

Enhancing Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade VI Learners Through Multimedia-Integrated Short Stories

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of multimedia-integrated short stories on the reading comprehension skills of grade six students at Jigme Losel Primary School, Bhutan. Despite English being the medium of instruction, many learners struggle with vocabulary, semantic understanding, and inferential reasoning in reading. The research employed a quantitative one-group pre-test and post-test design involving 77 purposively sampled learners. The intervention integrated audio narration, animations, images, and interactive exercises with curriculum-aligned short stories over eight weeks.

A 25-item reading comprehension test covering vocabulary, semantics, and inference was developed, validated by expert teachers, pilot tested, and found reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$). Paired t-test analysis of pre-test and post-test scores showed statistically significant improvements in all three domains, with particularly strong gains in vocabulary and semantics, and moderate progress in inference. The findings suggest that multimedia-supported instruction enhances student engagement, reduces cognitive load, and scaffolds higher-order comprehension skills.

The study confirms that multimedia integration is an effective pedagogical strategy to enhance reading comprehension, especially for learners facing difficulties with traditional text-based instruction. The study recommends careful multimedia design and targeted support to further strengthen inferential comprehension.

Keywords: Multimedia-integrated short stories, Reading comprehension, Grade six learners

Introduction

Background of the Study

Since the mid-20th century, English has gained prominence as the global language of education, business, and communication. In many international primary schools, English is taught as either a first or second language, forming the foundation for academic success and future participation in a globalised society. Research highlights that early exposure to English in primary education enhances learners' proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking while fostering critical thinking and cultural awareness (Ghosn, 2002; Gonzalez, 2010). Short stories, in particular, have been widely used in international classrooms as an effective resource because they provide authentic language input, stimulate imagination, and promote comprehension through meaningful contexts (Tso, 2014).

In Bhutan, English has been taught as a second language since the establishment of modern education in 1961. The government adopted English as the medium of instruction to develop skilled professionals for

socio-economic development and engage with the global community (Biddha & Thinley, 2010). English provides Bhutanese learners access to international knowledge and enables them to share Bhutan's cultural heritage worldwide (CAPSD, 2006). Despite these advantages, concerns persist regarding the overall proficiency of Bhutanese students. Studies and classroom observations have shown that many learners struggle with the four skills of English and often face difficulties in comprehension, inference, and critical thinking tasks (Peldon, 2014). Although short stories are included in the national curriculum, they remain underutilised as a pedagogical tool, despite their potential to enrich language learning and foster reading comprehension.

Similar challenges are evident at the school level. Learners across grade six struggle with comprehension, inference, and analytical thinking, as reflected in their limited ability to respond effectively to written and oral questions. In addition, many learners underperformed in the literature section of the midterm examination. These outcomes suggest persistent gaps in reading comprehension that require focused attention from teachers. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the underlying causes of learners' weak comprehension skills and explore effective pedagogical approaches to address these issues. In particular, it emphasises the use of multimedia-integrated short stories as a strategy to enhance engagement, support understanding, and ultimately improve reading comprehension among grade six students.

Context of the Study

This action research was carried out at Jigme Losel Primary School, Thimphu, with grade six B and D learners. English is a compulsory subject, and literary genres such as short stories, essays, and poetry are an integral part of the national curriculum. However, the 2025 midterm examination item analysis revealed that grade six learners consistently underperformed in comprehension questions across genres. Classroom observations further confirm that while learners can respond to simple recall questions, they struggle to comprehend storylines, make inferences, and provide extended responses to competency-based questions (CBQs).

This study focuses specifically on short stories, as they are engaging, manageable in length, and widely used in the curriculum, while also providing skills that can support comprehension in other literary genres. In light of these challenges, this study proposes the integration of multimedia resources, such as animations, audio narrations, and visual aids, into the teaching of short stories. By providing learners with multiple modes of input, multimedia can enhance engagement, scaffold understanding, and make literary texts accessible. It is anticipated that this approach will not only strengthen learners' comprehension of short stories but also help them develop transferable skills that support understanding across other literary genres.

