

BOOSTING READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT AND VOCABULARY MASTERY: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN WITH RAP

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to ascertain the impact of the RAP reading strategy on the academic progress of pupils in vocabulary and reading comprehension. The sample for this study comprised of 45 pupils (22 females and 23 males) from Sriwijaya State Polytechnic who were in their second semester during the 2022-2023 academic year. This research was conducted using a quasi-experimental approach. The study employed a vocabulary test, a reading comprehension test, and the RAP reading strategy. The data analysis used mean, standard deviation, standard error mean, and t-tests for both the vocabulary test and the reading comprehension achievement test. The statistical significance level was set at .05. The study demonstrated that there were significant differences in reading comprehension achievement and vocabulary mastery between the experimental group and the control group. However, the RAP reading strategy was found to be more effective in enhancing reading comprehension achievement and vocabulary mastery than the traditional reading strategy. Overall, the RAP reading strategy can be a valuable tool for improving students' vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Keywords: *RAP strategy; reading comprehension; vocabulary mastery*

INTRODUCTION

Reading strategies have become increasingly important as a means to help students become strategic readers while also coping with difficult passages in recent years. Effective L2 learners utilize a greater number of learning strategies and employ them with greater frequency compared to their less successful peers; these strategies are utilized before, during, and after learning tasks. The reader's assessment of whether

their reading goal has been met as they progress is a very important aspect of reading. If not, he has to adjust to different monitoring activities, which is a sign of a good reader.

It is vital to stress that the responsibility of the lecturer additionally changes and it is not enough solely to show the strategies, however equally apply and utilize them in each lesson persistently to have an effect on accomplishment. In reality, the ultimate

objective is to cultivate strategic readers who will automatically employ these strategies to enhance their performance on comprehension and recall tests.

Over the past three decades, there has been a significant corpus of study on second language acquisition techniques. While some of them have publicly aimed to further the theoretical knowledge of language learning processes, others have more pragmatic objectives, namely to look into ways to enable language learners to become more independent and effective in their learning. The general consensus among strategy experts is that students who have a strategic understanding of language acquisition are more effective, inventive, and adaptable, which makes learning a language easier.

In general, a strategic reader employs techniques like previewing a text, scanning, skimming, anticipating the material to come, summarizing, inferring the meaning of unknown terms, coming up with questions about the text, identifying text organization, etc. Summarizing, querying, predicting, and clarifying are the four primary reading strategies for explicit and direct method training, according to Qanwal & Karim (2014). Two of the most effective tactics, according to Bulut & Akyol (2019), involve the student summarizing verbally what he has read about a text or responding to questions about it. Additionally, students will learn more efficiently and develop their reading comprehension and vocabulary if they come up with their own questions and summarize the lesson. Although reading has been closely studied by many students, no one discipline has yet cracked the code to efficient reading (Shea & Ceprano, 2017). Unfortunately, the normal reading classroom situation at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic involves the instructor first reading the chapter and then, more often than not, translating such piece to the home language before asking pupils to respond to questions the author has set about the passage. The majority of these students, according to Barber & Klauda (2020), do not understand the true value of reading. Hence, if they can

construe a piece of writing word for word, they presume that they have comprehended it. The translation technique can certainly be useful when reading, but it is still a skill that goes beyond the typical goals of reading.

Based on the above problems, it is suggested that the lecturer employ specific attention-getting strategies to make the learning process fruitful, engaging, and to motivate students to eagerly read and comprehend the material in order to meet the learning objective. The utilization of the Read, Ask, and Paraphrase (RAP) strategy is feasible, as it follows a belief system that recognizes the significance of rephrasing in aiding learners to remember essential ideas and particulars in written works. (Khoshsima, 2014).

One of the many strategies that might help students who struggle with reading develop their comprehension and vocabulary is paraphrasing. Their capacity for understanding and processing meaning can be enhanced through RAP. Additionally, this method is simple to implement in the classroom, according to Hagaman and Reid (2017) and Stevens et al. (2019), who also claim that RAP is a simple strategy that can be seamlessly integrated into existing curricula without any modifications to the way in which the curriculum's material is taught to students. This implies that by using the Read, Ask, Paraphrase (RAP) strategy, students will not only be able to decipher words as they read, but also grasp the content with ease. Students can digest the material for a deeper comprehension of what they read in the book by reading, asking questions, and paraphrasing.

