

The Perceived Challenges in Reading of Learners: Basis for School Reading Programs

Mary Jane L. Tomas¹, Erleo T. Villaros², Sheena Mai A. Galman¹

¹College of Education, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Cabanatuan City, Philippines

²Schools Division of Aurora, Department of Education, Baler, Aurora, Philippines

Email: sheenamaiagalman@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Tomas, M. J. L., Villaros, E. T., & Galman, S. M. A. (2021). The Perceived Challenges in Reading of Learners: Basis for School Reading Programs. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9, 107-122.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.95009>

Received: March 16, 2021

Accepted: May 9, 2021

Published: May 12, 2021

Copyright © 2021 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

This mixed method research study was conducted to investigate the English and Filipino reading profile of learners, challenges, difficulties and lessons, the schools' agenda and initiatives for the enrichment of reading programs to eliminate these reading challenges and difficulties; and stakeholders' support and commitment. A total 4056 Filipino reading profiles and 4216 English reading profiles of Grade 1 to Grade 7 students and responses from the interviews done with school heads and teachers were described using descriptive measures and analyzed using thematic analysis. Results showed that majority of the learners were at the frustration level. Also, the perceived causes, origins and attendant variables of the students' reading level were non-mastery of the elements of reading, presence of learners-at-risk, and no culture of reading. The suggested reading programs and activities may form part in the creation of contextualized reading curricula and be used as reading literacy initiatives in the schools. These initiatives are categorized as Literacy Program, Individual Reading Recovery Program and Enrichment/Enhancement Program.

Keywords

Reading Skills, Reading Intervention, Reading Programs, Perceived Challenges in Reading

1. Introduction

The quality of a person's life can be enhanced by the literacy level as the latter is directly related to his/her working life (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2008). There is a direct relationship between literacy and academic achievement. Hence, training individuals with good literacy who can comprehend and question what they read is one of the most important goals for today's education (Grove & Hauptfleisch, 1982; Moreillan, 2007).

Individuals who are regarded as smart as their peers but having poor reading abilities cannot improve it as much as their peers. As per record, all students pass elementary education. Corollary, even those who have poor reading ability pass their classes. They cannot perform reading at the level expected of their grade, resulting in anxiety and depression throughout their schooling. They are usually stereotyped as unsuccessful throughout their formal education. Such results in adoption problems in their classes (Bender, 2012).

Reading is a complex process as it involves “sensation, perception, comprehension, application and integration”. It is the process of making and getting meaning from printed words and symbols. Reading as a whole, is a means of communication and of information and ideas. Aracelo (1994) as cited by Panerio (2008) reported that “85% of the things that people do involve reading”. Individuals read street signs, advertisements, menus in restaurants and recipes from cook books, dosage of medicine and others. Moreover, reading is the foundation of academic success and life learning. One article from Philippine Star (2010) states that: “The undeniable fact remains that majority of Filipino students do not possess the ability and motivation to read. Due to the fast-evolving world and changing technology, it cannot be denied that sometimes reading is taken for granted”.

Reading also plays a vital role in ones’ success in school. It is one of the most important skills an individual learner must need to master. It is a prerequisite of all learning areas. It serves as a gateway for every learner to learn the different subjects because when a learner has a difficulty in reading, he/she may encounter also difficulties in all subject areas. Researches have shown that there are many reasons in the difference in the achievement level of the students. Luz (2007) stresses that many Filipino learners do not have the reading habit required in learning. As she noted, “The problem of non-reading lies at the heart of why the Philippines is so uncompetitive in the world economy and why so many of our people continue to live in poverty or barely escape it”.

As Claessen et al. (2020) coined, reading difficulties are present in the world. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results from PISA 2018 revealed that reading is among the areas that fifteen-year-old students in the Philippines scored lower than those in majority of the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. The country’s average reading score was 340 score points, on a par with that of the Dominican Republic. No country scored lower than the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. In mathematics and science, students in the Philippines scored 353 and 357 points, respectively, on a par with performance in Panama. The Philippines outperformed the Dominican Republic in mathematics and science.

The Philippines shared a significant rate of low performers among all PISA-participating countries and economies. That is, 80% of the Filipino students did not reach the minimum level of proficiency in reading. Their poor scores in English, Mathematics, and Science are attributed to the students’ lack of ability in basic reading and comprehension. This being the case, the Department of Education (DepEd) has launched the *Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs In-*

itiatives), in order to intensify the advocacy for reading and by pledging commitment to make every learner a reader at his/her grade level.