Problem Statement

Although literary genres such as short stories, essays, and poetry are included in the English curriculum, grade six learners at Jigme Losel Primary School continue to face difficulties comprehending these texts. Classroom observations and midterm examination item analysis reports show that learners can respond to simple recall questions, such as multiple-choice and short-answer items, however, they struggle significantly with extended-response questions that demand higher-order comprehension, inference, and interpretation. This study focuses on short stories as an intervention context because they are engaging, manageable in length, and widely used in the curriculum. Moreover, strengthening comprehension through short stories is expected to transfer positively to learners' understanding of other literary genres. This

persistent gap suggests that traditional teaching strategies may not be sufficient to build deeper comprehension skills or prepare learners for competency-based assessments. Therefore, there is a need to investigate how multimedia-integrated short stories can enhance comprehension, make reading more engaging, and support learners in answering extended and competency-based comprehension questions.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for multiple stakeholders.

1. **For learners:** It enhances reading comprehension in an engaging manner, making literary texts less intimidating and more meaningful.
2. **For teachers:** It provides a classroom-based strategy to integrate ICT and literature to strengthen learners' comprehension skills.
3. **For schools:** It contributes to evidence-based practices that improve academic performance and align with the competency-based curriculum.
4. **For researchers:** It adds to the limited body of research on the use of multimedia in teaching short stories in the Bhutanese context.

Objectives of the Study

The research objectives are as follows:

1. Assess the impact of multimedia-integrated short stories on grade six learners' reading comprehension skills.
2. Compare the difference between learners' pre- and post-test reading comprehension scores after exposure to multimedia-integrated short stories.

Overarching Research Question

How does the use of multimedia-integrated short stories influence the reading comprehension skills of grade six learners?

Sub-Questions

1. What is the effect of multimedia-integrated short stories on learners' reading comprehension in terms of vocabulary, semantics, and inference?
2. Is there a significant difference between learners' pre- and post-test reading comprehension scores after exposure to multimedia-integrated short stories?

Literature Review

Reading Comprehension in Language Learning

Reading comprehension is a multifaceted process that is central to the development of literacy and language proficiency. It involves decoding written symbols, interpreting their meaning, and connecting textual information with one's prior knowledge and experiences. Castles et al. (2018) defined reading as a process encompassing word recognition, literal understanding, interpretation, and critical and creative comprehension. This process engages multiple linguistic and cognitive dimensions, including vocabulary development, semantic interpretation, and inferential reasoning, which collectively determine a learner's overall comprehension performance. According to Hwang and Duke (2020) and Kim (2020), reading is a receptive language skill that requires learners to receive, process, and construct meaning from written text.

Duke and Cartwright (2021) further explain that reading involves multi-level processing, such as visual decoding, phonological processing, semantic comprehension, and contextual integration. In the context of grade six learners, these components are particularly critical because learners at this stage transition from basic decoding to deeper comprehension, which relies heavily on vocabulary mastery, semantic understanding, and inference-making. When these sub-skills are underdeveloped, learners often struggle to derive meaning, interpret relationships between ideas, and comprehend implied meanings within a text.

Short Stories as Tools for Reading Development

Short stories are widely recognised as effective instructional materials for developing reading skills in second-language and foreign-language classrooms. They provide authentic linguistic input, cultural enrichment, and opportunities to practice all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ghosn, 2002; Gonzalez, 2010; Tso, 2014). Their narrative structure helps learners engage with characters, settings, and plots in meaningful ways, making language learning more contextual and emotionally resonant.

Al-Dersi (2013) and Khatib and Nasrollahi (2012) have demonstrated that short stories can enhance vocabulary and comprehension when used with appropriate pedagogical strategies. However, Khatib and Nasrollahi (2012) cautioned that literature alone may not yield significant improvement without effective instructional scaffolding.

Similar challenges exist in reading instruction in Bhutan. Studies have indicated persistent weaknesses in reading comprehension, as reflected in school assessments and examination analyses (Peldon, 2014). This suggests that conventional text-based, teacher-centred instruction may not adequately address learners' cognitive and motivational needs. Therefore, incorporating technology-enhanced methods, such as multimedia-integrated storytelling, offers a promising approach to strengthen reading comprehension and engagement among primary learners.

Multimedia-Integrated Short Stories and Their Impact on Reading Comprehension

The integration of multimedia into reading instruction has emerged as a powerful method for enhancing comprehension by engaging learners through both visual and auditory modalities. Rooted in Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2020), this approach posits that learners better understand and retain information when it is presented simultaneously through multiple channels, such as images, sound, and text. Interactive multimedia, including video stories and digital storytelling, enriches the reading experience by providing authentic, multimodal inputs that enhance vocabulary acquisition, conceptual understanding, and inferential reasoning.

