

Enhancing Students' Understanding of *Florante at Laura* Through Visual Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

Understanding classical literature, such as *Florante at Laura*, can be challenging for junior high school students, especially when taught using traditional methods. This classroom-based action research aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Visual Interpretation Learning Strategy (VILS) in enhancing Grade 8 students' Understanding of *Florante at Laura*. A total of 20 Grade 8 students from a public secondary school in Misamis Occidental were purposively selected for the school year 2024—2025. The study employed a quantitative approach, using a researcher-developed pretest and posttest, supported by rubrics and observation tools. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel, applying statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, percentages, and a paired-samples t-test. The study sought to assess students' level of Understanding before and after the use of visual interpretation and to determine whether a significant difference existed after the intervention. Results showed a significant increase in students' comprehension, with a shift from "Did Not Meet Expectations" to "Outstanding" performance levels. Visual interpretation is an effective strategy in teaching literature, making abstract concepts more relatable and engaging for students. Teachers are encouraged to integrate visual tools to support learning and improve students' appreciation of Filipino literary texts.

Keywords: visual interpretation, Grade 8, *Florante at Laura*, Filipino literature, student understanding, VILS

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Enhancing students' Understanding of *Florante at Laura* can be effectively achieved through visual learning strategies. These methods not only support comprehension but also increase student engagement. By integrating illustrations, storyboards, character maps, animated summaries, and multimedia presentations, complex themes and challenging passages become more accessible and easier to grasp. Visual tools aid in memory retention and foster critical thinking and creativity, enabling students to explore the text more deeply and connect it with contemporary issues. This approach is driven by the belief that incorporating visual interpretation strategies can significantly improve student comprehension and motivation. Activities such as visual interpretation also promote the development of key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment. These activities not only make learning more enjoyable but also help students connect with the language in practical, meaningful contexts, thereby improving comprehension and language retention (Altun et al., 2020).

Visual representations allow learners to break down complex scenes and character motivations, making them easier to analyze and discuss. By engaging with the text visually, students can better appreciate the emotional tone and symbolic meanings embedded in *Florante at Laura*. This method also encourages collaborative learning, as students can work in groups to interpret and present visual elements of the story. Ultimately, visual learning helps transform passive reading into an active, student-centered experience that deepens literary appreciation and critical insight. (Hargie, 2021). Strong speaking skills help build confidence and credibility, allowing individuals to express their thoughts clearly and persuasively. In professional

environments, effective speaking can enhance leadership, collaboration, and influence, fostering better relationships. Additionally, mastering public speaking techniques can empower individuals to connect with diverse audiences and convey messages with impact (Rahman, 2023).

Students often struggle to understand Florante and Laura through visual interpretation because of limited exposure to the language in everyday contexts, making it harder for them to connect with visual cues. The complexity of Filipino grammar and vocabulary can also hinder students from articulating their thoughts clearly when interpreting images or scenes (Villanueva, 2022). Additionally, students may feel self-conscious or anxious about making mistakes, which can inhibit their confidence in speaking the language. Lastly, the varying levels of fluency among students may make it difficult for them to express themselves accurately, especially when interpreting visuals that require a deeper understanding of the language's cultural context (Tsunemoto, 2022).

Research has shown that the students' struggles to understand Filipino through visual interpretation can be attributed to limited language exposure, complex grammar, self-doubt, and varying fluency levels (Ayawan et al., 2020).

To address these challenges, it is essential to provide more interactive language and comprehension experiences that connect Filipino to real-life situations. Teachers can also use simplified visual materials to help students gradually build their confidence and vocabulary (Abdelrady et al., 2022). Additionally, encouraging a supportive classroom environment where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process can reduce anxiety. Regular practice through group discussions and activities can further enhance fluency and interpretation skills (Kuhn, 2020). Incorporating technology and multimedia tools, such as language apps or video content, can make learning Filipino more engaging and relatable for students. By using visual aids such as infographics, videos, and interactive games, students can better connect language to context and improve their comprehension (Jadallah, 2023). It is also beneficial for teachers to incorporate the language's cultural aspects, helping students understand the nuances of Filipino in real-life situations. Finally, pairing students with different levels of fluency for collaborative work can promote peer learning and create a more inclusive learning environment (Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2020).