As a result, the researchers suggest employing the RAP strategy to reading in this study to determine if there are any significant differences in the achievement of reading comprehension and vocabulary skills among students who were instructed using the RAP method as opposed to those who were not.

The RAP strategy relies on the belief that rephrasing is an essential ability that helps students recall important information and fundamental concepts from their

readings. A paraphrase method, which has three parts, is one particular cognitive technique that may be taught to students. Read a paragraph, identify the primary concept and two supporting elements, and then paraphrase or put the key idea in my own words. Students learn to remember key details and concepts from their readings using the RAP strategy. The reading strategy has been labeled with the acronym RAP, comprising of three elements. RAP helps students locate the most crucial information in a particular reading selection for the purpose of increasing reading comprehension (Leidig et al., 2018). RAP is a straightforward strategy that may be quickly introduced into current curricula without taking time away from the instruction of crucial topics. Students gain from paraphrasing for a variety of reasons (Hagaman and Reid, 2017).

For a variety of reasons, students might benefit from paraphrasing. It is essential for the students to actively engage with the information before simply reading it. Due to the fact that the reading material is divided into smaller sections and tasks (such as reading, questioning, paraphrasing, and so on) are alternated, the students must pay close attention to what they are reading. Additionally, students who use the paraphrasing technique "chunk" the information in a lengthy paragraph into manageable parts and retain the knowledge they learn (Liao & Tseng (2018).

Researchers Hagaman and Reid (2017) as well as Surayatika (2018) concluded that the strategy improves reading comprehension in students. The resource can be used by students in a variety of subject areas. For enhanced reading comprehension, students process the data from the questions and paraphrases. Studies adopting the RAP strategy have proven its value. The research mentioned above found significant improvements in reading comprehension across a range of age groups. In order to serve a number of readers who have comprehension issues, the RAP strategy is simple to integrate into current curricula.

RAP is a strategy used to teach reading and is useful in helping students answer comprehension questions or retell reading passages. As previously said, a particular strategy for rephrasing involves using the abbreviation RAP, which simplifies the process of recalling and implementing a reading comprehension strategy. RAP means "read a paragraph, ask yourself what the key ideas and details were in that paragraph, and then summarize the key ideas and details in your own words," according to Surayatika (2018) and Suwana et al. (2013). Paraphrasing allows for a more thorough understanding of the original content as it encompasses all modes of communication, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The primary method is carried out through the subsequent phases, which are included with a worksheet.

- 1) The lecturer assigns a brief text for the class to read aloud.
- 2) The student is next instructed to point out the paragraph's key theme and supporting details.
- 3) The lecturer should record the students' comments in the relevant area of the associated worksheet as they identify each ingredient.
- 4) The worksheet asks students to note the topic of the paragraph as well as any further information that was provided.
- 5) To help the students remember the RAP strategy's phases and the components they had to identify in each paragraph, a graphic organizer with the steps clearly displayed on it is distributed to the class.
- 6) The strategy is most effective when it is taught in a straightforward, methodical, and step-by-step manner that includes goal-setting and self-monitoring (also known as self-regulation).

Students were assessed on how much of the material they could recollect and how well they grasped the key points after receiving RAP treatment.

It takes time and effort to learn to read, and it requires the reader to remain enthusiastic throughout the process. To increase students' enthusiasm, try using

reading strategies. Students' comprehension of written text will increase if comprehension strategies are explained to them along with how to employ them. A learning strategy is a systematic method of accomplishing a task that aims to improve knowledge and lessen the cognitive challenges faced by students with exceptional requirements. The implementation of such learning strategies has been discovered to enhance the utilization and overall effectiveness of reading comprehension skills. (Suwana et al., 2013; Sukma & Haryadi, 2016).

Additionally, according to Kemp (2017) and Wegner et al. (2013), learning strategies aid students in keeping their attention and focus throughout a variety of academic assignments. Teachers who instruct on learning methods impart to their students the skill of learning as opposed to a particular topic or collection of skills. If students use learning techniques, they may perform many academic tasks with greater excitement and concentration. Students frequently struggle to understand what they read due to a lack of conceptual understanding, and their limited vocabulary makes it difficult for them to respond to what they have read in an effective way.

Paraphrasing involves expressing a text in different words or phrasing. When reading, one can convey a sentence using their own vocabulary. In their work, they replace as many words and sentences as possible in a read sentence (Mentari & Flora, 2021). Reading comprehension and oral language development can both be supported by this strategy. Vocabulary development is certainly related to a student's ability to verbalize knowledge.