Azhimia (2023) discovered that learners exposed to multimedia-enhanced stories consistently outperformed their peers who engaged with traditional text-only materials. These findings highlight the significant impact of integrating audiovisual elements into reading instruction. Similarly, La Bertha et al. (2023) emphasised that digital storytelling not only enhances comprehension but also makes learning more engaging and meaningful particularly when the stories are age-appropriate and culturally relevant.

Multimedia-integrated short stories, in particular, offer an engaging and effective medium for reading instruction. Teng (2022) highlighted how features such as pause, replay, and interactive reflection in multimedia stories foster deeper understanding and inference-making. The use of multimedia in the form of short stories provides not only cognitive but also emotional and contextual benefits. Rahimi and Yadollahi (2011) and Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) found that digital storytelling enhances both comprehension and motivation in young learners by allowing them to visualize characters and events, interpret meanings in context, and predict story outcomes. This multimodal engagement strengthens key

areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, semantic understanding, and inferential reasoning which are essential for deeper learning.

Implications and Research Gap

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that multimedia-integrated storytelling enhances reading comprehension by supporting vocabulary acquisition, deepening participants' semantic understanding, and promoting inferential reasoning. Through interactive and multimodal engagement, learners can visualise meaning, associate words with contextual cues, and make informed predictions about text content.

Despite this compelling evidence, most existing research has been conducted outside Bhutan, often involving limited sample sizes and specific populations. Within the Bhutanese context, there remains limited empirical investigation into how multimedia-integrated short stories can enhance reading comprehension among grade six learners. Furthermore, few studies have explored this instructional approach within the framework of competency-based learning emphasised in Bhutan's curricula.

Recent studies in Bhutan have begun to address this gap. Pema and Sakulwongs (2023) found that using multimodal materials combining text, images, and audio significantly improved grade six learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement, supporting the effectiveness of multimedia-integrated short stories in Bhutanese classrooms. Similarly, Lhamo and Sakulwongs (2023) reported that implementing an audio-assisted reading strategy with grade six learners led to significant improvements in comprehension, motivation, and learner satisfaction. These findings highlight the growing relevance of technology-enhanced reading instruction in Bhutan and provide a strong foundation for further exploration at the grade six level.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study utilised a quantitative research approach involving a one-group pre-test and post-test experimental design which allow the researcher to assess the effects of an instructional intervention specifically, multimedia-integrated short stories comparing reading comprehension outcomes prior to and following the treatment. This design was selected to measure the effectiveness of multimedia-integrated short stories in improving learners' reading comprehension. The approach allows for assessing the difference in learners' performance before and after the intervention, thereby establishing causal inferences regarding the instructional treatment. The choice of a one-group pre-test and post-test design aligns with Creswell and Creswell (2018), who emphasise its effectiveness in educational research where randomisation or control groups are not feasible. This design is appropriate for classroom-based intervention studies conducted under natural school conditions.

Sampling and Participants

A total of 77 learners from grade six B and D participated in the study, selected through purposive sampling. This method allows researcher to deliberately choose participants based on their academic needs, classroom dynamics, and reading comprehension challenges (Creswell, 2012). This approach conforms to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), who highlighted purposive sampling as being suitable for exploring specific classroom environments and promoting educational pedagogic practice.

Data Collection Tools

According to Creswell (2014), data collection tools are instruments used to systematically gather, measure, and analyse information relevant to a study's objectives, ensuring systematic, reliable, and valid data

collection. In this study, reading comprehension test (pre-test and post-test) with 25-item test designed based on grade six english curriculum was administered to measure learners' comprehension before and after the intervention. The test assessed three domains: vocabulary, semantics, and inferential comprehension. Both tests were administered under standardised classroom conditions, supervised by the researcher. Each test was completed within a 40-minute time frame. To reduce test-retest bias, the sequence of test items was rearranged in the post-test, although the content and level of difficulty remained consistent with the pre-test.