In response to this DepEd's 3Bs Initiatives, the Schools Division of Aurora has started its reading administration to elementary and junior high schools to assess the level of reading ability of the learners and determine their reading profile. It has a great hope that these learners who have reading difficulties can still be relieved of their reading problems by means of a suitable reading environment, teaching program and family support. The indispensable issue to be addressed here is the form the environment, program and support that should be undertaken. The reading environments must be designed to eliminate the reading difficulties of students to make them feel relaxed and willing to express themselves. In addition to this, students' learning must be supplemented with materials in consonance to their interests and abilities coupled with support from the teacher and students' family members. The research proves the "effectiveness of informing students about the difficulties they experience and strategy-based programs conducted with the cooperation of the teacher and family" (Baydik, 2011; Torgesen, 2000; Westwood, 2008).

The students' experienced difficulties in reading and learning could serve as a basis for a strategy-based program to be designed for them to have better reading skills. Hence, this study was conducted to assess the students' reading profile and perceived challenges in reading to serve as a basis for schools' agenda and initiatives for the enrichment of reading programs.

2. Methods

The study employed a mixed method of research. The quantitative method was used to determine the reading level of the students. The qualitative data was used to assess the perceived challenges of students in learning.

The study included all grades 1 to 7 learners in the Schools Division of Aurora. Twenty (20) supervisors were assigned to ten (10) schools districts to conduct and evaluate oral reading skills among sample learners of all schools. The sample learners were selected randomly with five (5) per class for each language.

The administration of reading among schools in Aurora is one form of reading assessment that defined the felt needs, problems and other key issues challenging the schools in terms of learning reading ability. It also explored their perceived causes, origins and attendant variables; and their actual effects/impacts to the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Hence, the Schools District Profile, Challenges, and Issues (SDPCI) clarified and validated a clear and accurate picture of the actual state, dynamic and impact of reading programs and interventions drawn from all schools in Aurora. In addition, the Schools Agenda for Improving Reading Skills (SAIRS) of all schools districts were collected.

In the process, the reading skill of the learners was determined through the oral reading assessment tools in Filipino and English for Grades 1 to 7. A total of 4056 Filipino reading profiles and 4216 English reading profiles of learners across the seven (7) grade levels were considered for description and analysis.

Observations were also made as the learners read the texts/passages. The reading difficulties were recorded, tabulated and analyzed thematically.

The chief supervisor met all the supervisors to collectively discuss, examine and synthesize the **SDPCI and schools agenda for improving reading skills (SAIRS)** through group sharing and clarification processes. They harnessed the lessons learned to formulate proposed measure to improve approaches/paradigms, structures, systems, processes, resources and other organizational elements in order to develop reading skills among learners.

3. Results

This section provides the percentages of learners for the reading levels in Filipino and English reading skill. Both aggregated and disaggregated summary statistics showing the percentages of learners are presented in this section. These statistics are taken from Grades 1 to 7 learners of 10 schools districts of the Schools Division of Aurora.

3.1. Reading Level of Learners and Challenges in Filipino and English

The predominant challenge conveyed by the school heads and teachers and revealed in the study is how to improve the reading ability among learners. The challenge is felt across all schools in the Schools Division of Aurora regardless of the size of schools. Elementary and secondary schools acknowledge the need to improve the reading ability of learners in order to increase the learners' academic performance and attain the culture of reading.

In total, the percentage of Grade 1 learners in Aurora who belong to frustration level is 64.31%. Furthermore, 9.04% Grade 1 learners are in instructional level. Only about 13.10% Grade 1 learners are in independent level. About 13.55% are nonreaders. The total percentage distribution of Grade 2 learners for the reading levels in Filipino reading ability is shown in **Figure 2**.

As shown in **Figures 1-4**, majority of Grade 2 learners (57.19%) are at frustration level. Furthermore, 24.44% and 14.21% Grade 2 learners are in independent level and instructional level, respectively, and only 4.16% are nonreaders.

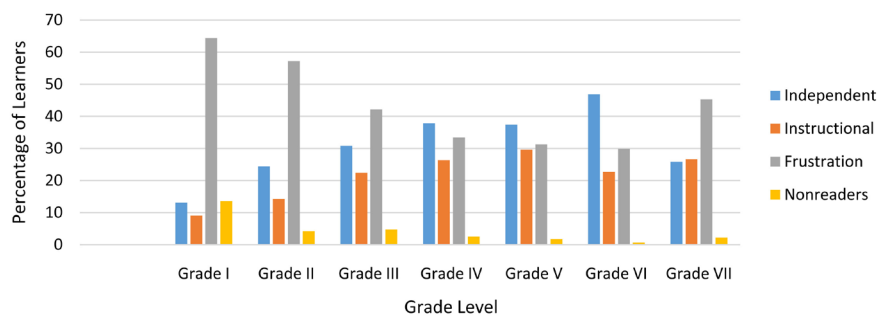


Figure 1. Learners' percentage distribution in Filipino reading ability per grade level. *Note:* Percentages of learners are shown for the reading levels of learners such as independent, instructional, frustration and nonreaders in every grade level for a total of 4056.

