

DEVELOPING THE READING LITERACY AMONG GRADE I LEARNERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to test the effectiveness of an experiment with regard to developing the reading literacy among Grade I learners in the District of Candelaria. This research is quantitative in nature which utilized an experimental design where the experimental group, 99 pupil-participants from public elementary schools in Candelaria, were selected as the study subjects and involved one group pre-test post-test design. The researcher utilized the following literacy strategies: Read-Aloud, K-W-L Charts, Graphic Organizers, Vocabulary Instruction, Writing to Learn, Structured Note-taking, and Reciprocal Teaching and engaged the pupil-participants in multiple readings of the texts over the course of eight weeks. The data gathered is analyzed using frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics, specifically, T-test and One Way Analysis of Variance. The findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the performance of Grade I pupils in their reading competence based on the pre-test and post-test evaluation thus, utilizing a proper intervention can be instrumental in improving pupils' reading comprehension skill. Additionally, the study found out that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of reading competence strategies before and after the activity.

KEYWORDS: *Reading, Literacy, Learners*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

In the Philippine setting, efforts to promote literacy are encouraged by the government, organizations, or even private individuals as the ability to read and write is considered an utmost priority (Cristobal, 2015). In a speech given by the Department of Education's Literacy Coordinating Council OIC, Dina Ocampo, during the 2014 National Literacy Conference and Awards, she emphasized the role of literacy in empowering an individual to interact with the community and realize his worth and what he can do to contribute to the development of the society. According to the result of the 2010 Census of Population and Housing from the National Statistics Office, 97.5% of the 71.5 million individuals who belong to the age group of 10 years and older were literate, showing a significant increment from the 2000 CPH record of 92.3%. There are various literacy-specific initiatives of the Department of Education purposed to improve the literacy rate among students and these are "Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP)", "The Library Hub", "a focus in K-3 Curriculum language development", "The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)", "Journalism program under

Republic Act 7079", and lastly, activities throughout the year which includes Book Week and National Reading Month (Cristobal, 2015).

Reading as defined by Alvermann & Montero (2003) is the process of deriving meaning from written or printed text which includes many components. There are five major areas of reading and these are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Armbruster, B.B, Lehr, F., and Osborn, J., 2001). Reading is one of life's basic skills. It is a basic tool for learning in all subjects. It is a skill that stimulates one to discover the answers to one's existence. It is the cornerstone of one's personal growth and success throughout one's life.

The ability to read is very crucial in this generation because industrialization is taking place which is an extremely powerful force in human affairs. With the bulk of information readily available for everyone, it would be unfortunate if an individual cannot partake of human beings' accumulated experiences and achievement if they cannot read. Similarly, the way a man craves for basic necessities in life, man hungers and succumbs to the promise of new worlds, ideas, philosophy and a vast horizon that could be opened through reading. Reading is the ordinary individual's passport to knowledge, his gate pass to worlds beyond imagination.

Reading is the true backbone of most learning, is it math, science, or even home economics hence, it is immeasurably important. It is expected that as students climb the educational ladder, it is associated with more reading as the subject become more dense and challenging. A study revealed that individuals bring knowledge and skill to their jobs, future studies. Despite the emphasis on the importance of reading, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil IRI) Oral Reading result in 2010 shows a diminishing efficiency in reading skills, especially in the primary grades. This claim was supported by an alarming level, the numbers posted by other online articles by A previous study confirmed that the official performance tests on the high school students in certain 2004-2005 school year showed that only 6.59 percent could read, speak and understand English. Some 44.25 percent had no knowledge of the English language for everyone.

Teachers play a major role in the development of students' reading habits and interests which was repeatedly stressed by many journal articles. Educators make a difference in the success of their students when they demonstrate an earnest passion and believe that all children have the capacity to learn to read and make anything happen with skills and determination. They base their classroom practices on a sound reading theory, utilize different means of instruction available which are purposed to meet the specific learning needs of students, create an organized and stimulating learning environment, and regularly assess their students' reading achievement. Teachers have a pivotal role in helping children to develop and maintain a positive attitude towards learning and literacy. Motivated readers read more, use more complex cognitive strategies, and thus become better readers.

One of the important things teachers need to do is adapt their instruction to match their students' current development in reading, knowing full well that children will need to spend less time developing as they progress, and practicing some skills and more time with others. They are expected to use classroom time more effectively, maximize available resources to spearhead instructions among large-groups, small groups, and individuals. Furthermore, teachers' expectations of and relationships with their students profoundly affect students' learning. This has been widely supported by numerous research studies in literacy that show students are more academically successful when they feel welcomed, esteemed, and provided with materials that challenge them hence, their knowledge, experiences, and interests are enriched. Willis (2000) noted that when these attitudes, behaviors, and curriculum considerations are missing, there is great chance that children may resist learning, especially those who with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This stresses the importance of expectations and relationships between teachers and students in a classroom.

Teachers committed to excellence in reading instruction know that there is no single program or method that is effective for all as there are various considerations an educator must look into. It is of utmost importance that teachers improve their professional knowledge individually and within a team, and view themselves as lifelong, reflective learners thus, they seek out opportunities to expand their knowledge by participating in peer coaching, mentorships, professional reading circles, networking opportunities with colleagues, and literacy workshops and conferences. Additionally, teachers need an ongoing professional development that allows for growth in expertise across all learning areas.