Data Analysis Technique

Quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-tests were analysed using Jamovi software. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation, were employed to report learners' performance, and a paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the intervention caused a statistically significant change in reading comprehension. Cohen's d was further computed to estimate the effect size, which is indicated by the magnitude of the change as being small, medium, or large (Cohen, 1988).

Validity and Reliability

The research instrument was developed by adapting existing items from existing grade six english curriculum assessments and was further refined through expert review to ensure its validity and reliability. A panel of three experienced english teachers, each with over 30 years of teaching experience, evaluated the test for content accuracy, clarity, and alignment with the study objectives. Their feedback was incorporated to improve the wording, difficulty level, and domain balance of the items.

Prior to the main data collection, the instrument was pilot tested with a group of 20 grade six learners from a different section to assess clarity, timing, and item discrimination. Minor revisions were made to ambiguous items based on the pilot results. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.8 indicating acceptable internal consistency for classroom-based research. The combination of expert validation, pilot testing, and statistical reliability confirms that the instrument is both valid and reliable for the purposes of the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical norms in educational research to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of all respondents. The researcher sought approval from the school administration. Informed consent was sought from the guardians and parents of the learners once they were provided with a clear explanation of the intent of the study, procedures involved, potential benefits, and minimal risks.

Participation was voluntary, and learners were informed that they could drop out of the study at any point without penalty or adverse impact. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained at all times; participants' names and identifying information were withheld from all data files and reports.

Intervention: Multimedia-Integrated Short Stories

The intervention was applied for a period of eight weeks and integrated multimedia tools into teaching of two short stories selected from the grade VI english curriculum: "The Orphan Boy and The Umbrella Man." The short stories were chosen based on alignment with the national curriculum, appropriateness for learners' age group, relevance to learners' experience, representation of diverse themes, and compatibility with multimedia enhancements. This guaranteed that the intervention was both pedagogically meaningful and curriculum-relevant, and also addressed key areas of reading comprehension, including vocabulary acquisition, semantic sense-making, and inferential logic. A variety of multimedia materials were systematically integrated at various points during the reading process to promote learners' involvement and comprehension.

1. Audio narration was used before each story to enhance listening comprehension, pronunciation, and reading fluency. These reading activities were especially helpful for struggling readers, enabling them to follow the text while listening, thereby facilitating vocabulary recognition and decoding.
2. Animations and images were employed to illustrate key scenes, figures, and places so that learners could see ideas that were otherwise abstract and understand the semantic relationships within the text. These visualisations made difficult vocabulary and plot resolution clear and served as scaffolds for making inferences. For lower-ability learners, reduced images provided concrete assistance, whereas higher-ability learners were encouraged to draw conclusions from symbolic details and make inferences beyond what was represented.
3. Interactive reading comprehension exercises, such as Kahoot, Quizizz, and PowerPoint games, were also applied after each reading session. They were used as formative assessments that supported vocabulary, tested semantic comprehension, and probed inferential thinking. The activities were differentiated to incorporate both lower-order recall questions and higher-order questions that included interpretation, analysis, and drawing conclusions.

With such a wide-ranging multimedia-supported intervention, the intervention was designed to enhance learners' reading comprehension at different levels, acquisition of vocabulary, semantic processing, and inferential thinking and also introduce a more engaging and meaningful reading experience.

Results and Discussions

Table 1

Grade VI Learners' Pre-test Scores in Vocabulary, Semantics, and Drawing Inference Before the use of Multimedia-Integrated Short Stories

Score Range	Vocabulary		Semantic		Drawing Inference		Comprehension Level
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
90–100	8	10.4	7	9.1	7	9.1	Independent
75–89	15	19.5	13	16.9	9	11.7	Instructional
Below 75	54	70.1	57	74.0	61	79.2	Frustration
Total	77	100	77	100	77	100	