Supplementary and alternative strategies, such as technology and multimedia, can also provide instant feedback, helping students recognize and correct mistakes in real time, which is vital for language development (Shadiev, 2020). Interactive games and apps that focus on visual cues and language associations can help students engage with Filipino in a fun, less intimidating way (Chauhan et al., 2021). Cultural aspects, such as local customs and traditions, can deepen students' Understanding of how language is tied to identity, making their learning experience more meaningful. Encouraging students to share their personal experiences in Filipino can help them apply language skills in practical, real-world contexts. Additionally, fostering a growth mindset, in which students view challenges as opportunities to learn, can boost their motivation and willingness to participate (Kroeper et al., 2022).

A new educational strategy for visual interpretation is the "Visual Thinking Strategy" (VTS), which encourages students to analyze and interpret images through guided discussion and critical thinking (Albert, 2022). In this approach, students are presented with a visual (such as a photograph, painting, or video), and the teacher asks open-ended questions like "What do you see?" and "What makes you say that?" This prompts students to engage deeply with the image, draw connections, and express their thoughts in a supportive, non-judgmental environment (Gruber, 2024). The strategy not only enhances students' ability to interpret visual content but also strengthens their speaking and reasoning skills. By using VTS, educators can help students develop a stronger understanding of both visual literacy and language skills, fostering more confident communication in Filipino (Bordeos, 2023).

Many students struggle to articulate their thoughts due to insufficient practice with real-world language use and visual cues. Hence, the researcher identified an apparent knowledge gap in visual interpretation, namely

students' limited exposure to using visuals as a tool for language development, particularly for enhancing speaking skills (Heritage et al., 2020).

This action research aimed to enhance students' Understanding of Florante and Laura through visual interpretation in one of the secondary schools in Misamis Occidental during the S.Y. 2024- 2025. The study focused on enhancing students' understanding of the Filipino subject among secondary school students in Misamis Occidental during S.Y. 2024-2025 using a visual interpretation learning strategy. It targeted a specific group of students, limiting generalizability to other contexts. The research centered on speaking development, excluding other language contexts. The research centered on enhancing their understanding development, which can be connected to grammar and reading comprehension. It was conducted over a limited time frame, capturing short-term impacts.

This study addresses the challenge of Filipino Understanding among secondary school students, a critical skill for effective communication and academic success. By integrating a visual interpretation learning strategy, the research offers an innovative approach that fosters engagement and enhances language proficiency. The findings benefit students by improving their knowledge and performance, teachers by providing dynamic instructional methods, school administrators through actionable curriculum insights, and future researchers by contributing to the literature on visual interpretation learning and language education.

Proposed Strategy

Visual interpretation is a powerful strategy to enhance students' Understanding, especially when learning a new language or improving communication (Pratiwi, 2020). Combining visual stimuli with language practice allows learners to deepen their Understanding and use language more naturally (Du, 2023).

Students enhance their Understanding through courses or workshops that focus on effective learning strategies and comprehension techniques. Additionally, participating in activities such as literary discussions, debate clubs, or dramatic reenactments of texts like Florante at Laura can deepen their Understanding of the content and improve their interpretive skills.

These experiences promote active engagement, encourage critical thinking, and allow students to explore different perspectives. By applying what they learn in dynamic and interactive settings, students are more likely to internalize complex ideas and themes. Ultimately, such approaches foster deeper academic Understanding and personal connection to the material. (Grieve et al., 2021). Learning and mastering speaking skills can be challenging because it requires overcoming nervousness and building self-confidence in front of an audience. It involves mastering techniques such as tone, pacing, and clarity, which can take time and consistent practice to perfect (Hidaya, 2023).

