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Solo-Based QAR Strategy Framework in Learning Reading

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the effectiveness of the SOLO-Based Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy in enhancing the reading comprehension of Grade 7 learners and used the findings as the basis for a SOLO-Based QA Strategy Framework in Learning Reading. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (QUAN–qual) was employed at San Miguel National High School, San Remigio, Cebu, during the fourth quarter of School Year 2025–2026. The quantitative phase used a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–post-test approach with 35 Grade 7 learners, while the qualitative follow-up involved purposively selected learners and open-ended feedback on their experiences with the intervention. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, paired-samples t-test, and Braun and Clarke thematic analysis. The mean score for citing evidence to support a general statement increased from 79.43 (Fairly Satisfactory) to 88.91 (Very Satisfactory), with a mean difference of 9.49, $t = 16.00$, $p < .001$. The mean for reacting to what was asserted or expressed in a text increased from 80.23 (Satisfactory) to 91.20 (Outstanding), with a mean difference of 10.97, $t = 15.60$, $p < .001$. Learners reported that QAR clarified question types, provided a structured method for locating and developing answers, reduced stress, and improved reading confidence, although they requested additional examples and practice with more complex questions. The findings indicate that the SOLO-aligned QAR strategy supported measurable gains in the two targeted reading competencies and informed a structured framework for progressive, higher-order reading instruction.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, Question-Answer Relationship (QAR), SOLO taxonomy, Grade 7 learners, sequential explanatory mixed methods, reading confidence*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is central to learners' ability to identify ideas, integrate details, make inferences, evaluate claims, and connect textual information with prior knowledge. In the source study, the problem was framed not only as a matter of recognizing words but also as the need to move learners from literal retrieval toward deeper, evidence-based and reflective engagement with texts. Cunha and Capellini (2016) similarly described reading comprehension as a complex process involving cognitive and linguistic components, while recent local evidence has continued to show difficulties in inferential and critical reading among learners (Albarico & Deiparine, 2025).

One instructional response to this challenge is the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. QAR guides learners in determining where an answer can be found and what kind of thinking a question requires. Its four question types—Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own—help distinguish direct textual retrieval from synthesis, interpretation, and personal reasoning. Studies cited in the thesis reported that

ISSN: 3116-3475
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of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

structured QAR instruction can improve reading comprehension by making question demands more explicit and by supporting learners as they move from locating information to interpreting it (Untailawan, 2020; Anggrain et al., 2020; Damanik & Herman, 2021).

The Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomy complements this strategy by describing the increasing complexity of a learner's response from prestructural and unistructural understanding through multistructural, relational, and extended abstract thinking. The taxonomy provides a way to examine not only whether an answer is correct, but also the depth and organization of understanding reflected in that answer (Biggs & Collis, 1982). More recent applications have likewise emphasized the usefulness of SOLO in scaffolding cognitive learning outcomes and higher-order response quality (Arceo, 2024; Clavacio & Legaspi-Estoque, 2025).

The local context strengthened the need for a structured reading intervention. The school-consolidated Phil-IRI results for School Year 2024–2025 at San Miguel National High School showed that 101 of 680 learners (14.85%) could read fluently yet exhibited little to poor comprehension, while the reported school literacy rate of 71% remained below the Division planning standard. These conditions pointed to a need for instruction that would help learners identify relevant evidence, react critically to textual assertions, and become more deliberate in answering comprehension questions. The Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory provides a policy context for identifying learner needs and planning appropriate reading support (Department of Education [DepEd], 2018).

The study addressed a practical gap identified in the thesis: QAR is commonly used as a reading-comprehension strategy, while SOLO is used to classify the quality and complexity of learning outcomes, but the two approaches are not always systematically aligned within a single sequence of instruction and assessment. The study therefore examined whether a SOLO-aligned QAR intervention could improve two Grade 7 reading competencies—citing evidence to support a general statement and reacting to what is asserted or expressed in a text. It also investigated learners' experiences in terms of ease in understanding and answering questions, levels and kinds of questions, language-use requirements, and reading confidence, with the results serving as the basis for the SOLO-Based QA Strategy Framework in Learning Reading.