According to Kemp (2017), comprehension depends on the ability to understand words or sentences in context, which can be encouraged and taught. In reading-by-reading, paraphrasing is a strategy for helping students understand texts. A sentence level interpretation can be found within the stages of word processing within the stages of reading. However, it is expected that in this study the students'

interpretive efforts will progress from sentence to paragraph.

In general, a strategic reader employs techniques like previewing a text, scanning, skimming, anticipating the material to come, summarizing, inferring the meaning of unfamiliar terms, coming up with questions about the text, identifying text organization, etc. Summarizing, questioning, predicting, and clarifying are the four primary reading strategies for explicit and direct method training, according to Ahmadi & Gilakjani (2012). In addition, Koch & Spörer (2017), claim that the two most helpful techniques are when a student verbally summarizes what he has read about a piece or responds to questions about it. Additionally, students will learn more efficiently and develop their reading comprehension if they come up with their own questions and summarize the lesson. Despite the fact that reading has received a great deal of scrutiny from various experts, no secret to effective reading has yet been discovered (Koch & Spörer, 2017; Zhang, 2018;). Unfortunately, at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic's reading classes, the lecturer usually reads the text aloud to the class before translating it to the students' mother tongue and asking them to respond to the author's questions about the passage. In reality, the majority of these students, according to Noviyanti (2018), are unaware of the true importance of reading. Therefore, when they can interpret a piece literally, they assume that they have understood it. The translation technique can certainly be useful when reading, but it is still a skill that goes beyond the typical goals of reading.

Because of the fact that, English in Indonesia is considered a foreign language, the ability to read is regarded as the most important competency. As a result, Sriwijaya State Polytechnic's English lecturers are anticipated to get familiar with effective reading practices. To solve the issues, students need to learn a new reading strategy that will enhance their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skills. With reference to the context given above, the researchers are interested in conducting study to enhance vocabulary

mastering and reading comprehension skills at third semester Public Sector Accounting students in the academic year 2022–2023 at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic.

METHOD

The researchers employed the quasi-experimental layout. To conduct the examination, two groups were formed namely the control and experimental groups. The study comprised of a total of 45 students. Control group had 23 participants, while the experimental group had 22. Two groups were randomly selected from a target sample of researchers serving as English teachers. The participants were nearly similar on an economic, cultural, and social level. In the straight-term final exams of the academic year (2022-2023), their English language performance was almost at the same level, according to a statistical treatment of their grades. Also, their previous reading comprehension skills were the same. The age variable of the samples was also controlled before conducting the experiment, as they were approximately 19 years old.

The research in question looks at two variables. They both function as independent and dependent variables. Other names for an independent variable include stimulus, predictor, and antecedent variables. An autonomous variable, which can influence the reliant variable, is referred to as an independent variable. Reading method RAP serves as one of the study's independent factors. Dependent variables—also known as output, criterion, or consequent variables—are those that depend on independent variables for their effects or

causes. Reading comprehension proficiency and vocabulary command are the dependent variables in this study.

The researchers employed a forty-item achievement (pre-post) vocabulary and comprehension exam to accomplish the study's objectives. The reading comprehension and vocabulary exams were taken from pre-made tests, hence the researchers did not verify their validity or reliability.

To determine whether there was a clear difference before and after the intervention, the researchers used a paired-sample t-test. The exam papers were graded once the experiment was completed. There were 40 questions on the reading comprehension test and 40 questions on the vocabulary test. The SPSS application version 26 was then used to input the data for further analysis. First, the researchers ensured that the classes were samples drawn from a normal distribution because there were less than thirty individuals in each group. Thus, the mean, mode, and median were computed, and it was found that they were essentially identical. Additionally, a post-test histogram showed that the group may be regarded as a sample from the normal distribution. As a result, it was determined that this study could use parametric inferential statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that it can be observed that the significance values (Sig.) obtained from the reading comprehension assessment for the experimental and control groups, as deduced from the normality tests conducted by Liliefors (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and Shapiro-Wilk, are greater than $\alpha = 0.05$. This implies that the data from both groups adhere to a normal distribution.