Furthermore, visual interpretation is crucial in speaking as it helps convey emotions and reinforce messages, making the speaker's delivery more engaging and impactful. As visual interpretation plays a significant role in the lives of children and adolescents today, these activities can also serve as valuable tools for developing learners' speaking skills and enhancing their confidence. VILS helps students to think creatively and critically and introduces new ideas more successfully than the traditional method. Learners enjoyed visual learning activities and creative techniques. It has been seen as a promising plan for effectively acquiring and retaining knowledge (Honggal, 2020).

Due to various factors, students' Understanding of the Filipino language is essential for addressing their lack of interest and improving overall academic performance. This disinterest often stems from the perception that Filipino lacks practicality in comparison to global languages like English. As a result, students may struggle to develop strong communication skills in Filipino, affecting their ability to express themselves clearly and confidently in both academic and real-life settings.

Students are more likely to participate actively when word definitions are presented engagingly. It is possible to significantly increase student engagement and retention by making the study of Filipino more enjoyable. This method has been shown to increase enthusiasm and improve language proficiency.

The visual interpretation activity aims to enhance students' speaking skills during the 2024-2025 school year. The proposed strategy integrates reporting, visual interpretation, image description, and rewards into educational content to engage students and promote learning. Visual interpretation learning activities immerse students in interactive experiences, encouraging them to apply skills, solve problems, or complete tasks within a structured format.

The researcher used visual interpretation learning activities to enhance students' Filipino language speaking skills. The researcher planned to develop a speaking skill that students could use collaboratively. In visual interpretation, the class will be divided into groups. Each group will identify the pictures or images given to them. After identifying the pictures, they will use their speaking abilities to interpret the images in front of the class. The group will be graded according to the given rubrics. This innovative activity is integrated into the Filipino discussion. This innovation aimed to enhance Grade 8 students' speaking skills, foster communicative ability, critical thinking, and an Understanding and appreciation of literary values, and improve overall performance.

Action Research Questions

This action research aimed to enhance students' Understanding of Florante and Laura, one of the secondary schools in Misamis Occidental during the school year 2024-2025. Specifically, it will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of students' Understanding of the Florante and Laura class before the implementation of visual interpretation??
2. What is the level of students' Understanding of the Florante and Laura class after the implementation of the visual interpretation?
3. Is there a significant difference in students' Understanding of the Florante and Laura class before and after the implementation of the visual interpretation learning activities?

Action Research Method

Research Design. This study used a single-group pretest-posttest design to enhance students' Understanding. Action design research, or ADR, has gained widespread recognition as a major research methodology in the field of information systems (Cronholm & Göbel, 2022). This design will be deemed appropriate, as it enhances students' Understanding of Florante and Laura in Filipino at one of the secondary schools through the Integration of visual interpretation.

Site. The study was conducted at the junior high school level, specifically with Grade 8 students at a certain public secondary school in Misamis Occidental during the school year 2024-2025. The school, aligned with the resolution mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd), is currently at the forefront of implementing the K to 12 basic education programs, encompassing both junior and senior high school levels. In adherence to the DepEd directive, the Junior High School curriculum spans grades 7 to 10, reflecting the institution's commitment to providing a comprehensive and modern educational experience for its students.

Participants. The respondents of the study were Grade 8 students from one section that the researcher will be teaching. They were selected through purposive sampling. The selection of respondents will be based on the following criteria: students enrolled in Grade 8 for the school year 2024— 2025; students who are observed to have low performance; and students who are willing to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that these criteria were met prior to conducting the survey. However, the researcher will not include other sections of the same grade level in the study.

Instruments

The researcher will use the following research instruments as the data-gathering tools

A (Pagsusulit sa Paglalawak ng Kaalaman sa Filipino at Visual na Interpretasyon).

It is a 20-item researcher-made test used to measure the students' Understanding, covering topics such as Florante at Laura. Filipino 8 from the 4th grading period. This question will be used in the pretest and posttest. To ensure the test's validity, the researcher will ask five experts in the Filipino department to review the test questionnaire. The researcher will conduct a pilot test to a set of participants not included in the study and the instrument must yield a Cronbach's Alpha between 0.7 and 1.0. The instrument will be used for both the pretest and posttest.