Literature Review

Self-Regulated Learning, Cognitive Load, and Reading

The theoretical foundation of the study emphasized learners as active participants who monitor and regulate their own comprehension. Self-regulated learning involves the strategic control of cognition, motivation, and behavior during learning. Kuhlmann et al. (2023) described self-regulation as involving processes through which learners actively manage their learning, while Sutiono et al. (2022) linked self-regulated learning with reading-comprehension processes. In reading, this perspective supports the use of clear goals, strategic questioning, monitoring of understanding, and reflection on the adequacy of an answer.

The thesis also drew on cognitive-load principles to explain why instructional structure matters. Reading tasks can become difficult when learners must simultaneously interpret a text, determine what a question requires, retrieve relevant information, and formulate an appropriate response. A structured strategy can reduce unnecessary search and uncertainty by providing recognizable question categories and a progressive response pathway. This aligns with the study's use of QAR and SOLO as complementary scaffolds: QAR clarifies the source and nature of the answer, while SOLO organizes the expected depth of the response. Thiede and de Bruin (2018) further emphasized the importance of metacognitive monitoring in self-regulated reading, supporting instructional approaches that make comprehension processes visible to learners.

Question-Answer Relationship Strategy in Reading Comprehension

QAR is designed to help learners recognize the relationship between a comprehension question and the information needed to answer it. In the Book questions include Right There, for which the response is explicitly located in the text, and Think and Search, which requires the learner to combine information across parts of the text. In My Head questions include Author and Me, which combines textual information with interpretation, and

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

On My Own, which relies more heavily on the learner's knowledge, judgment, and experience. This sequence provides a practical way to make increasingly complex reading demands explicit (Untailawan, 2020).

Empirical studies cited in the thesis support the usefulness of QAR for reading comprehension. Damanik and Herman (2021) reported improved comprehension through QAR, while Harefa et al. (2023) documented learners' reading-comprehension performance using the strategy. More recent work has likewise shown that QAR can strengthen learners' ability to categorize and respond to reading questions (Aldiansya & Mansour, 2025; Tiara et al., 2025). These findings are consistent with the source study's rationale that learners may perform more effectively when they are explicitly taught how different question types demand different reading and reasoning behaviors.

The literature also indicates that QAR is not solely a retrieval technique. When learners move from Right Their questions toward Think and Search and Author and Me questions, they must integrate information, justify interpretations, and connect ideas. Fauzi and Apsari (2022) noted difficulties learners may experience in applying QAR, indicating the need for explicit modeling and repeated practice. Consequently, the thesis positioned QAR as a scaffold that should be introduced systematically rather than as a one-time questioning routine.

SOLO Taxonomy and Higher-Order Reading

SOLO taxonomy classifies the quality of learning outcomes across five hierarchical levels: prestructural, unistructural, multistructural, relational, and extended abstract. At the lower levels, responses are absent, irrelevant, or focused on isolated information; at higher levels, learners integrate multiple ideas, explain relationships, generalize, and apply understanding beyond the immediate task. In the source study, these levels were used to interpret the progression of reading responses from basic evidence identification toward integrated and evaluative reasoning (Biggs & Collis, 1982).

Research reviewed in the thesis supports the use of SOLO as a framework for examining cognitive complexity. Adeniji et al. (2022) synthesized applications of the SOLO model and highlighted its value in distinguishing levels of understanding, while Arceo (2024) and Clavacio and Legaspi-Estoque (2025) applied SOLO-based teaching to cognitive learning outcomes and English instruction. For reading, the taxonomy is particularly relevant because higher-order comprehension requires learners to connect evidence, synthesize information, and justify interpretations rather than merely reproduce isolated details.