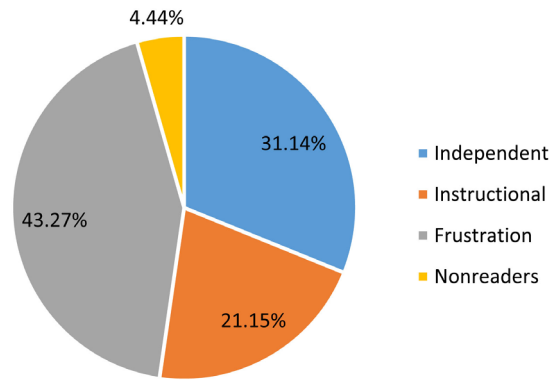


Figure 2. Percentage distribution of grades 1 - 7 learners in Filipino reading ability.

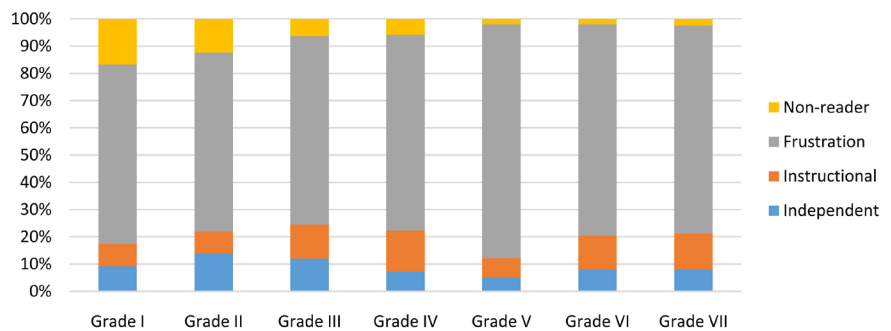


Figure 3. Learners' percentage distribution in English reading ability per grade level. Note: Total number of learners tested is 4216.

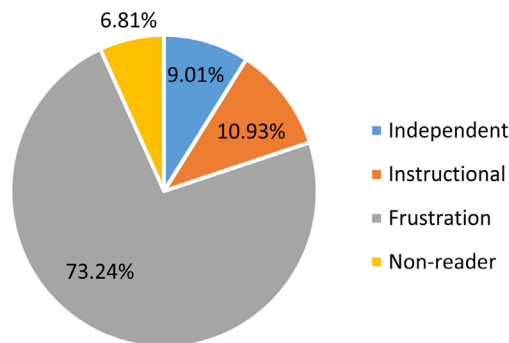


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of grades 1 - 7 learners in English reading ability.

Teachers show lack of commitment to reading as they don't have clear reading plan, reading materials and tools.

3.2. Perceived Causes of Poor Reading Skills

Analyzing the qualitative data gathered from the school heads and teachers, and based on the schools reading profile and other learners' data, there are three underlying issues that affect the poor reading skills of learners in Aurora, to wit: 1) Non-mastery of the elements of reading; 2) Presence of learners-at-risk; and 3) No culture of reading.

The perceived causes for each of these issues are discussed below:

3.2.1. Non-Mastery of the Elements of Reading (the Data and Other Information for Each Cause Shall Be Included Based on the Schools' Records and Learners' Reading Profile)

The perceived causes of non-mastery of the elements of reading are: no phonological awareness, non-mastery of alphabet knowledge, non-mastery of phonics, poor word recognition and vocabulary, poor fluency skills, and lack of comprehension.

1) No phonological awareness was observed

The Grade 1 learners in Filipino experienced difficulties on sound blending. They did not know the strategy that by putting up phonemes together they will be able to read a word. For instance, one of the learners was told to put the speech sound /m/ add /a/, then add /s/, that is, (/m/ + /a/ + /s/). Instead of blending /m/ + /a/ + /s/ correctly, he pronounced it differently. His transcription /mas/ was different from the intended.

2) Non-mastery of alphabet knowledge

Also, as per observations, there was a clear confusion among grade one learners between the letter name and letter sound. The learners' difficulty to distinguish letters from one another was very evident. They added vowels to every consonant, e.g. letter *m* is read as *ma*.

3) Non-mastery of phonics

Reversals like *ya* for *ay* in Filipino, insertions (*pinirito to prito*), deletion (say for says)/addition of letters (*nanay to nanaya*) were some of the common errors in the informal reading analysis or running records done.

