

# Verbal Comprehension and Verbal Reasoning of Graduated Senior High School Students: Critical Success Factors in College

**Dr. Helmer B. Montejo**

*Talisay City College, Cebu Philippines*

[hmontejo@uspf.edu.ph](mailto:hmontejo@uspf.edu.ph)

**Dr. Bernard Evangelicom V. Jamon**

*Cansojong National High School, Cebu Philippines*

## Abstract

---

Paying attention while listening, following instructions, and verbal reasoning are some of the most important skills we will need to get through life. These are some of the most important skills a college student needs to possess in order for him to survive. The fast pace of technological advancement and social change over the years has created a great deal of emphasis on performance in order to achieve one's goals be it economic or personal. This emphasis is particularly true for college students who are primarily concerned with performing well on measures of academic achievement like overall GWA, an aggregate index of academic performance. But why do some students excel academically while others do not? This question seems to hang around for quite some time. In order to survive and thrive in a global standard in education, higher education institutions must overcome language barriers and English will almost always be the common ground. This is why verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning are always part of an attempt to facilitate communication and performance across diverse functions in college. A duo of dynamic examiners of Talisay City College's Guidance Center, Ms. Deborah A. Bacasmas and Ms. Ailaire C. Cabatingan, gathered the results of OLSAT (Otis-Lennon School Ability Test) Eighth Edition of 825 students who enrolled in the College. The researchers made themselves available for clarifications asked by the examiners. After making sure of the completeness of the data gathered, the researchers collated, tabulated, analyzed, and statistically interpreted the available data through the assistance of Ms. Marelen H. Amanuence, a statistician and math instructor. It was found out that more than 50% from each cluster of students from the top 5 feeder schools are below average in both verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning.

As we globalize instructions in higher education institutions, there is a rising need for students to be skilled in verbal comprehension like following directions, sentence completion and arrangement etc. There is also a need for students to be proficient in verbal reasoning like logical selection, verbal analogies, making inference and the list goes on. The student's ability to understand and use these skills is not only a life skill. It is a skill that sets students apart from the rest.

---

**Keywords:** verbal comprehension, verbal reasoning, college life, academic performance, success factors

## Introduction

When a Talisaynon chooses a college or university, he is essentially choosing his future. Choosing the right school is not easy because you need to consider a lot of things. One is the campus which offers the best education. Students, in general, want to attend a school that will give them the best foundation for success where they will network with future professionals as soon as they finish their studies. In other words, they will choose the right college or university that has the best academic reputation. However, before they can become successful, they need to have mastery in verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning. These critical success factors in college are necessary for students to survive. It's more than a life skill. It sets them apart from the rest.

The way we think with words and the way we understand them are concepts based around words and language. It involves problem-solving around words, thinking about text, following written instructions and deciphering a solution, understanding letter sequences, decoding letter and number-based codes and a lot more.

When a student enters college the challenges become bigger and the pressure to succeed becomes higher. With

diverse students coming from different schools, one needs to push himself up in order to be recognized academically. When a student speaks with English fluency, one can surmise that the student has a higher ability in accessing his vocabulary, expressing himself in a meaningful manner, applying reasoning skills presented verbally, applying work knowledge to reasoning skills to help in understanding his environment, and retrieving information, vocabulary, verbal reasoning, and problem-solving. Several factors may play a role in the degree of verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning of students. Common factors like cultural opportunities, knowledge, and information may come into play.

Talisay City College is a microcosm of diverse students coming from different backgrounds. Its inception was in 2004 and the main reason why the institution remains steadfast until today is the desire of the local government to provide higher learning for the poor but deserving constituents of Talisay City, Cebu. This makes the admission of students in Talisay City College crucial. As much as we can, the College accommodates students from all walks of life. At the same time, the institution is always on-the-know to keep abreast with the changing times and strong desire to attain excellence.

The researchers assume that critical success factors in college like verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning are essential things a college student must possess in order for him to survive the challenges he might face as he starts his journey in higher learning.