Herbert, Hoover High School in San Diego, California adopted seven (7) specific literacy activities which were found to be effective in developing the love of reading among students. Fisher (2001) enumerated the seven literacy activities and these are read-aloud (or shared reading), K-W-L charts, graphic organizers, vocabulary instruction, writing to learn, structured note-taking, and reciprocal teaching. In the Philippine setting, the Department of Education implemented the K to 12 curriculums which is in line with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, which is to promote and advance literacy; implement programs that will help learners develop their reading skills. Among the programs implemented by the Department of Education are summers reading camps and project D.E.A.R to strengthen the reading skills of the students and immediate slow readers. Additionally, it launched "Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program" last April 10, 2015 to continue to strengthen their reading program.

The study focused on the effectiveness of the experiment in developing the reading literacy among Grade 1 students using the seven reading literacy activities. All data are sourced and collected from Grade 1 students from Uacon Integrated School, Sinabacan Elementary School, and the Candelaria Elementary School.

METHODOLOGY

The research study is quantitative in nature which utilized an experimental design. The experimental group was selected as the study subjects and involved a one group pre-test post-test design. For this study, reading literacy performance was the dependent variable of the study while the seven (7) reading literacy activities such as Read-Aloud, K-W-L Charts, Graphic Organizers, Vocabulary Instruction, Writing to Learn, Structure Note-taking, and Reciprocal Teaching are the independent variables.

The participants of the study were the ninety-nine (99) students from three (3) Grade I classes in Uacon Integrated School, Sinabacan Elementary School, and Candelaria Central Elementary School. The participants belonged from the cream section in Grade I and the experiment was conducted by their teachers.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in three schools in Candelaria District, Schools Division of Zambales. Figure 2 shows the map of the province of Zambales showing the town of Candelaria.

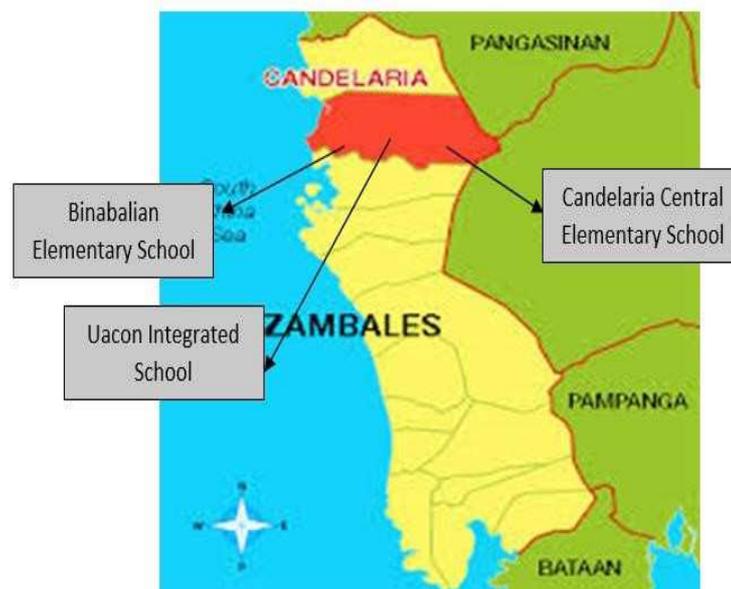


Figure 1: Map Showing the Location of the Schools in the District of Candelaria

Research Instrument

The research instrument was developed and validated by the School Principal, District Supervisor, and Education Program Supervisor who are considered experts in literacy strategies. The Pre-Test/Post-Test reflect the following strategies: Read-Aloud, K-W-L Charts, Graphic Organizers, Vocabulary Instruction, Writing to Learn, Structured Note-taking, and Reciprocal Teaching which undergone item analysis, face and content validation by the above mentioned experts.

Data Analysis

This study utilized descriptive statistics in analyzing collected data. Test for central tendencies was computed and these include the means and standard deviations. The results were sorted out and tallied. Appropriate tables were used in presenting data for variables. For a more empirical standpoint, the researcher utilized T-test to assess whether the means of pre-test and post-test were statistically different from each other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pre-Test and Post-Test Evaluation using Seven Literacy Strategies

Table 1 presents the summary results of the pre-test and post-test evaluation using the seven literacy strategies. For Pre-Test results, the pupils were rated “poor” in a graphic organizer, writing to learn and reciprocal teaching with a mean of 7.05, 7.76 and 7.91 respectively. On the other hand, their performance was “fair” on Reading -Aloud, KWL, and vocabulary study with a weighted mean of 11.34, 10.23, and 25.10 respectively but rated “good” in structured note taking with 6.13 weighted mean.

With regard to Post-Test evaluation, the pupils’ performance was rated “good” in Read-Aloud, graphic organizer and reciprocal teaching manifested in their weighted mean of 18.52, 19.53, and 19.93 while pupils were rated “very good” in KWL, vocabulary study, writing to learn, and structured note taking with weighted mean of 21.69, 45.11, 21.14 and 8.22 respectively.