It is expected that Grade one learners in Filipino were taught about the letter-sound relationships of a number of the vowel phonemes. Then consonants were introduced. But as per general observation among Grade 1 learners, of their difficulty in blending the various sounds or phonemes of a word together in proper order to arrive at a pronunciation.

4) Poor word recognition and vocabulary

Most of the tested Grade 1 learners have a very limited bank of sight words as shown in their Dolch Basic Sight Word Test Results in English. Most of them can only read cvc words. This shows that the teachers do not integrate basic sight words for the grade level in oracy lessons. Learners have limited vocabulary as well.

5) Poor fluency skills

Learners who find difficulty in learning the skill in decoding words tend to refuse to read. No continuous opportunities were provided by the teachers in the content that the learners are more comfortable. Children learn to read more easily when this instruction is based on strengths and resources they already possess.

6) Lack of comprehension

It is very evident from the results that few learners got perfect scores in reading comprehension in Filipino. Though the reading material was written in their Mother Tongue, still they can hardly answer the questions. There were Grades 1

and 2 learners who can read fluently in Filipino but without comprehension. This can be attributed to the focus of the teachers in reading instruction which is decoding. Learners have limited vocabulary as well.

3.2.2. Presence of Learners-at-Risk

The causes of presence of learners-at-risk are presence of nonreaders, learner's poor health condition, presence of LSENs in regular class, lack of interest in reading, lack of orientation and training to teach reading, and frequent absenteeism of learners.

1) Presence of nonreaders

For the Grade 1 nonreaders, they could not even identify the letter name and letter sound. I asked two learners to write all the letters they knew but unfortunately one learner was able to write two letters only and he didn't even know the name of the letters he wrote. The other one was able to write 3 letters. Most of the cases in Grades 1 and 2 had difficulty in reading words with -ng in Filipino (beginning, middle, ending).

2) Learner's poor health condition

The poor health condition of some learners affects their ability to assimilate instruction and building their self-confidence.

3) Presence of LSENs in regular class

Learners with special needs were included in some schools. There was no specific assessment utilized for the LSENs. Some teachers use the assessment materials for the regular learners which affect the class performance in reading.

4) Lack of interest in reading

Low self-concepts among struggling readers interfere with progress in overcoming reading problems. Convinced that the learners cannot succeed, such learners only fall farther and farther behind. Many poor readers refuse to cooperate with those who would help them due to negative reinforcement.

5) Lack of orientation and training to teach reading

As per observation, most of the Grade 1 teachers with the most number of nonreaders or struggling readers were handled by new teachers. They do not have any training in beginning reading. According to the principals they were assigned to handle the Grade 1 class because they were the last to in in the school.

6) Frequent absenteeism of learners

This can be attributed to the low socio-economic status of parents. Sometimes the learners help at home in running errands and taking care of their younger siblings. Some learners opt to be absent in classes because of their inability to read.

3.2.3. No Culture of Reading

Under no culture of reading, the perceived causes are no opportunity for independent reading, lack of reading materials, failure to give learners sufficient guidance for reading, absence of parents teachers and learners reading partner-

ship; lack of teacher's commitments and confidence to teach reading; improper implementation of reading program; and no monitoring of learner's progress during intervention.

1) No opportunity for independent reading

There was no balanced reading program in the schools. Some of the fast readers assisted the struggling readers instead of doing independent reading activities. Enhancement of reading performance is not a regular activity in reading. The schools do not have graded reading materials with answer key so that learners can check their work anytime and monitor their reading and comprehension progress independently.

2) Lack of reading materials

Many schools especially from the far-flung areas do not have varied story books which are appropriate for the grade level of the learners. No picture books are available for beginning readers/nonreaders. The picture books will allow them to be creative in composing their own story even in the mother tongue only. There were story books developed by the LRMDs but these materials were not yet reproduced for maximum utilization.

3) Failure to give learners sufficient guidance for reading

Reading teachers were new and they do not have any orientation regarding the teaching of beginning reading. Some teachers were more comfortable in the strategies that they used instead of the suggested approaches or strategies.

4) Absence of parents, teachers and learners reading partnership

Some teachers do not look upon the parents as people who can help diagnose and correct the child's learning difficulties. Parents seem to be resistant because they were not trained on how to teach phonics among beginning readers.

5) Lack of teacher's commitment & confidence to teach reading

Lack of commitment was manifested through in adequacy of teaching devices displayed in the classroom and in the result of oral reading test results. When teachers were asked why they have many nonreaders, e.g. 6/24, or 9/27 they tend to be defensive about their shortcomings. They blamed parents for not doing follow-up at home.