### **The Problem**

#### *Statement of the Problem*

This study was undertaken to gauge the verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning of graduated senior high school as critical success factors in college. The respondents who were mainly first year students enrolled in Talisay City College were made to answer a standardized OLSAT version 8.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the overall verbal comprehension of the respondents?
2. What is the overall verbal reasoning of the respondents?
3. What are the top 5 feeder schools of Talisay City College?
4. Is there a significant relationship between verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning among the top 5 feeder schools?
5. Is there a significant difference between verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning among the top 5 feeder schools?
6. Based on the findings, what program can be proposed to senior high schools?
7. Based on the findings, what measures should be taken by Talisay City College to ensure success among graduated senior high school students?

### **Research Design**

#### *Methodology*

The quantitative method was employed to determine the verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning of graduated senior high schools students who enrolled in Talisay City College. The data was gathered from the standardized test results, the administration of which was done by the Guidance Center staff. The test administration ran from April 10, 2018 to May 25, 2018 and the checking, interpretation, and analysis followed right after. Thirty-six questions were looked into for study.

#### *Research Environment*

The study was conducted in Talisay City College through the assistance of its Guidance Center. Talisay City College is at the heart of Talisay City and it was established in 2004 with the aim to provide quality and affordable

tertiary education to marginalized sectors. Being recognized by the Commission on Higher Education for its exemplary performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), Talisay City College is now the home of more than 2700 college students enrolled in different programs namely Bachelor in Elementary Education, Bachelor in Secondary Education (English, Filipino, Social Studies, and Mathematics), Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (Electronics and Computer Technology), and Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management. These programs are authorized by the Commission on Higher Education Regional Office VII (CHEDRO VII).

#### *Research Respondents*

Included in the research were graduated senior high school students who enrolled in Talisay City College as freshmen. The feeder schools of Talisay City College are the public and private secondary schools in Talisay City and proximity. There were eight hundred twenty-five (825) graduated senior high students who enrolled in Talisay City College from April 10, 2018 to May 25, 2018. Four hundred eleven (411) senior high school students or 49.82% were from the top five feeder schools namely Talisay City National High School with one hundred seventy-two students or 20.85%, Cansojong National High School with ninety-three students or 11.27%, College of Technological Sciences with fifty-three students or 6.42%, Asian College of Technology with fifty students or 6.06%, and Mohon National High School with forty-three students or 5.21%. Four hundred fourteen (414) students or 50.18% were from other schools.

#### *Research Instrument*

OLSAT 8, like OLSAT 7, includes seven levels that collectively assess the ability of students. It is structured to provide Verbal and Nonverbal subtest scores in addition to the Total score, since students' ability to succeed at ordinary school learning tasks involves both verbal and nonverbal skills. The scores for the parts within the Verbal and Nonverbal subtests may reveal greater student proficiency in one content cluster over another. The verbal comprehension is measured using the variables following directions, antonyms, sentence completion, and sentence arrangement. Verbal reasoning on the other hand is measured using the variables aural reasoning, arithmetic reasoning, logical selection, word/letter matrix, verbal analogies, verbal classification, and inferences. (See Appendix to check on samples of the test taken by students per area and sub-area)

OLSAT 8, being the latest edition released, is described as more kid-friendly than previous editions. Level G (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) is used in this study. As published by Pearson NNC, it is a tool to measure scholastic achievement across all ages. It is a test administered to students from pre-K through 12th grade. The OLSAT measures and assesses cognitive abilities that relate to a student's academic success in school. Although schools often use the OLSAT to identify gifted children for admission into gifted and talented programs, its administration is not limited to those perceived as gifted or intelligent. In fact, OLSAT is an important assessment on many different levels. Across the United States, the result of the test gives parents an idea of where their child stands academically in relation to other students in the same grade. This is critical as it may provide parents with information regarding academic areas where their child may be struggling. In California, it is administered to all students in second grade.

#### *Research Procedures*

The creation of the concept of the study started in the last quarter of 2017 when most of the fourth year students who were deployed in different schools reported a quite distressing account on the likely low verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning among senior high school students based on their daily conversation with them. These students and how well they perform are crucial since their batch would be the first completers of the K-12 program. The researchers scouted for the right tool to measure their verbal aptitude and waited for the right time to gather data.

