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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Celebrating Diversity: Differentiated Reading Materials for Students in an Inclusive Classroom**

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**| ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to evaluate the reading performance of students in selected public schools in Cebu using Differentiated Learning Materials in English during the 2024–2025 school year. It specifically assessed students' preferred learning styles—Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic (VARK)—and their reading performance based on four key comprehension strategies: Preparation, Organization, Elaboration, and Monitoring. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design and normative survey method, the study employed an adapted questionnaire administered to 406 students. Findings revealed that most students were at the Intermediate level in the areas of preparation, organization, and elaboration, with monitoring emerging as the strongest skill area at the advanced level. These results indicate that students generally possess developing to proficient comprehension skills, with notable strengths in self-monitoring. Statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between learning styles and the reading strategies of Preparation, Organization, and Elaboration. However, no significant relationship was found between learning styles and the monitoring strategy. This suggests that while students' preferred learning styles influence specific comprehension strategies, monitoring skills may develop more effectively through direct and explicit instruction rather than through learning preference alone. Therefore, instructional approaches should prioritize flexible, evidence-based strategies over rigid adherence to learning styles to effectively support diverse students.

**| KEYWORDS**

Special Education, Learning Styles, Reading Comprehension Competencies, Reading Activities, Differentiated Reading Materials

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### **1. Introduction**

Inclusive classrooms represent a microcosm of diversity, encompassing learners with varied backgrounds, abilities, and educational needs (Shih, 2024). Within these environments, disparities in reading proficiency are particularly evident: while some students exhibit advanced literacy skills, others encounter persistent challenges attributable to factors such as learning disabilities (Krämer et al., 2021), linguistic limitations (Capin et al., 2022), or limited access to instructional resources (Adao et al., 2023). Reading, as a foundational academic competency, reinforces learning across all disciplines (Buehl, 2023). However, decoding text alone is insufficient (Crawford et al., 2025); learners must comprehend (Tovani, 2023), analyze, and apply textual information to achieve academic success and lifelong literacy (Tachie-Donkor & Ezema, 2023). This complexity underscores the urgent need for instructional approaches that address individual learning differences, thereby promoting equity and inclusivity in education.

Differentiated reading materials have emerged as a promising strategy to meet this demand. Defined as instructional texts and activities adapted to students' unique interests, abilities, and reading levels, differentiation seeks to optimize engagement and

comprehension by aligning content with learners' cognitive profiles (Tomlinson, 2014, as cited in (Kahmann et al., 2022). When implemented intentionally, such resources not only mitigate learning disparities but also foster active participation, cultural responsiveness, and equitable access to knowledge (Snyder & Fenner, 2021). Existing literature highlights the theoretical advantages of differentiation; however, empirical evidence on its effectiveness—particularly in enhancing reading comprehension and engagement among junior high school students in inclusive educational settings—remains limited. This research addresses this critical gap by examining the impact of differentiated reading materials on reading outcomes within public school contexts.

This study also draws on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasize providing multiple ways for students to access content, engage with material, and demonstrate understanding (Levey, 2023). When paired with differentiated reading materials, these principles can help create more inclusive learning experiences that address the needs of diverse learners, including struggling readers and students from diverse language backgrounds (Grecu, 2022). Additionally, using personalized and relevant texts may not only improve comprehension but also encourage motivation and foster a lasting appreciation for reading (Kheang et al., 2024).

Reading comprehension is a fundamental academic skill and a critical predictor of lifelong learning, academic achievement, and future opportunities (Busari et al., 2025). It goes beyond simple word recognition, requiring active cognitive engagement such as interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating text. Learners with weak comprehension skills often experience academic difficulties, diminished motivation, and limited prospects (Vaughn et al., 2024). Research highlights that reading is essential for adapting to an increasingly complex world driven by technological and informational demands (Khan et al., 2022; Ng et al., 2023). Inclusive classrooms present diverse learning needs, including those of students with disabilities, which necessitate the use of adaptive instructional strategies. Learning Style Theory, particularly the VARK model, emphasizes that students learn differently—some respond better to visual aids, others to auditory input, reading/writing tasks, or kinesthetic activities (Beltran et al., 2025). Addressing these differences through differentiated instruction improves engagement, motivation, and comprehension outcomes (Goyibova et al., 2025).