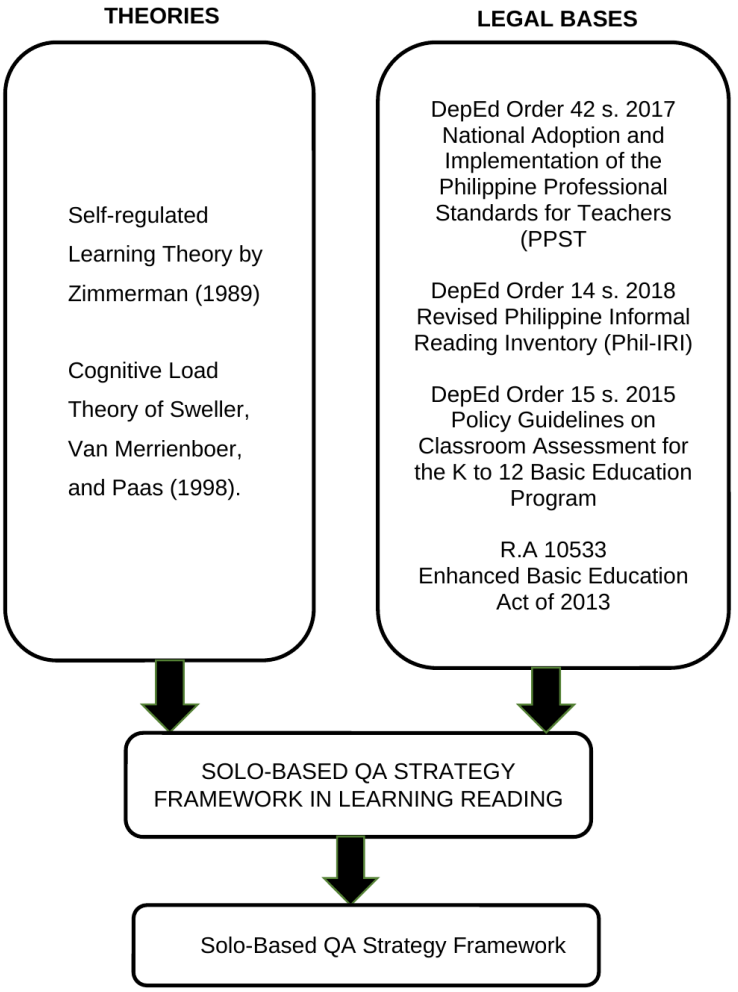
Integrating SOLO and QAR in the Philippine Reading Context

The integration of QAR and SOLO creates a progression in which learners first identify what a question asks and where the needed information can be found, then develop responses at increasing levels of cognitive complexity. This combination is consistent with the Philippine policy emphasis on classroom assessment, literacy intervention, and standards-based teaching. DepEd policy on classroom assessment calls for assessment practices aligned with learning standards (DepEd, 2015), while the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers emphasize competent instructional and assessment practices (DepEd, 2017). The Phil-IRI policy provides an additional basis for diagnosing reading performance and planning responsive instruction (DepEd, 2018).

Within this context, the study treated structured questioning, explicit scaffolding, learner reflection, and repeated practice as mutually reinforcing elements. The approach also reflects broader evidence that scaffolded and metacognitive reading instruction can support comprehension, motivation, and learner confidence (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Momdjian & Chidiac, 2025). The framework therefore positioned the theories and policy bases as foundations for a reading strategy that progressively moves learners from surface-level responses toward relational and extended understanding. The original theoretical framework of the thesis is retained below to preserve the conceptual grounding of the study.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework of the Study*



METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design (QUAN–qual). The quantitative phase used a quasi-experimental one-group pretest–post-test approach to measure changes in the targeted Grade 7 reading competencies before and after the SOLO-aligned QAR intervention. The qualitative phase followed the quantitative assessment and explored learners' experiences with the strategy through open-ended feedback and one-to-one semi-structured follow-up. The sequential arrangement allowed the quantitative results to establish the extent of change and the qualitative responses to explain how learners experienced the instructional process.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at San Miguel National High School in Barangay San Miguel, San Remigio, Cebu, Region VII. The public secondary school serves learners from surrounding communities and offers Grades 7–12, including senior high school strands. The thesis described the school as approximately 10 kilometers from the national road, with transportation commonly provided by motorcycles and tricycles and with weak cellular and internet connectivity in the area. At the time described in the manuscript, the school served 618 learners with

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

25 teachers and one school head and maintained facilities that included a library, science and TLE rooms, and two computer laboratories.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The quantitative participants were 35 Grade 7 learners from the Dove section, comprising 16 males and 19 females. They completed both the pretest and post-test and participated in the SOLO-aligned QAR intervention. For the qualitative follow-up, eight learners were purposively selected to provide more detailed feedback on their experiences. Participation was voluntary, and learner identities were protected throughout the study.