The Guidance Center was made aware of the researchers' intent to conduct and complete another institutional research on the critical success factors in college. The administration through its President was responsive of the proposal and allowed the researchers to use the existing of the College to gather data. The Guidance Center staffs

were tasked to collate test results based on the researchers' need.

When the spin of enrollment officially started, the researchers were closely monitoring the conduct of examination through OLSAT 8 in order for them to come up with the result on time.

The deans of the three programs namely Teacher Education Program, Industrial Technology Program, and Hospitality Management Program were made aware of the research. Furthermore, teachers were also informed about the study. After all, whatever the result is, it will be the responsibility of the entire Talisay City College to look after for the welfare of the students.

#### *How is the OLSAT Scored?*

Students earn points for each question they answer correctly, but do not lose points for skipping or incorrectly answering a question. When the test is graded, a student is first given a raw score, which provides the number of questions answered correctly out of the total number of questions (e.g., 46/60). Once the raw score is calculated, it is then converted to a School Ability Index (SAI) score. The SAI score is determined by comparing the raw scores of other students in the same age group. It is a normalized score, with an average of 100, a standard deviation of 16, and a maximum score of 150. This SAI score is then used to find which percentile a student falls into. Students who score about two standard deviations above the mean (a score of 132) generally fall into the top 2-3%, or the 97<sup>th</sup>-98<sup>th</sup> percentile.

### **Results and Findings**

In reference to the specific problems of this study, the following details below explain the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. The data were collated in different tables which were analyzed and interpreted. This includes the verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning of graduated senior high school students.

### **OVERALL VERBAL COMPREHENSION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

<b>Levels of Verbal Comprehension</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Below Average</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Above Average</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the eight hundred twenty-five (825) respondents, five hundred fifty-six (556) or sixty-seven percent (67%) got below average in verbal comprehension. Two hundred fifty (250) or thirty percent (30%) got average in verbal comprehension. Nineteen (19) or three percent (3%) got above average in verbal comprehension. The result is quite alarming since college students are expected to communicate well verbally especially through English language. The result implies that most of the students have difficulty with understanding oral language or verbal expression and may struggle to find the words to communicate. Even if they might have adequate memory to recall what they have learned, it seems as if it's difficult for them to express themselves with their words. Struggle in basic problem-solving and reasoning skills may occur.

**OVERALL VERBAL REASONING OF THE RESPONDENTS**

<b>Levels of Verbal Reasoning</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Below Average</b>	480	58
<b>Average</b>	342	41
<b>Above Average</b>	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the eight hundred twenty-five (825) respondents, four hundred eighty (480) or fifty-eight percent (58%) got below average in verbal reasoning. Three hundred forty-two (342) or forty-one percent (41%) got average in verbal reasoning. Three (3) or one percent (1%) got above average in verbal reasoning. The upsetting result is very evident knowing that college students are expected to be logical in giving reasons and understanding concepts framed in words within the use of reasoning. The result implies that most of the students are having difficulty in evaluating one's ability to think constructively and not only on a person's language fluency or vocabulary recognition.

**TOP 5 FEEDER SCHOOLS OF TALISAY CITY COLLEGE**

<b>Top 5 feeder schools of TCC</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>1. TALISAY CITY NATL. HIGH SCHOOL</b>	172	21
<b>2. CANSOJONG NATL. HIGH SCHOOL</b>	93	11
<b>3. COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES</b>	53	7
<b>4. ASIAN COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY</b>	50	6
<b>5. MOHON NATL. HIGH SCHOOL</b>	43	5
<b>6. Other Schools</b>	414	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>100</b>