Philippine laws and policies, including RA 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022), and RA 9442 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities), mandate learner-centered, inclusive practices and the provision of appropriate accommodations. These legal frameworks, along with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, advocate for accessible and flexible instructional materials to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Despite these mandates, many students continue to struggle with vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, which significantly hinders comprehension and overall reading performance. This suggests the need for differentiated learning materials and targeted strategies to enhance reading skills within inclusive classrooms. Specifically, this study evaluated the reading performance of students using differentiated learning materials in an inclusive classroom at selected public schools in Cebu during the 2024-2025 school year. Specifically, it sought to answer questions about the predominant learning styles of the students as to visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic; identify the reading performance of the students in terms of the given reading comprehension strategies such as preparation, organization, elaboration, and monitoring; and the correlation between the predominantly learning styles and reading comprehension performance of the students in an inclusive classroom.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationship between Grade 7 students' learning styles and reading comprehension performance in five public schools in Cebu during AY 2024–2025, with 406 respondents selected through simple random sampling. Data were gathered using a modified Reading Activity Package integrating the Gunning's (1996) four reading comprehension strategies (Preparation, Organization, Elaboration, and Monitoring) and the VARK model (Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic) to assess comprehension skills and learning preferences. The instrument consisted of 40 items, designed for inclusive classrooms. Data collection involved three stages: pre-data gathering (approval, consent, validation), data gathering (structured administration of questionnaires), and post-data gathering (organization, analysis, interpretation). Ethical standards, confidentiality, and data privacy protocols were strictly observed. Statistical tools used included percentages (for demographics and reading performance), weighted mean (to identify tendencies in responses), correlation analysis (to examine relationships between learning styles and comprehension), and frequency distribution (to analyze pattern occurrence)—findings aimed to inform the development of culturally responsive and differentiated reading activities for inclusive education.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1 Learning Styles of the Respondents**

This section outlines the learning styles of the respondents, which include visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic preferences. Table 1 presents the distribution of 406 students based on their identified learning styles.

**Table 1. Distribution of the students' learning styles**

Learning Styles	f	%
Visual	52	12.81
Auditory	187	46.06
Read/Write	88	21.67
Kinesthetic	79	19.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 1 reveals that the predominant learning preference among respondents is auditory learning (n = 187; 46.06%), indicating that these students learn most effectively through listening and verbal instruction. This finding suggests that nearly half of the participants respond better to spoken explanations, discussions, and auditory cues. The second most common preference is read/write learning (n = 88; 21.67%), reflecting a strong inclination toward text-based materials such as notes, handouts, and written assignments. Kinesthetic learners comprise 19.46% (n = 79), who favor physical engagement through movement, hands-on activities, and real-world simulations. Finally, visual learners account for 12.81% (n = 52), showing a preference for visual representations such as charts, images, and diagrams.

According to Brahim (2022) and Imran et al. (2023), learners, especially those with special needs such as ADHD or autism, benefit from instruction that uses varied methods of content delivery. This approach is reinforced by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, which advocates for providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to create an inclusive and effective learning environment (Sanguinetti, 2024). Therefore, recognizing and responding to these learning styles is crucial in designing differentiated reading materials that cater to every student's unique way of learning.

### **3.2 Reading Performance of Students Based on the Reading Comprehension Strategies**

The reading performance of the students was assessed using a questionnaire designed to evaluate their comprehension skills. The performances were rated in the areas of preparation, organization, elaboration, and monitoring.

#### **3.2.1 Preparational**

This component assesses students' ability to preview the text, anticipate its content, and generate predictions before reading. Table 2 presents the data.

**Table 2. Reading performance of the students in terms of reading comprehension strategies in preparation**

Performance Level	Range of Scores	f	%
Advanced	8-10	128	31.53
Intermediate	4-7	223	54.93
Beginner	0-3	55	13.55
<b>Total</b>		<b>406</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As presented in Table 2, the data are categorized into three performance levels based on score ranges. A majority of the students (n = 223; 54.93%) achieved an Intermediate level with scores between 4 and 7, indicating that more than half of the learners exhibit a developing capacity to engage in preparatory activities such as previewing texts, activating prior knowledge, and setting reading objectives. Meanwhile, 128 students (31.53%) attained an Advanced level (scores 8–10), reflecting strong proficiency in applying preparation strategies to facilitate comprehension. Conversely, 55 students (13.55%) fell within the Beginner level (scores 0–3), suggesting limited utilization or understanding of preparatory techniques in reading.