Table 1. *Reading comprehension tests of normality*

Score	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	Experimental	.101	22	.200*	.963	22	.560
	Control	.128	23	.200*	.942	23	.199

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 2. *Vocabulary tests of normality*

Score	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	Experimental	.180	22	.063	.944	22	.238
	Control	.164	23	.109	.952	23	.327

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to Table 2, the significance levels (Sig.) for the vocabulary test in the normality tests, Lilliefors (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and Shapiro-Wilk, for both the experiment and control groups surpass the threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$. This suggests that the information obtained from both the experimental and control groups conforms to a normal distribution.

To sum up, the researchers were able to infer that the entirety of the information is regular, and a parametric examination (t-test) could be executed on either the experimental or control group.

According to table 3, the experimental class's mean pre-test reading comprehension score was 5.6932, and the mean post-test score was 7.5000 as a result of the RAP reading strategy's treatment.

Table 3. *Paired samples statistics of reading comprehension of experimental class*

Pair 1		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	5.6932	22	.88281	.18822
	Posttest	7.5000	22	.65465	.13957

Table 4. *Paired samples test of reading comprehension of experimental class*

		Pair 1	
		Pretest - Posttest	
Paired Differences	Mean	-1.80682	
	Std. Deviation	.72347	
	Std. Error Mean	.15424	
	95% Confidence Interval of the	Lower	-2.12759
	Difference	Upper	-1.48605
t		-11.714	
df		21	
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	

Based on the given chart 4, it is apparent that the t value is -11.714 with a two-tailed significance level of .000.

Upon comparing with the t table alpha 0.05 (df 21), which is 2.080, it is apparent that the obtained t value of -11.714 is significantly greater than the t table (0.05, df 21) = 2.080. This suggests that there is a noteworthy difference in the scholarly performance of students in reading

comprehension prior to and following the execution of the RAP strategy.

Similarly, in the figure 1, the histogram indicates that the arrangement of information regarding reading comprehension in the experimental group (before and after testing) conforms to a standard distribution. This is evident from the bell-shaped form of the histogram.

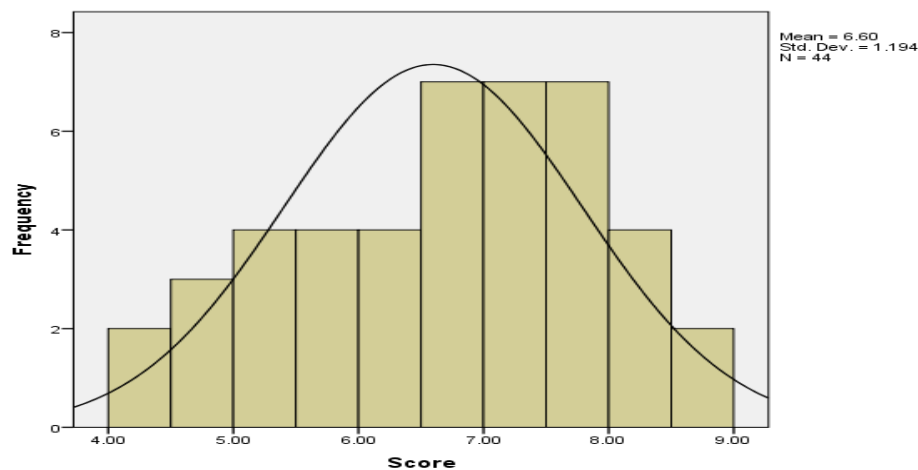


Fig. 1 Histogram of reading comprehension test of experimental class

The score of pre-test of experimental group's proficiency in vocabulary using RAP reading strategy is 6.8864 while the score of post-test is 8.2159, resulting in a mean difference of -1.32955. The standard deviation between the initial and final assessments on vocabulary accomplishment is .63801.

Tables 5 and 6 display the results of the experimental group's vocabulary proficiency scores using the RAP reading strategy in both the pre-test and post-test. The two-tailed test yielded a t-value of -9.774, with a

significance level of .000. The critical value of 2.080 was surpassed by the t-value of 9.774 when compared to the t-table alpha value of 0.05 (df 21). This indicates a noteworthy difference in the results between the pre-test and post-test.

Similarly, in Figure 2, the bar chart highlights that the arrangement of information for the vocabulary assessment pre-test and post-test of the experimental group follows a normal pattern. This is evident from the bell-shaped structure of the histogram.