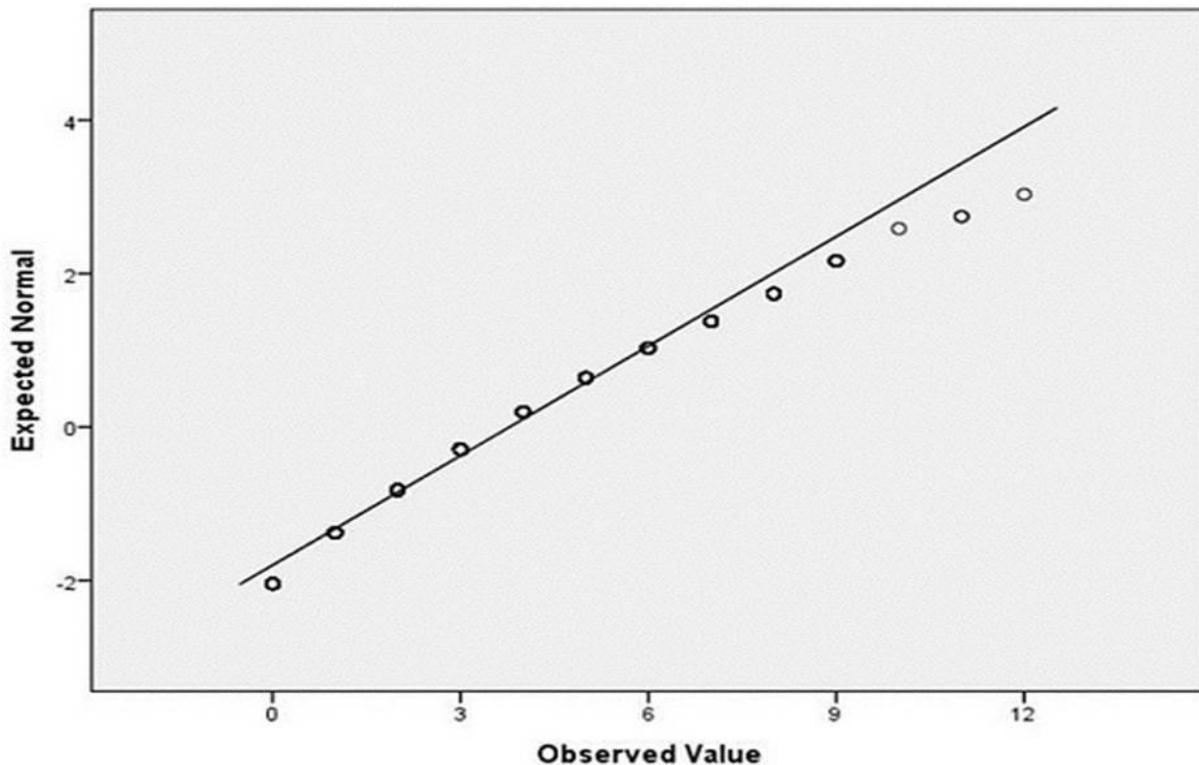
There were one hundred thirty-one (131) feeder schools of Talisay City College when the OLSAT version 8 was administered to students from April 10, 2018 to May 25, 2018. Most of the schools yielded few graduated senior high school students comprising 50.18%. The researchers decided to focus on the top 5 feeder schools because these schools comprised 49.82% of the respondents.

Of the four hundred eleven (411) graduated senior high school students belonging to the top 5 feeder schools, One hundred seventy-two (172) or twenty-one percent (21%) were from Talisay City National High School while ninety-three (93) or eleven percent (11%) were from Cansojong National High School. College of Technological Sciences yielded fifty-three (53) or seven percent (7%), Asian College of Technology produced fifty (50) or six percent (6%), and Mohon National High School brought in forty-three or five percent (5%).