The results highlight that while a significant portion of the students were competent in preparation strategies, a substantial number—particularly those at the Beginner level—may require targeted instructional support. This finding reinforces the importance of explicitly teaching metacognitive reading strategies, particularly in inclusive classrooms where students may vary widely in their readiness and learning needs. According to Schedl et al. (2021), preparation plays a vital role in guiding students' purpose-driven reading and comprehension, as it influences how they engage with a text. Moreover, supporting beginner-level students through scaffolded instruction and differentiated reading activities can help bridge the gap and foster more independent, strategic readers (Fisher et al., 2022).

### 3.2.2 Organizational

This strategy evaluates students' ability to identify essential details within a text and establish meaningful relationships among these ideas to construct a coherent understanding. Table 3 presents the results.

**Table 3. Reading performance of the students in reading comprehension strategies in terms of organization**

Performance Level	Range of Scores	f	%
Advanced	8-10	100	24.63
Intermediate	4-7	236	58.13
Beginner	0-3	70	17.24
<b>Total</b>		<b>406</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As shown in Table 3, most of the respondents (n = 236; 58.13%) scored within the Intermediate level (4–7 points), suggesting that more than half of the learners exhibit a moderate ability to organize information, including identifying main ideas, recognizing supporting details, and sequencing events. Meanwhile, 100 students (24.63%) attained an Advanced level (8–10 points), demonstrating strong proficiency in applying organizational strategies to enhance comprehension and recall of textual information. In contrast, 70 students (17.24%) were categorized as Beginners (0–3 points), reflecting limited capability in structuring and organizing content during reading. The distribution of performance levels suggests that while many students possess developing skills in organizing information, a considerable number still require guided support.

The ability to organize textual content is a crucial component of reading comprehension, as it enables readers to make sense of complex information and construct coherent mental representations (Duke & Cartwright, 2021). For learners in inclusive classrooms, particularly those with learning difficulties, organizing content can pose a challenge unless it is explicitly taught. Instructional approaches such as the use of graphic organizers, summarizing techniques, and think-alouds can enhance organizational skills among struggling readers. Moreover, differentiating instruction based on learners' performance levels enables teachers to provide scaffolding for beginner learners while challenging more advanced students to refine their comprehension strategies (Tomlinson, 2017).

### 3.2.3 Elaboration

This strategy may enhance students' comprehension by forming connections between the text and their prior subject knowledge. Table 4 presents the reading performance of the students based on their use of the elaboration strategy, which involves connecting new information with previous knowledge, making inferences, and generating explanations while reading.

**Table 4. Reading performance of the students in reading comprehension strategies in terms of elaboration**

Performance Level	Range of Scores	f	%
Advanced	8-10	99	24.38
Intermediate	4-7	216	53.20
Beginner	0-3	91	22.41
<b>Total</b>		<b>406</b>	<b>100.00</b>

As shown in Table 4, most of the students (n = 216; 53.20%) fall within the Intermediate level (scores 4–7), indicating a developing ability to elaborate on textual content by forming meaningful associations that enhance comprehension. Meanwhile, 99 students (24.38%) achieved the Advanced level (scores 8–10), reflecting strong proficiency in elaborative processes such as interpreting meanings, synthesizing ideas, and extending information beyond the given text. Conversely, 91 students (22.41%) remain at the Beginner level (scores 0–3), demonstrating limited application of elaboration strategies in their reading comprehension.

The data suggests that while over half of the learners are progressing in their ability to use elaboration techniques, nearly a quarter still struggle to make deeper connections with what they read. Elaboration is a key higher-order comprehension skill that contributes to more durable learning and improved retention of information (Job & Muralidharan, 2024). For students with diverse learning needs, particularly those in inclusive classrooms, the ability to elaborate may vary depending on language proficiency, cognitive development, and background knowledge. To support learners at the beginner level, educators can integrate strategies such as guided questioning, concept mapping, and collaborative discussions that prompt deeper thinking.

According to Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding elaborative skills within a learner's developmental range can foster independent comprehension over time.