To determine test performance, the following scale was used.

Score	Grade Equivalent	Interpretation
17-20	90-100	Outstanding
16	85-89	Very Satisfactory
14-15	80-84	Satisfactory
12-13	75-79	Fairly Satisfactory
1-11	74 below	Did not meet expectatio

B. Lesson Plan. It is a researcher-made lesson plan that focuses on Florante and Laura, integrating visual interpretation to enhance students' Understanding. Before putting it into teaching, the lesson plan was carefully reviewed and checked by the cooperating teacher and revised by the researchers. The implementation occurred at one of the junior high schools in Ozamiz City, specifically with the Grade 8 students, in March 2025.

Data Gathering Method

Pre-Implementation Phase

The researcher will request permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and, once granted, approval from the school principal and the cooperating teacher to conduct the study. Data collection will commence only after all necessary permits are obtained. At this stage, assessments and activities will be prepared based on the teachers' lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations.

Implementation Phase

The researchers will present and discuss the lessons using a collaborative judgment session strategy in the class. Detailed instructions will also be given to the students regarding the function, guidelines, and use of the collaborative judgment session strategy for the activities and assessments. After a month of implementing the intervention, an assessment will be administered to determine how much the students have improved their Understanding of economic sectors.

Since data triangulation will be used in this study, observations and interviews will also be conducted to gather additional data. To record the data, the researchers will take video recordings of the class lessons, photos and screenshots, and field notes throughout the duration of the implementation. Semi-structured

interviews will also be conducted to gather specific data on students' and teachers' feelings and perceptions regarding the use of the Collaborative Judgment Session Strategy. The interviews will be conducted in-office, face-to-face, and will be audio-recorded by the researchers for future reference.

Post-Implementation Phase

The post-implementation stage includes drawing conclusions, providing recommendations, proofreading, editing, and finalizing the research study. It also involves properly disseminating research results to a specific group of people.

Ethical Consideration. The subjects' informed consent was obtained in accordance with the study's ethical standards and ethical guidelines before the survey. As part of ethical practice, the researchers presented participants with a full briefing on the Data Privacy Act of 2012. This was done to demonstrate a commitment to protecting personal information and to ensure accountability when dealing with sensitive data.

Throughout the procedure, participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, the potential benefits to them, and the importance of their participation. The researchers also emphasized the confidentiality of the obtained data and assured participants that their anonymity would be preserved throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The researcher will calculate descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation, to assess performance before and after implementing the intervention.

Frequency and percentage distributions were also used to summarize categorical data, allowing for a clearer Understanding of trends in students' performance.

The mean and standard deviation were used to summarize students' performance before and after the use of the Collaborative Judgment Session Strategy (CJSS).

T-Test used to explore the significant difference in students' performance before and after the use of Collaborative Judgment Session Strategy (CJSS).

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of students' Understanding before the use of visual interpretation learning activities. The table shows that 100% of students did not meet expectations, indicating a lack of Understanding prior to the intervention. While this table does not present statistical significance, as no p-values or t-values are provided, the observation that all students failed to meet expectations is noteworthy. It suggests that the current instructional approach may not have been sufficient to ensure students grasp the expected concepts, highlighting the potential need for additional support or revised teaching methods.

The fact that 100% of students did not meet expectations suggests a significant gap in their Understanding and underscores the importance of the upcoming intervention—visual interpretation learning activities. Although we cannot assess statistical significance based on the provided data, this finding remains significant in a practical sense. The results point to the necessity of an effective intervention to improve student performance. If this is part of a larger study, subsequent measurements after introducing visual interpretation activities will be crucial for determining whether these tools have the desired impact.

Regarding non-significant findings, it is important to note that no inferential statistics (e.g., t-tests) were conducted in this analysis, so it is not possible to classify any findings as non-significant in the traditional sense. The entire table presents descriptive data, and without statistical testing, we cannot conclude that there are no differences between groups or conditions.