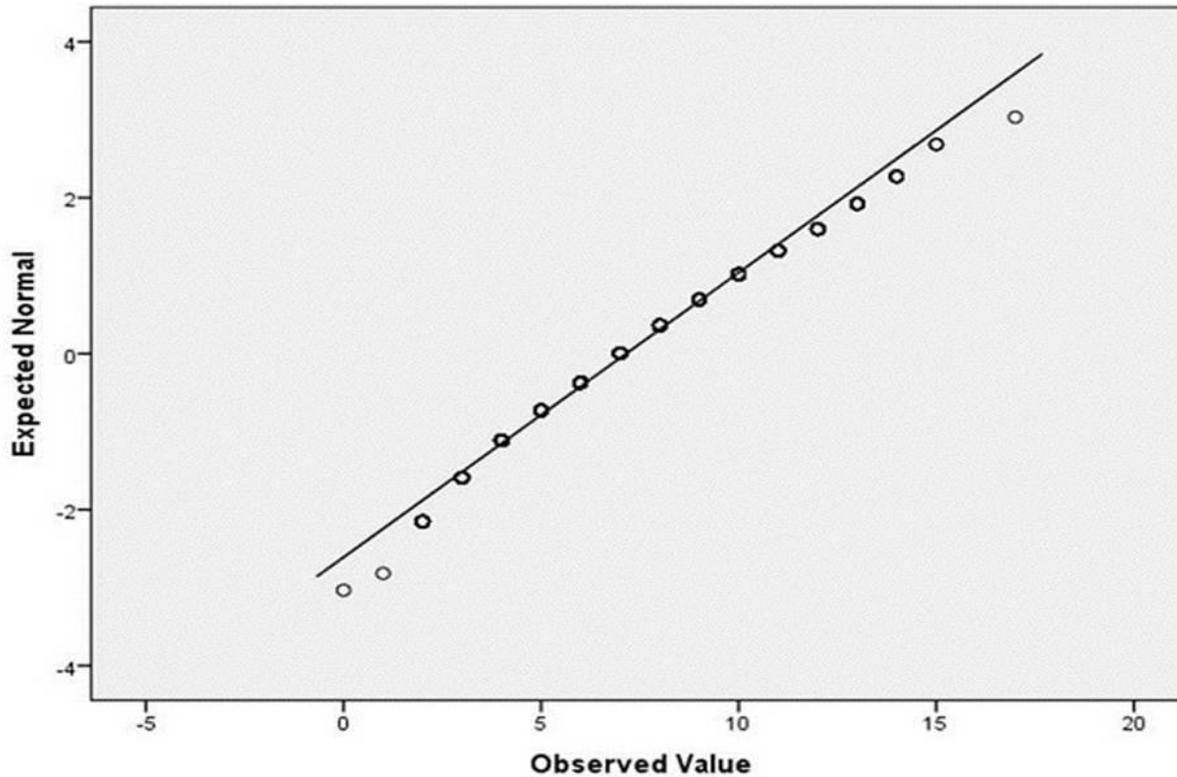
Talisay City College is surrounded by public secondary schools and because of its strategic location students would opt to enroll in the College. Other than its location, students and especially the parents find it economical to enroll their children in the College because of low tuition fee. Besides, it has been known that Talisay City College has been producing topnotchers in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) for the past years.

As for the significant relationship between the verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning among the top 5 feeder schools, statistical test using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used since it is a measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables measured on at least an interval scale.

**Normal Q-Q Plot of Verbal Comprehension**



**Normal Q-Q Plot of Verbal Reasoning**



The reasons for using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation are as follows:

- (a) Two variables (scores in verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning ) are measured at the interval level
- (b) There is no significant outliers

**CORRELATION BETWEEN VERBAL COMPREHENSION AND VERBAL REASONING**

<b>Pair</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation (r)</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
<b>Verbal Comprehension and Verbal Reasoning</b>	411	.352	.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between reading comprehension and verbal reasoning scores. There was a weak, positive correlation between reading comprehension and verbal reasoning, which was statistically significant ( $r = .352$ ,  $n = 411$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND T-TEST BETWEEN VERBAL COMPREHENSION AND VERBAL REASONING**

Verbal Comprehension		Verbal Reasoning		N	t	df	ig. (2-tailed)
Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
30.33	17.230	29.84	11.115	411	.496	410	.552

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare students’ scores in reading comprehension and verbal reasoning. Results of the paired-samples t-test show there is no significant difference between scores of students in reading comprehension (Mean=30.33, SD=17.230) and verbal reasoning (Mean=29.84, SD=11.115) at the .05 level of significance ( $t=.496$ ,  $p=.552$ ).

The Statistical Test, dependent t-test also called the paired-samples t-test was used. Reasons for using Dependent t-test are as follows:

- (a) Two variables (scores in verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning ) are measured at the interval level
- (b) The test is conducted on paired data- that is two measurements on the same person.
- (c) The sampling distribution is approximately normal.