Table 1. *Distribution of Participants*

Section	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Dove	16	19	35	100%

Research Instrument

The quantitative instrument consisted of standardized multiple-choice pretest and post-test materials using reading selections adapted from the Department of Education's Phil-IRI, with questions developed by the researcher to measure the two competencies: citing evidence to support a general statement and reacting to what is asserted or expressed in a text. Each correct response received one point, and raw scores were converted to percentage scores. Performance was interpreted as Outstanding (90–100), Very Satisfactory (85–89), Satisfactory (80–84), Fairly Satisfactory (75–79), or Did Not Meet Expectations (0–74). The qualitative component used a Learners' Experience Survey with open-ended items organized around ease of understanding and answering questions, levels and kinds of questions, language-use requirements, and improvement in reading confidence.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured permission from the school principal and coordinated the administration of the study with the Grade 7 English class. A pretest was administered to establish baseline reading performance. The SOLO-aligned QAR strategy was then implemented through structured reading activities that introduced and practiced QAR question types while progressively increasing the expected depth of learner responses according to SOLO levels. After the intervention, the same targeted competencies were assessed through the post-test. Learners subsequently completed the experience survey, and selected participants provided qualitative follow-up responses. The data were anonymized, organized, and prepared for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the distribution of learners across the five competency levels, while the weighted mean summarized pretest and post-test performance. A paired-samples t-test tested whether the mean scores differed significantly before and after the intervention at the .05 level of significance. The qualitative responses were analyzed using Braun and Clarke thematic analysis as described in the thesis, following the process of familiarization, coding, theme development, review, definition, and reporting. The analysis focused on recurring patterns in learners' experiences of the strategy.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher obtained informed consent and institutional permission before implementation. Learners were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw without penalty. Consistent with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, identifying information was replaced with codes, electronic files were password protected, and access to the data was restricted. Adapted materials, including Phil-IRI reading selections, were properly acknowledged. The procedures were designed to avoid physical, psychological, emotional, or social harm, and the data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Baseline Reading Performance

Before the intervention, the learners showed foundational but incompletely developed performance in both targeted competencies. For citing evidence to support a general statement, 19 learners (54.3%) were Satisfactory, 11 (31.5%) were Fairly Satisfactory, 2 (5.7%) were Very Satisfactory, and 3 (8.6%) Did Not Meet Expectations; no learner was Outstanding. The mean of 79.43 was interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory. For reacting to what was asserted or expressed in a text, 22 learners (62.9%) were Satisfactory, 8 (22.9%) were Fairly Satisfactory, 2 (5.7%) were Very Satisfactory, and 3 (8.6%) Did Not Meet Expectations, again with no Outstanding performer. The mean was 80.23, interpreted as Satisfactory.

These distributions indicated that most learners could retrieve or respond to information at an acceptable level but had limited evidence of consistently integrated and evaluative reading. This pattern was aligned with the study's use of SOLO as an interpretive lens: learners were concentrated around lower to middle levels of response complexity rather than relational or extended abstract performance. Similar concerns regarding difficulty in inferential and critical comprehension were noted by Albarico and Deiparine (2025), while Clavacio and Legaspi-Estoque (2025) emphasized the importance of scaffolding learners toward deeper SOLO levels.

Table 2. *Pretest and Post-test Reading Performance*

Competency	Pretest Mean	Pretest Category	Post-test Mean	Post-test Category	Mean Gain
Citing evidence to support a general statement	79.43	Fairly Satisfactory	88.91	Very Satisfactory	9.49
Reacting to what is asserted or expressed in a text	80.23	Satisfactory	91.20	Outstanding	10.97

Post-test Reading Performance

After the intervention, performance shifted markedly toward the higher competency categories. In citing evidence, 15 learners (42.9%) were Outstanding, 13 (37.1%) were Very Satisfactory, and 7 (20.0%) were Satisfactory; no learner remained in the Fairly Satisfactory or Did Not Meet Expectations categories. The post-test mean of 88.91 was interpreted as Very Satisfactory. This represented a clear change from the baseline mean of 79.43 and showed that all learners reached at least the Satisfactory range.