Table 5. Paired samples statistics of vocabulary of experimental class

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	6.8864	22	.52171	.11123
	Posttest	8.2159	22	.76879	.16391

Table 6. Paired samples test of vocabulary of experimental class

		Pair 1	
		Pretest - Posttest	
Paired Differences	Mean		-1.32955
	Std. Deviation		.63801
	Std. Error Mean		.13603
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-1.61242
		Upper	-1.04667
t			-9.774
df			21
Sig. (2-tailed)			.000

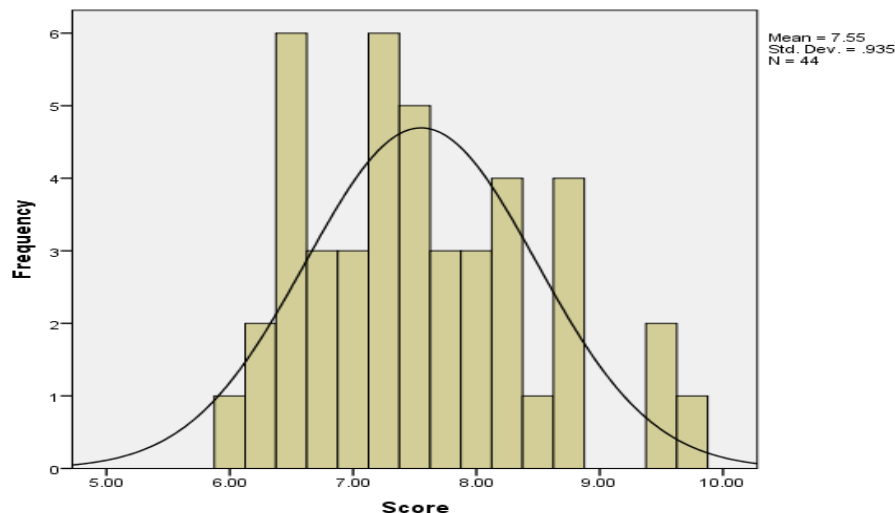


Fig. 2 Histogram of vocabulary test of experimental class

By referring to tables 7 and 8, it is apparent that the the mean scores obtained in the pre-test and post-test are 4.6848 and 6.8587, respectively. The mean differences between the two tests is -2.17391, with a deviation of .94278. The t value equals -11.058, with a significance level of .000 for a two-sided test. Considering a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) of 22, the t-table value is 2.074. As the obtained

t-value (-11.058) is higher than the t-table value (0.05, df 21) of 2.074, it can be said that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test.

Likewise, as depicted in Figure 3, the histogram representing the reading comprehension test results of the control group reveals that the distribution of data (both pre-test and post-test) is classified as normal. This is evident from the bell-shaped histogram.

Table 7. Statistics of control class reading comprehension for paired samples

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	4.6848	23	1.00628	.20982
	Posttest	6.8587	23	.64766	.13505

Table 8. Paired samples test of reading comprehension of control class

		Pair 1
		Pretest - Posttest
Paired Differences	Mean	-2.17391
	Std. Deviation	.94278
	Std. Error Mean	.19658
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower Upper
		-2.58160 -1.76622
t		-11.058
df		22
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