**Conclusion**

The reasoning and verbal comprehension were not given emphasis by the schools and teachers. Though students are encouraged to reason out and communicate through authentic assessment, it is still evident that teachers are still employing the traditional methods of teaching, especially in the public school wherein facilities, instructional materials, etc. are scarce. Another reason could be, those students were not exposed to communicative exercises or activities, which eventually led to the poor performance on verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning. The researchers believe that the findings of the study have great significance to basic education teachers, college instructors, curricularists, Department of Education, and higher learning institutions. The in-service teachers as well as the pre-service teachers shall be immersed with different strategies that would help them teach verbal reasoning and verbal comprehension. Likewise, the curriculum makers of basic education and higher learning institutions shall put to emphasis the weight of these skills by embedding them to the curricula. Thus, making these skills unignored by introducing them across learning areas; not just in one particular subject. Finally, improved verbal reasoning and verbal comprehension can have a tectonic impact as educators prepare learners to be glocally (globally and locally) competitive.

**Recommendations**

Since verbal comprehension and verbal reasoning are already in the K to 12 curriculum, we can address the problem by encouraging teachers to emphasize reasoning and verbal comprehension through alternative or authentic assessment. Students must be encouraged to hone verbal comprehension and reasoning through interpersonal and interactive conversation with others and continuously learn these competencies inside and

outside the school. The impact of the research findings can be an awakener to educators that there is less emphasis given to the teaching of verbal reasoning and verbal comprehension among the basic education students of public schools. The teaching of verbal reasoning and verbal comprehension should be incorporated in all learning areas across disciplines and therefore be regarded as coequal with the five macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing).

### References

- Otis, A.S. et al. (2003). *Spring Multilevel Norms OLSAT Otis-Lennon School Ability Test 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*. United States of America of Pearson Education Inc. 2003.
- Anderson, R.C., & Biddle, W.B. (1975). *On Asking People Questions About What They Are Reading*. In G.H. Bower (Ed.), *The psychology of learning and motivation* (Vol. 9, pp. 9–129). New York: Academic Press.
- Block, C.C., & Pressley, M. (2001). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices*. New York: Guilford.
- Blachowicz, C., & Ogle, D. (2001). *Reading comprehension: Strategies for independent learners*. New York: Guilford
- Brown, A.L., Campione, J.C., & Day, J.D. (1981). *Learning To Learn: On Training Students To Learn From Texts*. *Educational Researcher*, 10, 14–21.
- Carrow E. (1985). *Test For Auditory Comprehension Of Language-Revised*. Allen, TX: DLM Teaching Resources; 1985. (revised ed.)
- Guthrie, J.T., Van Meter, P., McCann, A.D., Wigfield, A., Bennett, L., Poundstone, C.C., et al. (1996). *Growth Of Literacy Engagement: Changes In Motivations And Strategies During Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction*. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31, 306–332.
- Gustin WC, Corazza L (1994) [Mathematical And Verbal Reasoning As Predictors Of Science Achievement. Roeper Rev 16: 160-162.](#)
- Klinger, J.K., & Vaughn, S. (1999). *Promoting Reading Comprehension, Content Learning, And English Acquisition Through Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)*. *The Reading Teacher*, 52, 738–747.
- Piaget J *Growth of Logical Thinking From Childhood to Adolescence: An Essay on the Construction of Formal Operational Structures*. London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1958.
- Scholastic.com (2018). *Understanding Reading Comprehension*. <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/understanding-reading-comprehension/>
- Lincs.ed.gov (2018). *Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension*. <https://lincs.ed.gov/professional-development/resource-collections/profile-348>
- Southcountychildandfamily.com (2018). *What Does the Verbal Comprehension Index Measure?* <http://southcountychildandfamily.com/verbal-comprehension-index-measure/>
- Classroom.synonym.com. *What Does Poor Verbal Comprehension Mean?* <https://classroom.synonym.com/poor-verbal-comprehension-mean-8695942.html>
- Wikijob.co.uk (2018). *Verbal Reasoning Test*. <https://www.wikijob.co.uk/content/aptitude-tests/test-types/verbal-reasoning-test>
- Wikipedia.org (2018). *Verbal Reasoning*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal\\_reasoning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_reasoning)
- Verywellfamily.com (2018). *Importance of Verbal Intelligence*. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/what-is-verbal-intelligence-2162167>
- Birjandi, P. (2008). *Effects of Task Repetition on the Fluency, Complexity, and Accuracy of Iranian EFL Learners' Oral Discourse*. *The Asian EFL Journal* 32-37.
- Hoai Huong, L.P. & Yeo, M. (2016). *Evaluating In-Service Training of Primary English Teachers: A Case Study in Central Vietnam*. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 45-50.