Data presented manifested the incremental progress of the pupils in developmental reading and writing, which could be attributed to teachers’ dedication aided with the effectiveness of the intervention.

Table 1: Summary for Pre and Post-Test Evaluation

Reading Competence Strategies	Pre-Test			Post-Test		
	Score	\bar{X}	QI	Score	\bar{X}	QI
Read -A-Loud	1123	11.34	Fair	1833	18.52	Good
KWL	1013	10.23	Fair	2148	21.69	Very Good
Graphic Organizer	698	7.05	Poor	1923	19.53	Good
Vocabulary Study	2485.5	25.10	Fair	4465.5	45.11	Very Good
Writing to Learn	768	7.76	Poor	2093	21.14	Very Good
Structure Note Taking	607.5	6.13	Good	813.5	8.22	Very Good
Reciprocal Teaching	783	7.91	Poor	1973	19.93	Good

Differences on the Pre-Test and Post Test Results

The researcher utilized T-test to determine if there are any significant differences between the means of variables or groups. Table 2 shows the t-test value on the result of pre and post-evaluation on the reading competence of Grade I pupils.

Table 2: T-Test Value of Pre-Test and Post-Test Evaluation of Reading Competence

<i>t</i> -Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances	Variable 1 Pre-test	Variable 2 Post-Test
Mean	47.768	79.818
Variance	330.343	134.599
Observations	99	99
Pooled Variance	232.471	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	196	
t Stat	14.789	
t Critical one-tail	1.653	
t Critical two-tail	1.972	

The t-computed value is equivalent to -14.789 which is greater than (>) 1.653 at the 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance hence there is a significant difference in the performance of Grade I pupils in their reading competence based on the pre and post-test evaluation.

The significant difference is attributed to the effectiveness of the intervention used in enhancing the reading competence of the pupils. Additionally, the daily exercises supplemented by varying activities resulted in great impact on reading competence of Grade I pupils. Cekiso (2012) pointed out that a well-developed reading strategy instruction program has a strong positive effect on the English as second language learners’ reading comprehension and reading strategy development which is supported by the findings of this study. In other words, a reader’s reading comprehension skill can greatly improve if a proper intervention is conducted. Pupils in the experimental group exhibited greater improvement in terms of their performance after the intervention in comparison with pupils in the control group who showed no improvement on the comprehension test. This indicates that reading strategy instruction can and does make a contribution in improving students’ performance to the reading comprehension and reading strategy.

Test of Difference in the Effectiveness of the Strategies for Reading Competence

Before the Activity

The computed F value equivalent to 0.753 is less than (<) 2.372 at the 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance. Analysis of Variance revealed that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of the seven (7) strategies for Grade I pupils reading competence before the activity hence, the Null Hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance of Test Differences on the Effectiveness of Strategies for Reading Competence before the Activity

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit	Decision
Between Groups	100183.3	6	16697.22	0.753	2.372	Accept Ho
Within Groups	776206	35	22177.31			Not Significant
Total	876389.3	41				

After the Activity

The computed F value equivalent to **0.015** is less than (<) **2.372** at the 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is Accepted, hence **there is no significant difference** in the effectiveness of the seven (7) strategies for Grade I pupils' reading competence.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance to Test Differences on the Effectiveness of Strategies for Reading Competence after the Activity

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit	Decision
Between Groups	17678.57	6	2946.429	0.015	2.372	Accept Ho
Within Groups	6870519	35	196300.6			Not Significant
Total	6888198	41				

The results of the study revealed that the use of intervention has been proved to be effective in line with the results of the post-test which showed incremental progress among pupils. The use of Read-Aloud, KWL, Graphic Organizers, Vocabulary Instruction, Writing to Learn, Structured Note-taking, Reciprocal Teaching has immensely improved the learning process. Pupils developed a greater sense of reading and writing competence, thereby, have meaningful learning.

Ocampo (2007) has a similar observation, and noted that the requisites of the reading development and performance differ from those who are still learning to read and those who are already able to read moreover, the following are in common: language competence, prior knowledge, connections between the reader and the text, motivation to read and adequate levels of practice in reading. For developing readers, phonological awareness is at the level significant to the orthography to be read; for English, the level of the phoneme; for Filipinos, the level of the syllable, letter knowledge, rapid access of words from the lexicon or dictionary, literacy experiences; for expert readers, knowledge about the words, language comprehension, automatic word recognition, use of strategies to make meaning more efficient, and meaningful reading experience.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the Findings of the Study, Researcher Concludes that:

- The Grade I pupils were assessed to be poor in a graphic organizer, writing to learn, and reciprocal teaching; "fair" in Read-Aloud, KWL and vocabulary and "good" in structured note-taking. On the post-test evaluation,

“very good” in KWL, vocabulary study, writing to learn and structured note taking and “good” in the read-a-loud, graphic organizer, and reciprocal teaching.

- The reading competence of the pupils has improved after the intervention strategy.
- There is a significant difference in the performance of Grade I pupils in their reading competence based on the pre and post-test evaluation.
- There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of the reading competence strategies.

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