For reacting to what was asserted or expressed in a text, 23 learners (65.7%) were Outstanding, 9 (25.7%) were Very Satisfactory, and 3 (8.6%) were Satisfactory, with no learner in the two lower categories. The mean increased from 80.23 to 91.20, moving the group from Satisfactory to Outstanding. In the context of the intervention, the stronger post-test distribution suggests that progressive questioning helped learners move beyond direct retrieval toward interpretation and critical response. This pattern is consistent with research showing that structured QAR instruction can strengthen comprehension and response to increasingly complex questions (Harefa et al., 2023; Tiara et al., 2025; Aldiansya & Mansour, 2025).

The post-test gains also fit the logic of SOLO-based scaffolding. Learners were repeatedly exposed to tasks that moved from locating explicit information to combining details, connecting text with prior knowledge, and explaining judgments. Adeniji et al. (2022) noted that SOLO distinguishes increasingly integrated forms of understanding, while Arceo (2024) and Clavacio and Legaspi-Estoque (2025) showed how SOLO-based instruction can be used to promote more complex cognitive outcomes. The results of the present study indicate that this progression was reflected in the learners' reading scores after exposure to the combined strategy.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

Significant Difference Between Pretest and Post-test Performance

Table 3. *Paired-Samples t-Test of Reading Performance*

Competency	Pretest M (SD)	Post-test M (SD)	Mean Difference	t	p	Decision
Citing evidence	79.4 (4.57)	88.9 (3.89)	9.49	16.00	< .001	Reject H_0
Reacting to assertions	80.2 (4.33)	91.2 (4.09)	10.97	15.60	< .001	Reject H_0

The paired-samples t-test confirmed statistically significant improvements in both competencies. Citing evidence increased from M = 79.4 (SD = 4.57) to M = 88.9 (SD = 3.89), with a mean difference of 9.49, t = 16.00, p < .001. Reacting to assertions increased from M = 80.2 (SD = 4.33) to M = 91.2 (SD = 4.09), with a mean difference of 10.97, t = 15.60, p < .001. Because both p-values were below .05, the null hypothesis was rejected for both competencies.

The smaller post-test standard deviations also indicated that scores became somewhat less dispersed as overall performance increased. Taken together, the changes provide quantitative evidence that the Grade 7 learners performed substantially better after the SOLO-aligned QAR intervention. The result is consistent with studies reporting gains from QAR-based reading instruction (Anggrain et al., 2020; Damanik & Herman, 2021; Oktavia et al., 2025). The alignment with SOLO further provided a deliberate progression from surface-level information retrieval toward relational and evaluative reasoning rather than treating all comprehension questions as cognitively equivalent.

Learners' Experiences with the SOLO-Based QAR Strategy

The qualitative feedback supported the quantitative findings and clarified how learners experienced the intervention. Under ease in understanding and answering questions, learners commonly described QAR as providing clarity and structure because the question categories helped them decide whether to look directly in the text, combine information, or use their own interpretation. At the same time, participants requested more examples, additional time, and more practice with difficult questions, indicating that the strategy became easier with repetition but that complex question types still required support.

In relation to levels and kinds of questions, learners generally viewed Right There as the easiest because the answer could be located explicitly in the text. Think and Search was described as more challenging but useful because it required learners to combine information, while Author and Me encouraged personal interpretation and connection with the text. This pattern supports the instructional logic of moving gradually from direct retrieval to more cognitively demanding forms of response. Fauzi and Apsari (2022) similarly highlighted learner difficulty when question demands are not sufficiently clear, reinforcing the value of explicit modeling and guided practice.