The findings imply that students may require additional foundational support before engaging with visual learning activities. Educators may need to assess students' Understanding earlier and introduce more foundational activities to ensure they are better prepared for these advanced learning tools. For curriculum designers, these findings suggest the need to review and potentially revise the introductory content, or to implement preparatory activities, to boost students' performance to a level where visual interpretation can be effective.

In light of these results, further research could explore the specific reasons behind the lack of Understanding among students, such as prior knowledge gaps or difficulties with the learning format (Taber, K. S., 2001). It would also be beneficial to conduct follow-up assessments after implementing visual interpretation learning activities to evaluate their effectiveness. For educators, it may be helpful to introduce diagnostic assessments that identify specific areas where students are struggling and to offer supplemental resources, such as tutorials, to address these gaps before students engage with the visual tools (Karpudewan et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the data in Table 1 highlights the need for intervention, as all students failed to meet expectations prior to the introduction of visual interpretation learning activities. While statistical significance cannot be inferred from the current data, the findings strongly suggest that students require further instructional support. Future studies should focus on measuring the intervention's impact and on refining teaching methods based on the identified challenges.

Table 1: Students' Understanding Before the Use of Visual Interpretation Learning Activities

Students' Understanding	Frequency	Percentage
Did not meet expectations	20	100
Overall Performance Expectations	5.00 - Did Not Meet	

fact that 100% of students scored at the highest level ("Outstanding") raises some points of consideration. The lack of variation in student performance might limit the depth of interpretation, suggesting that all students performed similarly after the intervention. This uniform result could reflect the effectiveness of the visual learning activities. However, it may also imply that students were already performing at a high level to begin with, which could limit our Understanding of the intervention's true impact.

The significant improvement in student performance observed in Table 2 suggests that visual interpretation learning activities are highly effective in enhancing students' Understanding. While the data indicates that all students performed at an "Outstanding" level, it is important to consider whether this improvement is sustainable over time and applicable to a broader population. The uniform success in this case might point to the intervention's effectiveness but also warrants further investigation to ensure that the improvement is not a temporary result or an artifact of the specific group of students involved. To better understand the intervention's impact, future research should include pre- and post-assessments, varied evaluation types, and longitudinal tracking of student performance.

In terms of implications, educators should consider incorporating visual interpretation activities more widely in their teaching practices, as they appear to be an effective tool for improving students' Understanding. Curriculum designers should also explore expanding the use of visual aids across subjects, ensuring these resources are engaging and accessible to all students. For students, additional activities such as note-taking, group discussions, and active engagement with visual materials could further reinforce the learning experience (Zeyab, et al., 2020). Lastly, further research is needed to determine whether the improvement observed is long-lasting and to identify which specific elements of the visual learning activities contribute

most to student success. Overall, Table 2 shows promising results for the use of visual interpretation learning activities, but additional research and refinement of these tools are recommended for sustained effectiveness

Table 2

Students' Understanding After the Use of Visual Interpretation Learning Activities

Students' Understanding	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding	20	100
Overall Performance	18.600 - Outstanding	

Note: 17-20 (Outstanding); 16 (Very Satisfactory); 14-15 (Satisfactory); 12-13 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1-11 (Did not Meet the Expectations)

Table 3 presents a comparison of students' Understanding before and after using visual interpretation learning activities. The table reveals a significant improvement in student performance, with the pretest mean score being 5.00 and the posttest mean score increasing to 18.60. The test statistics show a t-value of -36.48 and a p-value of 0.000, which is highly significant ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that the visual interpretation activities had a substantial and statistically significant effect on students' Understanding. The negative t-value indicates that posttest scores were significantly higher than pretest scores, further underscoring the intervention's positive impact. Given that the p-value is well below the typical threshold of 0.05, it can be confidently concluded that the observed improvement is not due to chance but reflects the true effectiveness of the visual learning activities.

With no non-significant findings, the results clearly highlight the effectiveness of the visual interpretation activities in enhancing students' comprehension. The large difference in mean scores and the highly significant p-value suggest that these activities helped students grasp the material much more effectively than before. This outcome aligns with previous research supporting the use of visual tools in improving student understanding, particularly for complex or abstract topics.

