significant gap. The following blue and red line graphs illustrated the normalized distribution of before and after intervention respectively.

Table 3:  
 The Normalized Distribution of Before and After Intervention

Before (blue)	After (red)
10.24390244	15.97560976
10.244	15.976
3.160584137	4.906381136
3.161	4.906

Graph 1:  
 The Normalized Distribution of Before and After Intervention





## **b. Qualitative Findings**

For the qualitative insights, the increased interest and reading engagement were seen from students who showed significant improvement reported higher interest and engagement with the supplementary English literature texts. Enhanced motivation was also found as feedback from these students indicated that the variety and relevance of the texts motivated them to read more frequently outside of class. Positive feedback was also gained when many students highlighted specific stories or themes that resonated with their personal experiences, which encouraged them to dedicate more time to reading independently.

As for the expected outcomes, the intervention anticipated improvements in students' comprehension and overall attitudes toward reading. The responses collected during and after the Literature Circle Enrichment Program were analyzed to assess their understanding, application, and ability to articulate concepts. Regularly review students' reflection journals was also another way to measure success. Facilitators found evidence of their understanding, personal connections, and reflections on the new idea. Some of the responses on the improvements in students' comprehension were the following:

Student 7 (Male):

"I really enjoyed the Literature Circle Enrichment Program. The chosen literary texts were interesting and suited our age perfectly. I felt more engaged with the stories and found myself wanting to read more. Being able to choose my own texts for independent reading made a huge difference. I was more motivated to read and understood the material better because it was something I was genuinely interested in. My comprehension has definitely improved, and I can now articulate my thoughts more clearly in class discussions."

Student 14 (Male):

"The program was a game-changer for me. The literary texts were not only appropriate for our age but also very captivating. I loved that we had the freedom to select our own books for independent reading. This choice made me more excited about reading, and I noticed that my comprehension skills improved significantly. Writing in the reflection journal helped me connect personally with the stories and think more deeply about the new ideas presented."

Student 17 (Female):

"I found the Literature Circle Enrichment Program very beneficial. The texts chosen for us were fascinating and relevant to our experiences. Having the option to pick our own books for independent reading was empowering. It encouraged me to read more and enjoy the process. I saw a noticeable

improvement in my comprehension and ability to discuss complex concepts. Reflecting in my journal also helped me internalize and relate to the new ideas we explored."

Student 23 (Female)

"The literary texts selected for the program were excellent and matched our interests and age group well. Being allowed to choose my own reading material independently made me more invested in my reading. This choice led to a significant improvement in my comprehension and overall attitude toward reading. Regularly reflecting on what I read in my journal helped me understand and connect with the material on a deeper level."

Student 29 (Female):

"This program has been a highlight of my school year. The chosen texts were perfect for our age group and kept me interested. Having the freedom to pick my own books for independent reading was a big plus. It made me look forward to reading and contributed to a better understanding of the texts. My comprehension has improved, and I can now express my thoughts more confidently in both written and oral form. The reflection journals were a great way to connect personally with the stories and think critically about new ideas."

## **CONCLUSION**

The data collection instruments carefully designed to comprehensively assess the impact of supplementary English literature texts on ESL secondary students' reading engagement, comprehension, and attitudes were implemented well. The combination of quantitative surveys and assessments with qualitative interviews and focus groups provided a robust analysis, yielding both numerical data and rich, narrative insights to answer the research questions effectively.

The descriptive findings strongly showed that more than 50% of the Year 8 ESL students showed significant improvement in their time spent on independent reading sessions due to the impact of supplementary English literature texts. The quantitative data, corroborated by qualitative insights, demonstrates a marked increase in reading engagement among the majority of the students, validating the effectiveness of the intervention.

One of the most surprising elements of the research was the significant increase in independent reading sessions among ESL secondary students when supplementary English literature texts were integrated into their literacy activities. Initially, it was hypothesized that there would be a moderate increase in engagement, but the quantitative data revealed a marked uptick in the frequency of reading sessions, far exceeding the teacher's expectations. This suggested a strong positive impact of diverse and interesting literature on reading habits.

Another surprising element was the depth of emotional and personal

connection that students reported in their qualitative feedback. Many students shared that the supplementary texts made reading more enjoyable and helped them relate to the content on a personal level. These texts often reflected their cultural backgrounds or provided perspectives that resonated deeply with their experiences, significantly enhancing their interest and engagement in reading.

### **FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The impact of supplementary texts on reading engagement was interestingly profound. The introduction of supplementary English literature texts significantly enhanced reading engagement among ESL secondary students. This applied research explored how carefully selected supplementary texts can ignite students' interest in reading by providing engaging and culturally relevant material. The increase in independent reading sessions among students highlighted the positive impact of such texts on their reading habits.

One implication is to address barriers to effective literacy education. Identifying and addressing barriers such as inadequate resources and misleading advertising about educational quality are essential for improving literacy education. As educators have become more aware about the literacy crisis in the U.S. and around the world (*Education Statistics*, 2022), the applied research highlighted the significant deficiencies within the school environment that had hindered effective literacy education. By uncovering these issues, the study advocates for specific actions and policy changes to create a more supportive and transparent educational framework.

Personalized learning experiences are also important implication to consider. Personalized learning experiences enhance students' reading engagement and comprehension. Through the use of supplementary texts that cater to individual student interests and reading levels, the research emphasizes the value of personalized learning in fostering a deeper connection to reading and improving overall literacy outcomes (*Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices*, 2008). Lastly, building a supportive reading community is truly effective in promoting effective reading habit. Creating a supportive reading community enhances students' reading experiences and engagement. By facilitating discussions through focus groups and encouraging collaborative reading activities, the research shows how a supportive reading community can positively influence students' attitudes toward reading and foster a culture of literacy.

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