## APPENDIX

## “Sample Test Items per Area and Sub-Area”

## VERBAL COMPREHENSION

1. The opposite of **caution** is –

**F**recklessness      **G** fright  
**H**bravery      **J** defensiveness **k** mistrust

2. Choose the words that *best* complete this sentence.

They will \_\_\_\_\_ that you are going with them, so you should \_\_\_\_\_ them if your plans change.

**A** infer – forgive

**B** decide – avoid

**C** assume – notify

**D** resent – ignore

**E** forget – accompany

3. If the words below were arranged to make the *best* sentence, with which letter would the last word of the sentence begin?

restaurant	the	specials	vegetarian	offers	new
------------	-----	----------	------------	--------	-----

**F** s

**G** v

**H** r

**J** n

**K** o

4. The opposite of **chaos** is –

**F** happiness

**G** warmth

**H** order

**J** strength

**K** rhythm

5. Choose the words that *best* complete this sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ I saw that movie, I can't \_\_\_\_\_ the ending.

**A** Since – describe

**B** If – forget

**C** Although – recall

**D** Because – watch

**E** After – imagine

6. If the words were arranged to make the best sentence, with which letter would the first words of the sentence begin?

polite	people	to	means	courtesy	being	other
--------	--------	----	-------	----------	-------	-------

**A** O

**B** B

**C** C

**D** M

**E** P

## VERBAL REASONING

1. Which word does *not* go with the other four?

**A** dilemma

**B** category

**C** predicament

**D** quandary

**E** plight

2. There can be no music without –

- F** instruments      **G** sound      **H** words      **J** singers      **K** composers

3. The groups of letter in the box go together in a certain way. Choose the group of letters that goes where you see the question mark.

ZXV	YWU	XVT	<b>F</b> EDB	<b>G</b> FCA	<b>H</b> EDC	<b>J</b> DBA	<b>K</b> ECA
GEC	FDB	?					

4. What number is equal to one-third of the difference between 360 and 135?

- F** 1485      **F** 675      **H** 165      **J** 75      **K** 45

5. If A is greater than B and less than C, which is five less than D, then we know that –

- F** B is five less than C  
**G** A and D are equal  
**H** D is greater than A  
**J** C is five more than A  
**K** C is the least

6. Which word does *not* go with the other four?

- F** respected      **G** related      **H** connected      **J** associated      **K** allied

7. What is missing in this series?

- 135A    105Z    80B    60Y    ?    35X    30D  
**A** 40C      **B** 40W      **C** 45C      **D** 45W      **E** 50C

8. There can be no cooking without –

- F** a chef      **G** a recipe      **H** food      **J** a stove      **K** pans

9. **Wander** is to **rove** as –

- A** sleep is to dream  
**B** sip is to straw  
**C** lead is to follow  
**D** spoil is to ruin  
**E** pull is to push

## About the Authors

*Dr. Helmer B. Montejo* - The author considers himself, young and dynamic. He is one of the advisers of Global Educators Network-Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (GEN TEFL) and a member of two reputable research organizations namely International Association of Scholarly Publishers, Editors and Reviewers, Inc. (IASPER) and Asia Pacific Consortium of Researchers and Educators (APCORE). He has presented his papers in different international conferences and has won Best Oral Research Presenter in 2017. He accepts consultancy assignments and engages himself in training employees in different Japanese companies. At present, he is the Associate Dean and Research Director of Talisay City College.

*Dr. Bernard Evangelicom V. Jamon* - He is presently a Teacher III at Cansojong National High School, in which he serves as the English Coordinator and teaches English subjects. He is also currently an adjunct instructor at Talisay City College. He taught at the Graduate School of Cebu Technological University from 2015-2018. He has written books, conducted researches, presented a paper in an international forum, invited as resource speaker on various topics in education up to the national level, and a teacher demonstrator in the Regional level. He earned his Doctorate Degree in Education from Cebu Technological University in 2017 at the age of 25.