The data in table one illustrates that the majority of grade six learners performed at the frustration level across all three areas of reading comprehension vocabulary, semantics, and drawing inference before exposure to the multimedia-integrated short stories. The scores are categorised into three comprehension levels: Independent (90–100), Instructional (75–89), and Frustration (below 75). A significant majority of learners fell into the frustration level across all three domains, with 70.1% in vocabulary, 74.0% in semantics, and 79.2% in drawing inference. This indicates that most learners were unable to comprehend grade-level texts independently, placing them in need of substantial instructional support. Meanwhile, a smaller proportion of learners performed at the instructional level with 19.5% in vocabulary, 16.9% in semantics, and 11.7% in drawing inference. These learners demonstrated partial comprehension skills and

are considered to be within the zone where learning can be effectively supported through targeted intervention and scaffolding. Only a minimal percentage of learners reached the independent level: 10.4% in vocabulary, 9.1% in semantics, and 9.1% in drawing inference, suggesting that very few learners were capable of comprehending texts without assistance. Overall, the data highlights the urgent need for differentiated instruction, where learners in the frustration level receive foundational support and those in the instructional level are provided with strategies and scaffolding to progress toward independent reading. The use of multimedia-integrated short stories aims to address these diverse needs by enhancing engagement and providing multimodal cues that support vocabulary development, semantic processing, and inference-making.

Table 2

Grade VI Learners' Post-test Scores in Vocabulary, Semantics, and Drawing Inference After the use of Multimedia-Integrated Short Stories

Score Range	Vocabulary		Semantic		Drawing Inference		Comprehension Level
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
90–100	49	63.6	41	53.2	12	15.6	Independent
75–89	22	28.6	26	33.8	28	36.4	Instructional
Below 75	6	7.8	10	13.0	37	48.0	Frustration

The data presented in table two shows the post-test performance of 77 grade six learners in vocabulary, semantics, and drawing inference following the implementation of multimedia-integrated short stories as an instructional intervention. The results reveal a marked improvement across all three areas of reading comprehension when compared to the pretest scores. In vocabulary, 63.6% of learners reached the independent level (scores between 90–100), a significant increase from only 10.4% in the pretest. Similarly, in semantics, 53.2% of learners achieved independent comprehension, up from just 9.1% prior to the intervention. These shifts indicate substantial growth in learners' ability to understand word meanings and sentence-level meaning, likely supported by the use of multimedia elements that provided visual and contextual reinforcement.

In drawing inference, although fewer learners reached the independent level (15.6%), there was a notable increase in the percentage of learners scoring in the instructional range from 11.7% in the pretest to 36.4% in the post-test. This suggests that while inferencing remains a more challenging skill, the intervention helped move a significant portion of learners out of the frustration level. Infact, the percentage of learners at the frustration level in drawing inference decreased from 79.2% to 48.0%, indicating meaningful progress. Similarly, in vocabulary and semantics, the frustration level dropped sharply to 7.8% and 13.0% respectively.

Overall, the post-test data demonstrates that the use of multimedia-integrated short stories was effective in improving learners' reading comprehension. A large proportion of learners moved from the frustration and instructional levels to the independent level, especially in vocabulary and semantics. The improvement in drawing inference, although more gradual, also reflects the benefits of multimodal learning in developing higher-order comprehension skills. These findings suggest that multimedia can play a

significant role in supporting reading development by catering to diverse learning styles and enhancing engagement with textual content.

Table 3
Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores of Grade VI Students in Reading Comprehension

Reading Aspect	Pre-test Mean (%)	Post-test Mean (%)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Vocabulary	52.3	89.5	12.84	0.000	Significant
Semantics	54.4	83.2	11.93	0.000	Significant
Drawing Inference	37.3	69.4	10.27	0.000	Significant

Table three presents a comparison of the pre-test and post-test mean scores of grade six learners in three key aspects of reading comprehension; vocabulary, semantics, and drawing inference following the use of multimedia-integrated short stories. The data shows substantial improvements across all areas, with statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test scores, as indicated by the t-values and p-values.

In vocabulary, the mean score increased from 52.3% in the pre-test to 89.5% in the post-test, with a t-value of 12.84 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant improvement. Similarly, learners' performance in semantics improved markedly, rising from a mean score of 54.4% to 83.2%, with a t-value of 11.93 and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests enhanced understanding of word meanings and contextual language use. The most notable growth was observed in drawing inference, which, although starting from the lowest pre-test mean score of 37.3%, rose significantly to 69.4% post-test. The t-value of 10.27 and p-value of 0.000 confirm that this improvement is statistically significant as well.

Overall, the results clearly indicate that the use of multimedia-integrated short stories had a significant positive impact on learners' reading comprehension skills. The statistical evidence supports the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing vocabulary knowledge, semantic understanding, and inferential thinking. These findings highlight the potential of multimedia tools in creating engaging and effective literacy instruction, especially for learners who struggle with traditional text-based approaches.