The findings have several implications for educators, curriculum designers, and future research. For educators, these results strongly suggest integrating visual learning tools into their teaching strategies to improve student engagement and Understanding. For curriculum designers, the success of these activities calls for incorporating visual aids across subjects to make abstract concepts more accessible. Future research could explore the long-term effects of visual interpretation activities, investigating whether the improvements persist over time. For students, engaging with visual tools such as diagrams, charts, and videos can be a useful strategy to reinforce learning. Overall, Table 3 provides compelling evidence for the positive impact of visual interpretation learning activities and suggests that such interventions should be considered for broader implementation in educational settings.

Table 3: Students' Understanding Before and After the Use of Visual Interpretation Learning Activities

Variables	Mean Score		Test Statistics	
	(Pretest	Post- test)	(t-value	p-value)
Before and After Using Visual Interpretation	5.00	18.60	-36.48	0.000

H0: There is no significant difference between learners' engagement before and after integrating circular response

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant)

Summary

The action research focused on enhancing the Understanding of Florante at Laura among Grade 8 students in a public secondary school in Misamis Occidental using visual interpretation strategies. Many students struggled to comprehend the text due to language difficulty and lack of engagement. To address this, the researcher used visual tools, such as images, illustrations, and group presentations, to help students better analyze and connect with the story. A pretest and posttest were conducted to measure the improvement in students' Understanding. Results showed that before the intervention, all students performed below expectations. After applying visual interpretation strategies, all students achieved an "Outstanding" rating. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference in performance, demonstrating the approach's effectiveness. The findings suggest that using visual interpretation can improve comprehension, engagement, and speaking skills in Filipino. The study recommends integrating this strategy into the teaching of literature to help students better enjoy and understand complex texts.

FINDINGS

The following were the study's key findings:

1. Before implementing the Visual Interpretation Learning Strategy, students showed a low level of Understanding of Florante at Laura, as reflected in the pretest results, where 100% of the students did not meet expectations. This highlighted the need for an engaging strategy to support comprehension.
2. After implementing the Visual Interpretation Learning Strategy, students' Understanding significantly improved. The posttest results revealed that 100% of the students achieved an "Outstanding" performance, demonstrating the effectiveness of the visual approach in enhancing comprehension.
3. The data revealed a statistically significant improvement in students' Understanding. The mean score increased from 5.00 in the pretest to 18.60 in the posttest, with a t-value of -36.48 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a meaningful and reliable impact of the intervention.
4. The strategy also boosted student confidence and participation. Students became more engaged, actively contributed in discussions, and showed improved speaking and critical thinking skills when interpreting visuals related to the story.

CONCLUSIONS

The study's results led to the formulation of the following conclusions:

1. Before the implementation of the Visual Interpretation Learning Strategy, students had a poor understanding of Florante at Laura. Most of them struggled with comprehension, showing minimal engagement and difficulty in analyzing the text.
2. The use of visual interpretation significantly improved students' Understanding of the literary work. It helped simplify complex ideas and allowed students to better grasp the storyline, characters, and themes.
3. The strategy produced a statistically significant improvement in students' performance, proving that visual aids are effective tools in enhancing comprehension, especially in literature lessons.
4. Students also gained more confidence and became more participative after the intervention. The activity encouraged them to speak, collaborate with peers, and engage in meaningful discussions, creating a more active and supportive learning environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers are encouraged to continue using visual interpretation strategies in teaching literature, especially in complex texts like *Florante at Laura*, to improve comprehension and student interest.
2. Incorporate more creative visual activities such as drawing, character mapping, and image-based storytelling to further develop critical thinking and communication skills in Filipino.
3. Provide training and workshops for teachers on integrating visual tools effectively into their lessons to enhance student learning experiences.
4. Encourage group work and peer discussions during visual interpretation activities to promote collaboration and peer learning, especially for students who are shy or less confident in class participation.
5. Explore the use of visual interpretation in other subjects beyond Filipino to determine its impact on overall student engagement and academic performance across the curriculum.

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