### **3.2.4 Monitoring**

Table 5 illustrates the reading performance of the students based on their utilization of the monitoring strategy, a critical metacognitive component in reading comprehension that entails assessing one's understanding, identifying instances of confusion, and implementing corrective measures while reading.

**Table 5. Reading performance of the students in reading comprehension strategies in terms of monitoring**

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Range of Scores</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Advanced	8-10	294	69.81
Intermediate	4-7	97	25.47
Beginner	0-3	15	4.72
<b>Total</b>		<b>406</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data on Table 5 reveals that a substantial proportion of the respondents, 294 students (69.81%) attained the Advanced level (scores 8–10), reflecting a well-developed capacity for self-regulation during reading. These learners likely exhibit heightened awareness of comprehension breakdowns and employ strategies such as rereading, generating questions, or adjusting reading pace to enhance understanding. In contrast, 97 students (25.47%) were classified under the Intermediate level (scores 4–7), indicating emerging proficiency in monitoring their comprehension. A minimal segment, comprising 15 students (4.72%), fell within the Beginner category (scores 0–3), suggesting limited ability to recognize and address gaps in understanding during reading activities.

This distribution reveals that most students are proficient in monitoring their reading comprehension, a promising indicator of their metacognitive development. Monitoring is one of the most critical strategies for effective and independent reading, as it enables learners to be actively engaged with the text and take responsibility for their own learning (Manarin et al., 2024). The high percentage of advanced performers suggests that many students are already applying effective self-check techniques, which may be a result of consistent instructional focus on metacognitive strategy training. However, the small group of beginner-level students still requires targeted support, such as think-aloud modeling, comprehension checks, and reflection activities to help build their self-awareness as readers (Tang et al., 2025). In inclusive education settings, enhancing monitoring skills across all learner types aligns with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach, ensuring that all students are equipped to manage their own learning processes effectively (Zhang et al., 2022).

### **3.3 Correlation between Learning Styles and Reading Comprehension Strategies**

The students' identified learning styles, reading comprehension strategies, and performance test results are analyzed to determine the correlation between them and to assess their significance in relation to the respondents' reading comprehension skills.

**Table 6. Test of the relationship between the learning styles and the reading performance of the students**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>F-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p - value</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Learning Styles and Preparation	4.987	3	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
Learning Styles and Organization	3.131	3	0.026	Reject Ho	Significant
Learning Styles and Elaboration	3.631	3	0.013	Reject Ho	Significant
Learning Styles and Monitoring	2.467	3	0.062	Do not reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 6 presents the statistical findings on the relationship between students' learning styles and their reading performance across four comprehension strategies: Preparation, Organization, Elaboration, and Monitoring. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using the F-test to examine whether significant differences exist in reading performance among the four learning style categories—Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic.

The findings reveal that students' preferred learning styles significantly influence their application of specific reading strategies, particularly in the areas of preparation, organization, and elaboration. Auditory learners tend to perform better when they engage in verbal discussions, whereas visual learners benefit from tools such as charts and mind maps to structure information effectively (Qasserras, 2024). Similarly, elaborative strategies, including paraphrasing and making connections, are more effectively employed when instructional approaches align with learners' cognitive preferences (Xiaoying Feng, 2025). Conversely, the absence of a significant relationship between learning styles and monitoring skills suggests that metacognitive regulation—such as evaluating comprehension and adjusting strategies during reading—develops primarily through explicit instruction rather than individual learning preferences. These findings suggest the need for educators to integrate a differentiated strategy for preparation, organization, and elaboration with universal approaches that strengthen metacognitive skills, such as think-alouds and comprehension checks. This approach aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocates for multiple means of engagement and representation to ensure equitable access and learning opportunities for all students.

#### 4. Conclusion

The findings indicate that students exhibit diverse learning styles, with a notable preference for auditory learning. Overall, students demonstrated an average level of proficiency in reading comprehension strategies, with a noteworthy strength in monitoring their understanding during reading. The analysis further revealed that learning styles significantly influence the use of preparation, organization, and elaboration strategies; however, they do not appear to affect students' ability to monitor comprehension. These results underscore the importance of employing instructional approaches that align with students' learning preferences while simultaneously providing explicit guidance on developing self-monitoring skills. Such pedagogical adjustments have the potential to enhance reading comprehension across different learner profiles.

##### 4.1 Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted to selected schools in Lapulapu City Division and the results do not represent completely the totality of the whole program.

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