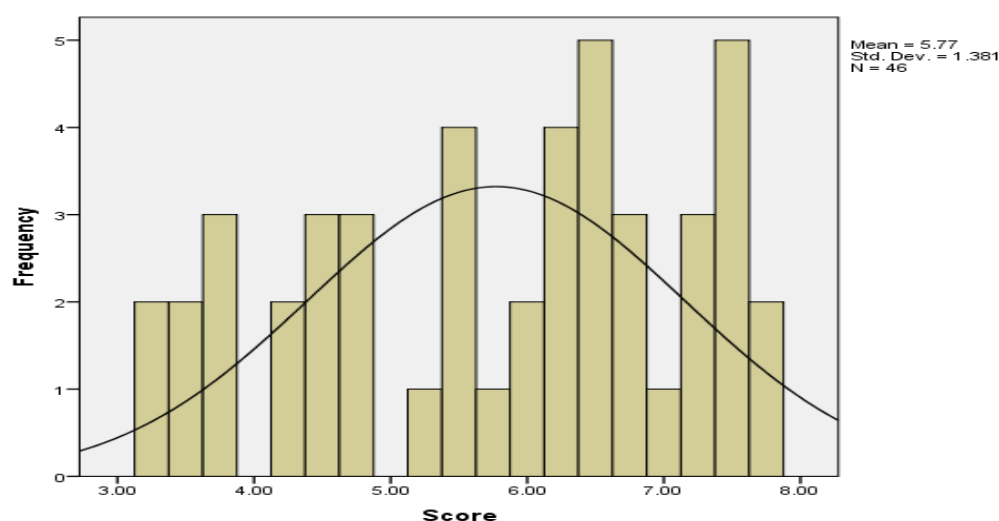


Fig. 3 Histogram of reading comprehension test of control class

According to Table 9, the control group's vocabulary test results showed a mean difference of -1.96739 (calculated as 5.5652-7.5326) between pre-test and post-test scores, with a standard deviation of .87680. In order to determine if there was a noteworthy change in the students' vocabulary proficiency following the intervention, the probability (or level of significance) of .005 should not exceed .000. The value of t was calculated as -10.761 with

a significance level (two-tailed) of .000, thereby confirming that there is a significant difference in the students' vocabulary mastery before and after the intervention.

As the data depicted in figure 4, the histogram portraying the vocabulary test results of the control group displays a distribution of information for both the pre-test and post-test. This is demonstrated by the curve resembling a bell-shape in the histogram.

Table 9. *Statistics of the control class's vocabulary for paired samples*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	5.5652	23	.91458	.19070
	Posttest	7.5326	23	.67126	.13997

Table 10. *Paired samples test of vocabulary of control class*

		Pair 1
		Pretest - Posttest
Paired Differences	Mean	-1.96739
	Std. Deviation	.87680
	Std. Error Mean	.18283
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower -2.34655
		Upper -1.58824
t		-10.761
df		22
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

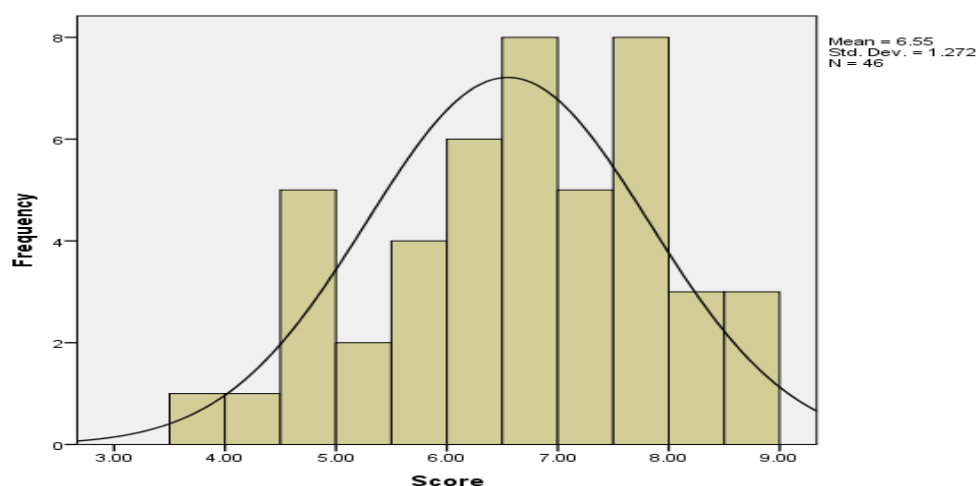


Fig. 4 Histogram of the control class's vocabulary test

The study discovered that the RAP strategy is suggested for implementation by English teachers at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic to facilitate reading instruction and learning as it effectively enhances students' lexicon and reading understanding accomplishment.

CONCLUSION

The RAP strategy helped students become more proficient in vocabulary and reading comprehension (Hagaman and Reid, 2017). The three phases of this straightforward strategy-reading the text, determining its key point, and then summarizing it-helped the students gain a deeper knowledge of the material. Moreover, the students gained proficiency in recognizing the primary concept and verifiable data within the written materials (Surayatika, 2018). After the group discussion, they could comprehend the subject matter more fully (Leidig et al., 2018).

They might use group discussion to share and debate their opinions. They had an increased chance to converse with their classmates and the teacher while engaged in the group discourse. The students' vocabulary comprehension increased as a result of participating in the synonym guessing exercises. They reported that the exercises were really entertaining and inspired them to study. Furthermore, the students' understanding of syntax, specifically in its usage in narrative writings, improved through paraphrasing and peer correction. If they discovered any grammatical errors, they might correct each other. The research determined that utilizing the RAP reading strategy

could improve the students' vocabulary and comprehension of written material.

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