6) Improper implementation of reading program

Although reading teachers were taught on the different approaches in teaching reading, they implement it in the classroom the short cut way. They teach right away the alphabet knowledge even without teaching reading readiness first. And they combine two approaches at a time as manifested by the finger counting of the Grades 1 and 2 learners, for example, Anggulo Approach (ba, ka, da) and Marungko Approach (phonics approach). A learner read *mas* as *masa* in Filipino. Remediation activities were not documented. Some teachers forgot that testing and measurement are essential in a reading program, while others did not properly document the reading intervention programs in schools.

7) No monitoring of learner's progress during intervention

Observing individual progress will help a reading teacher provide appropriate activities to overcome learners' difficulties. It is informative to look back at the

cumulative records of the changes that have occurred. Grades 1 and 2 teachers claimed that they do reading remediation but undocumented. Because according to them they do not know some assessment tools to monitor the progress of the learners. Consequently, they do not follow up the reading interventions at home.

4. School's Initiatives in Reding Literacy

From the school reading evaluation tool in the previous section, the study team was able to determine that the main problem affecting the reading difficulty among learners is **poor reading ability** mainly due to non-mastery of the elements of reading, presence of learners-at-risk, and no culture of reading in schools.

The School Reading Program to Eliminate Reading Difficulties

Reading skills is part of the instinctive skill of every individual as such starts at birth. However, prior experiences and knowledge brought by students upon entry to basic education determine their entry reading level. Some of the most regarded contributors of this process are the developed reading skills-related attitudes and behaviors, the manner their reading-related cognitive development is supported, the type of opportunities provided for them and what kind of guidance they are offered. Thus, the establishment of an enrichment learning environment suitable for the language acquisition and cognitive development of the child is important.

The basic requirements needed for the acquisition of effective reading skills and healthy reading are correct perception, sound recognition, word recognition, word discrimination, semantics, syntax, linguistic processes and comprehension. The establishment of reading environments based on reading requirements may be effective in overcoming reading difficulties. In addition, the use of appropriate methods and teaching as well as considering individual differences in individuals are contributory to the elimination of these difficulties. Also, the early diagnosis of students with reading difficulties and the integration of intervention programs for reading difficulties in their curriculum are of great importance (Figure 5).

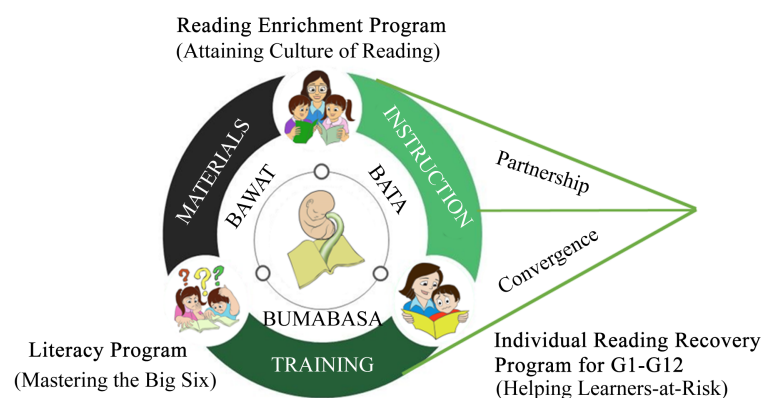


Figure 5. Reading intervention program in Aurora.

The following suggested reading programs and activities shall form part in the creation of contextualized reading curricula and be used as reading literacy initiatives in the schools. These initiatives are categorized as Literacy Program, Individual Reading Recovery Program and Enrichment/Enhancement Program.

4.1. Literacy Program

Reading is a form learning for decoding texts and making meaning from texts.

The Literacy Program (LP) has the following elements called “The Big Six”. For the learners to be effective readers, they should be able to combine the six elements. Therefore, an integrated approach to explicit reading instruction is important in providing relevant interconnected learning experiences. While teachers may emphasize individual component at various instances, they are not a set of isolated skills and needs to be integrated throughout reading opportunities across the day. So, for instance, while the systematic teaching of phonics is an important component, the same is insufficient in itself for learning to read. DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019 presented some conceptual considerations in reading program and discussed the following:

Oral Language

Having a very limited vocabulary and unfamiliarity with language structures renders impossibility of understanding the written form of a language. The vocabulary and familiarity could be developed before a child enters a school (Reese, Sparks, & Leyva, 2010; Skeat et al., 2010). Therefore, oral language provides the prerequisite skills to reading and is directly linked to overall reading achievement. When children are by and included in increasingly complex conversations, they:

- expand their vocabulary;
- increase the complexity of the language structures they use;
- become language risk-takers;
- develop confidence in the way they communicate;
- clarify their thinking and deepen their understanding of their world; and
- tune into the sounds of standard language.

Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness refers to the ability to focus on the sound of speech. It connotes an awareness of rhythm, rhyme, sounds, and syllables. Awareness often commences with rhythm, for instances, children clapping to the beats of their name. The second step is rhyming: producing rhyming patterns like king, wing and sing. This exhibits early phonemic awareness which is the most important subset of phonological awareness in the development of reading and spelling.

In addition, phonological awareness enables children to focus on the separate sounds in words called phonemes. The children at this step learn to divide syllables into separate sounds and manipulate them to form different words. Letter-sound relationships can then be introduced and children can be taught phonemic and phonics skills simultaneously from this point.

Phonics

Phonics recognizes the relationship between letters and sounds, sometimes called the “alphabetic principle”. Teaching beginning and struggling readers using a synthetic approach to phonics are supported by the current empirical evidence (Johnston & Watson, 2003; Rose, 2006). This approach emphasizes teaching single letters and common letter combinations in a discrete, systematic and explicit way. The manner in which they are arranged to be taught facilitates their blending into simple words so that children can immediately practice their new skills, building automaticity, and confidence. The research also recommends that these new skills be practiced as early as possible by having children listen to high quality texts and read connected text themselves.

Explicit phonetics instruction is material for most beginning and all struggling readers. However, it must be implemented alongside many elements of an effective reading program, such as “rich oral language instruction, and modelled and guided reading” (Konza, 2011).

Phonics instruction is not appropriate to help children understand irregular “sight” words such as said, was, and saw. These words must be learned by recognizing the words until the point of automaticity. Hence, sight words must be taught based on an explicit system, rather than being addressed only when children encounter these words in text. Providing plenty of practice to use newly-learned sight words in context can support comprehension. That is, immediate recognition of some words accurately can allow learners to concentrate on new or less familiar words and focus on giving them meaning, rather than just decoding.

Vocabulary

Knowing the meaning of a word implies the likelihood of the ability to read it and interpret it contextually. There is a need to continually expand the range of words that can be understood and used in context. “Vocabulary development” as an outcome of comprehension and a precursor of the same, has word meanings making up as much as 70% - 90% of the comprehension (Bromley, 2007).

Vocabulary is, for the most part, can be enhanced by encountering new words repeatedly in conversations, story listening, reading, and through different media (Sénéchal, 1997). Encountering words in meaningful situations makes meanings clear. Also, children can then easily add them to their word bank. This type of indirect vocabulary acquisition is particularly effective for children who have been exposed to a wide and rich vocabulary even before entering the school. For other children who have a more limited vocabulary and have less access to the vocabulary resources, the explicit teaching vocabulary is important (Beck & McKeown, 2007).

Fluency

Fluency does not amount to reading quickly. It is the ability to make reading sound like spoken language. Also, it is reading with appropriate phrasing, expression, and pace. Someone who is fluent can understand and make meaning of the text as they read. Its core components include accuracy, pace and expression,

and volume. Fluency is correlated with comprehension.

Familiarity with words contributes to fluency. There is a need for texts at the independent reading level. Hence, beginning and struggling readers need simple texts at their independent level to build speed and confidence. Children who are sent home with the books they can read, they can develop appropriate expression, practice chunking and pausing, and most importantly, build their confidence.

Reading quickly without attending to punctuation, expression, and comprehension is not fluency. Reading rates should not be at the expense of comprehension.

Comprehension

What makes reading effective is the understanding of the purpose of the reading itself and adjust the behaviors according to that purpose. These behaviors include skimming, scanning, or reading closely for details. The texts may appear to look different in terms of unidentified purpose, context, and audience. The understating of the different features of texts can contribute to interpretation.

Proficient readers keep track of their understanding as they read, by integrating new information with existing knowledge and experience. They focus on appropriate parts of the text to distinguish salient content from minor detail. They create and track predictions and assess content as they read. For this to happen, there is a need for the learners to learn how to adjust their reading strategies, pace and vocabulary knowledge, as well as their strategies, for decoding and chunking to read the unfamiliar.

Comprehension is made up of a toolkit of strategies that should explicitly be taught, namely:

Predicting and activating prior knowledge	Questioning	Visualizing
Monitoring and Clarifying	Making Connection	Inferring
Determining importance	Summarizing and Synthesizing	

These strategies are often intertwined but some are more suited to specific reading tasks than others.

4.2. Individual Reading Recovery Program

The Individual Reading Recovery Program (IRRP) is patterned with Catch Them Early (CTE) program by Santos (2001), which can be a good means of such an intervention. This program includes individual tutoring, daily 30 - 45 minute sessions, informal diagnosis and daily/weekly monitoring of progress, reading aloud three books daily supported by a variety of picture books and storybooks, and a tentative support in learning to read.