Discussions

The findings from this study clearly demonstrate that multimedia-integrated short stories had a significant positive impact on grade six learners' reading comprehension, particularly in the areas of vocabulary, semantics, and drawing inference. Prior to the intervention, most learners performed within the frustration level across all three domains, indicating severe challenges in understanding grade-level texts. Following the intervention, however, a substantial proportion of learners moved into the instructional and independent comprehension levels, with statistically significant gains in vocabulary (from 52.3% to 89.5%), semantics (from 54.4% to 83.2%), and inference (from 37.3% to 69.4%), all with $p < .001$. These results align with findings from Teng (2022), who reported that combining definitions, word knowledge, and multimedia content significantly enhances vocabulary acquisition and retention. Similarly, Azhimia (2023) found that animated story formats improved learners' comprehension more than traditional text, reinforcing the view that multimodal learning strengthens meaning-making. Hong et al. (2024) further

support these findings by showing that less-skilled readers benefit more from video-based stories than from print-only formats.

The multimedia design appears to have played a critical role in scaffolding learners' comprehension by reducing cognitive load and supporting the integration of new information. According to Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, meaningful learning occurs when verbal and visual elements are coherently presented (Mayer, 2020). However, the use of generative images, such as in the "RetAssist" project (Chen et al., 2024), highlights how carefully aligned visuals can reinforce textual meaning and support vocabulary and inference development. Additionally, Pannim et al. (2022) demonstrated that multimedia storytelling combined with mind maps improves reading comprehension among learners with learning difficulties, reinforcing the idea that multimodal strategies are particularly effective for struggling readers. Other studies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts show that digital storytelling fosters engagement and comprehension when multiple modalities are used in structured, learner-centered ways (Rahima, 2023).

Despite these promising results, several limitations should be noted. First, post-test scores in vocabulary and semantics approached ceiling levels (89.5% and 83.2%, respectively), suggesting less room for further improvement, whereas inference, still the lowest may require more targeted support. This aligns with existing research that identifies inferencing as a higher-order skill dependent on background knowledge, logical reasoning, and contextual understanding (Barth et al., 2024). Second, while short-term gains are evident, the sustainability and transferability of these gains remain untested. As Teng (2022) noted, vocabulary gains from multimedia instruction can diminish without reinforcement or delayed review. Additionally, learner variability may influence outcomes: learners with stronger metacognitive strategies or higher prior knowledge may benefit more from multimedia than peers who rely solely on surface-level cues (Hong et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study provides strong evidence that multimedia-integrated short stories effectively enhance reading comprehension among grade six learners. Following the intervention, learners who initially performed at frustration levels showed significant improvement across vocabulary, semantics, and inferential comprehension, progressing to higher comprehension levels. The multimedia approach offered varied and engaging learning modes that scaffolded difficult concepts, helping learners grasp word meanings, understand sentence contexts, and develop inferential thinking skills.

While vocabulary and semantics demonstrated considerable gains, inference—a more complex cognitive skill—showed improvement but requires additional support. These findings highlight multimedia tools' potential to accommodate diverse learning styles and support learners struggling with traditional text-based methods.

For optimal results, teachers should intentionally select or design multimedia content aligned with learning goals, avoiding distracting elements. Future research should examine long-term retention, transfer across text types, and individual learner characteristics in multimedia-based reading instruction.

Recommendations

1. **Incorporate Multimedia-Integrated Storytelling in the Curriculum:** Schools and teachers should integrate multimedia-based storytelling regularly to support vocabulary acquisition, semantic processing, and inference skills, especially for learners struggling with traditional text-based reading.

2. **Design Multimedia Content Thoughtfully:** Multimedia materials should be carefully aligned with learning objectives, combining visuals, narration, and text to reduce cognitive load and avoid extraneous distractions that may impair comprehension.
3. **Monitor Long-Term Retention and Transfer:** Future instruction should include follow-up assessments to evaluate the sustainability of learning gains and the transfer of skills to new texts, ensuring that improvements extend beyond immediate post-tests.
4. **Differentiate Instruction Based on Learners' Needs:** Recognise individual differences in prior knowledge and meta-cognitive strategies by offering tailored supports alongside multimedia interventions to maximize benefits for all learners.

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