Language use emerged as another important condition. Learners emphasized clear and specific wording and the need to recognize keywords that signal what a question requires. Reading confidence also improved when the strategy gave learners a predictable set of steps for approaching questions. Responses suggested that clearer question-type recognition reduced uncertainty and stress while increasing willingness to engage with reading tasks. These experiences correspond with research emphasizing structured scaffolding, metacognitive strategy instruction, and supportive reading environments as contributors to comprehension, autonomy, and confidence (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Momdjian & Chidiac, 2025; Seo, 2025).

Table 4. *Summary of Learners' Experiences*

Area	Emergent Themes	Interpretation
Ease in understanding and answering questions	Clarity and structure; need for more practice and support	Question categories gave learners a guide for answering, but difficult items required repeated examples and practice.
Levels and kinds of questions	Right There as easiest; Think and Search and Author and Me as deeper tasks	Learners differentiated question demands and recognized greater cognitive engagement in synthesis and interpretation.

ISSN: 3116-3475
International Journal
of Education, Research, and Innovation Perspectives
Volume 2 Issue 8 (August 2026)

Language use requirement	Clear and specific language; understanding keywords	Question wording and key terms helped learners identify the appropriate response process.
Improving reading confidence	Confidence from a clear method and structured approach	A predictable procedure reduced uncertainty and supported more confident engagement with texts.

Implications for the SOLO-Based QA Strategy Framework

The convergence of the quantitative and qualitative findings provided the basis for the proposed SOLO-Based QA Strategy Framework in Learning Reading. In the thesis output, the framework begins with assessment and learner preparation, proceeds through explicit QAR instruction, guided and interactive practice, and SOLO-aligned assessment, and culminates in enhanced reading outcomes. Learning activities emphasize Think and Search and Author and Me tasks, while feedback mechanisms, teacher development, learner enrichment, evaluation, and continuous improvement are incorporated to sustain implementation.

The framework therefore translates the study findings into a practical instructional sequence. The statistically significant gains indicate the value of structured progression, while learner feedback identifies implementation conditions that should be maintained: clear question categories, explicit language cues, sufficient examples, repeated practice, and opportunities to work with increasingly difficult texts. This is consistent with studies highlighting the importance of structured reading interventions and repeated scaffolding for comprehension and engagement (Pratolo et al., 2025; Momdjian & Chidiac, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Grade 7 learners demonstrated substantially better performance in the two targeted reading competencies after exposure to the SOLO-aligned QAR strategy. Citing evidence improved from a Fairly Satisfactory pretest mean of 79.43 to a Very Satisfactory post-test mean of 88.91, while reacting to textual assertions improved from a Satisfactory mean of 80.23 to an Outstanding mean of 91.20. The paired-samples t-tests showed that both improvements were statistically significant at $p < .001$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for both competencies.

Learners' feedback complemented these results by showing that the strategy made question demands clearer, provided an organized procedure for answering, and increased confidence while reducing stress associated with comprehension tasks. Learners nevertheless indicated a continuing need for additional examples, repeated practice, and support with more difficult question types. Taken together, the findings support the SOLO-Based QA Strategy Framework as a structured pedagogical guide for progressively developing evidence use, critical response, and confidence in reading.

Recommendation

School administrators are encouraged to provide sustained time for QAR practice and support professional development or Learning Action Cell activities on integrating QAR with the SOLO taxonomy. Curriculum developers may incorporate the four QAR question types across reading competencies and text genres, using differentiated activities that progressively increase in complexity and include clear examples, step-by-step guidance, and assessment tools.

English teachers are encouraged to provide frequent practice across literary, informational, and persuasive texts, simplify instructions where necessary, explicitly teach keywords and question cues, and use interactive activities such as peer discussion and guided feedback. Learners should also be encouraged to practice the strategy independently and collaboratively so that question recognition and evidence-based response become more automatic and transferable across reading contexts.

Future researchers may replicate the study across other grade levels, school types, and geographic contexts to examine the consistency of the findings. Further studies may also investigate longer-term effects, include classroom observations and in-depth interviews, or explore integration with digital reading platforms and other

pedagogical tools. Development of a teacher's guide and learner workbook based on the framework may also support future classroom implementation and evaluation.

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