Individual Tutoring

The IRRP involves individual tutoring. Wasik and Slavin (1993) recommend the one-on-one arrangement as the most powerful form of intervention instruc-

tion. It enables the tutor to plan an individual program for the learner; to closely observe his daily reading and writing behaviors to monitor his progress; and give him full attention. Sitting beside the learner is more reassuring.

If there are other learners in the program, they may get together for story reading by the tutor once a week, either on first day or last day of the week. This allows them to interact with peers who are also experiencing some difficulties in learning to read, and listen together to good reading modeled by the teacher/tutor.

Daily 30 - 45 Minute Sessions

The IRRP tutorial session is held daily for 30 - 45 minutes. Clay's (1990) work with Reading Recovery has shown that briefly daily one-on-one instruction increases the power of intervention. Rowan & Guthrie (1989) confirmed that there is no sufficient research evidence to show that longer intervention sessions held two or three times a week would result in better progress.

Informal Diagnosis and Daily/Weekly Monitoring of Progress

The IRRP uses informal assessment tools to diagnose the learner's reading status, results of which are the basis for designing an intervention plan for the child. These are as follows:

- Book and Print Orientation Record
- Test on Mastery of the Alphabet
- Test on Phonetic Awareness
- Textual Read-Aloud Inventory
- Story Writing

The following assessment tools are administered regularly and recorded systematically:

- Weekly Phonemic Awareness Check
- Daily Textual Read-Aloud Inventory
- Best of the Week in Story Writing

The Weekly Phonemic Awareness Check is given at the end of each week to assess the learner's progress in writing down sounds he/she hears in words.

The Daily Textual Read-Aloud Inventory records the learner's miscues and fix-up strategies he/she uses to correct his/her miscues as he/she reads aloud. The teacher takes note of difficulties for which the learner does not have fix-up strategies and take these up in the Word Identification Phase of the tutorial session. This is done daily.

The Best of the learner's daily story writing is collected weekly and analyzed to monitor his progress in graphically representing his/her own ideas, the quality of the message of his/her stories, and his/her knowledge of print conventions. These are filed in the learner's portfolio.

Supported by a Variety of Picture Books and Storybooks

The learner reads aloud at least three books daily. Thus, the program should be supported by a variety of picture books and storybooks with the following features:

- Use of natural language

- Uncontrolled vocabulary
- Predictable language
- Patterned text
- Rich illustrations
- Large print for easy reading
- Simple storyline

Pictureless versions of popular storybooks may be used to present increasing levels of challenge to the learner and give him/her the chance to use the word identification skills and strategies he/she has gained.

Tentative Support in Learning to Read

The IRRP is not a permanent program. Its duration depends on the learner's progress. Some learners may need 10 - 12 weeks to catch up with their peers in learning to read. Others may need more time. The learner should be continuously monitored by his/her teacher until he/she shows the ability to read as well as his/her classmates who are doing average performance. The learner is not expected to read as well as the best reader in his/her class, but he/she can work towards it.

The IRRP program may not be able to help the learners with speech and hearing difficulties or other disabilities that have to do with learning to read. Such learners should be referred to Specialist.

4.3. Reading Enrichment/Enhancement Program

The enrichment reading program includes, but not limited to the following:

- Profiling of learners.
- Creation of contextualized reading curricula.
- Establishment of reading center/clinic.
- Readathon.
- Drop Everything and Read.
- This can be done by setting aside a 10-minute time every day to read any chosen materials
- Gate password.
- Preparation/development of appropriate, contextualized interesting reading materials read by teachers and learners together (20 minutes).
- Development of supplementary reading materials (print and non-print) for use during classroom reading instruction or intervention.
- Capacity-building of reading teachers in teaching reading.
- Recognizing most effective reading teacher and reading intervention.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that majority of the learners were at the frustration level, hence, a need for improvement of the reading level must be considered in devising development plans for the learners. Also, the perceived causes, origins and attendant variables of the students' read-

ing level were non-mastery of the elements of reading, presence of learners-at-risk, and no culture of reading. The suggested reading programs and activities may form part in the creation of contextualized reading curricula and be used as reading literacy initiatives in the schools. These initiatives are categorized as Literacy Program, Individual Reading Recovery Program and Enrichment/Enhancement Program. These initiatives may be considered by the schools in developing the reading ability of the students. Also, it is recommended that the same study be conducted in our schools divisions to serve as basis of their contextualized reading initiatives.

Acknowledgements

We thank the following supervisors who helped the authors in data gathering: Eduardo P. Ducha, Esmeralda S. Escobar PhD, Rosanna P. Querijero, Emelita T. Angara, Rosalind P. de Mesa, Normita M. Ocampo, Rolando A. Bernardo, Milagros F. Bautista, Charlaw G. Quiben PhD, Estrella D. Neri, Metta DL. Alviarari, Teresita G. Edrada, Jocabet V. Amatorio, Karen M. Garcia, Ernesto R. dela Torre, Domingo R. Uera, Consolacion R. Mercado, Libay A. Lapsot, Raymundo R. David Jr., and Beatrice L. del Campo.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Baydık, B. (2011). Okuma Güçlüğü Olan Öğrencilerin Üstbilisel Okuma Stratejilerini Kullanımı ve Öğretmenlerin Okuduğunu Anlama Öğretim Uygulamalarının İncelenmesi. *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 36, 301-319.
<http://egitimvebilim.ted.org.tr/index.php/EB/article/viewFile/1354/330>
- Beck, I. L., & McKeown, M. G. (2007). Increasing Young Low-Income Children's Oral Vocabulary Repertoires through Rich and Focused Instruction. *The Elementary School Journal*, 107, 251-271. <https://doi.org/10.1086/511706>
- Bender, W. N. (2012). *Öğrenme Güçlüğü Olan Bireyler ve Eğitimleri* (Çev. Edt: Hakan Sarı). Ankara: Nobel.
- Bromley, K. (2007). Nine Things Every Teacher Should Know about Words and Vocabulary Instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50, 528-536.
<https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.50.7.2>
- Claessen, M., Dzidic, P., Boyes, M., Badcock, N., Nayton, M., & Leitao, S. (2020). Educators' Perceptions of the Impact of Reading Difficulties for Young People. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 25, 51-64.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2020.1734952>
- Clay, M. M. (1990). Reading Recovery in the United States: Its Successes and Challenges. In *the American Educational Research Association*, Boston, MA, April 1990. ERIC Number ED 320125.
- Grove, M. C., & Hauptfleisch, H. M. A. M. (1982). *Remedial Education in the Primary School*. Pretoria: HAUM Educational.

- Johnston, R., & Watson, J. (2003). *Accelerating Reading and Spelling with Synthetic Phonics: A Five Year Follow Up*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Executive Education Department; Insight 4.
- Konza, D. (2011). *Research into Practice: Understanding the Reading Process*. <http://www.evokelearning.ca/wp-content/uploads/SA-DECS-Phon-Awareness-doc.pdf>
- Luz, M. J. (2007). *Literature and Literacy: A Nation of Non-Readers*. <https://old.pcij.org/stories/a-nation-of-nonreaders/>
- Moreillan, J. (2007). *Collaborative Strategies for Teaching Reading Comprehension. Maximizing Your Impact*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) (2008). *Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills*. Paris: OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/education/ceeri/teachinglearningandassessmentforadultsimprovingfoundationskills.htm>
- Panerio, R. O. (2008). *Reading Comprehension Skills of Gubat South Central School*. Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, Bicol University Campus.
- Philippine Star (2010). *How Do Filipino Students Rate in Reading?* <https://philstar.com/lifestyle/health-and-family/2010/03/02/553720/how-do-filipino-students-rate-reading>
- Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results from PISA 2018*. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_PHL.pdf
- Reese, E., Sparks, A., & Leyva, D. (2010). A Review of Parent Interventions for Preschool Children's Language and Emergent Literacy. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 10*, 97-117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798409356987>
- Rose, J. (2006). *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading*. DfES. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf>
- Rowan, B., & Guthrie, L. F. (1989). The Quality of Chapter 1 Instruction: Results for a Study of Twenty Four Schools. In R. E. Slavin, N. L. Karweit, & N. A. Madden (Eds.), *Effective Programs for Students at Risk* (pp. 195-219). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Santos, N. (2001). *Catch Them Early: An Handbook on Early Reading Intervention* (3rd ed.). Manila: Little Big Books.
- Sénéchal, M. (1997). The Differential Effect of Storybook Reading on Preschoolers' Acquisition of Expressive and Receptive Vocabulary. *Journal of Child Language, 24*, 123-138. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000996003005>
- Skeat, J., Eadie, P., Ukoumunne, O., & Reilly, S. (2010). Predictors of Parents Seeking Help or Advice about Children's Communication Development in the Early Years. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 36*, 878-887. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2010.01093.x>
- Torgesen, J. K. (2000). Individual Differences in Response to Early Intervention in Reading: The Lingering Problem of Treatment Resisters. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 15*, 55-64. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/SLDRP1501_6
- Wasik, B. A., & Slavin, R. E. (1993). Preventing Early Reading Failure with One-on-One Tutoring: A Review of Five Programmes. *Reading Research Quarterly, 28*, 178-200. <https://doi.org/10.2307/747888>
- Westwood, P. (2008). *What Teachers Need to Know About Reading and Writing Difficulties*. Australia: ACER.