

The Effects of Project RePo on Grade 7 Students' Reading Skills and Proficiencies

Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
Doña Basilia S. Quilon
Memorial High School,
Camarines Sur

Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the effects of the school's reading intervention program named Project RePo designed to improve the reading proficiency levels and skills of Grade 7 students. The efficacy of the reading intervention program was examined since the result of tests on the three skills in reading was used to determine the significant difference in pre and post test result. The data on reading proficiencies and skills were determined using the pre and post testing materials adapted from standard set by the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI). The study employed quasi experimental with one group pre- and post-test design. The data were statistically analyzed using percentage technique, measure of skewness, wilcoxon-signed test, t-test dependent, percent increase and kruskal wallis test. All hypothetical questions were interpreted at 5% level of significance. The result of the pretest using the Phil-IRI showed that the majority of the Grade 7 students belonged to the frustration level reading proficiency. Additionally, the significant increase revealed by the tests on the three skills implied improvement in the students' performance. Among the three skills, it is observed that improvement was most evident in reading comprehension while word reading improvement was the least evident. It is then concluded that Project RePo, an intervention given, was effective in enhancing students reading proficiencies and skills. Therefore, it is hereby recommended that schools may use the reading intervention program since it was proven the reading proficiencies of Grade 7 students has improved.

Keywords: *reading skills, reading proficiency level and Project RePo*

Introduction

Reading is a habit where students learn, gain knowledge and develop new skills (Olivar, 2014). In line with the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program, to understand the significance of reading, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented "Every

Child Reader Program" (ECARP), through DepEd Memorandum No.402. s. 2004 and Administrative Order No. 324. This program aims to teach public elementary pupils with planned training in reading and writing to make them independent young readers and writers. The ECARP was part of the ten-point education agenda of the former president Simeon Benigno Aquino III to ensure that the

*Corresponding Author: Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
Doña Basilia S. Quilon Memorial High School, Camarines Sur

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Referred Journal

country's public schools produce well-equipped graduates who could cope with the different challenges in life.

However, the recent trend on research in the field of reading revealed that many high schools report large numbers of students who are reading below their expected level. Studies show that at least one out of five students have significant difficulty in reading acquisition (Therrien, 2004). Over the recent years, the percentage of high school students performing below the basic level in reading rapidly increased. The Division of Camarines Sur admitted that poor academic achievement is clearly shown in the low ratings they receive in the National Achievement Test (NAT). This was the grim revelation of the inconsistent results in the standardized test administered by the Department of Education in small, medium and big elementary schools in Pili West District, Camarines Sur for the 2015-2016 with its dropping average of 59. 42% for small schools, 67. 80% for medium schools, and 56. 38% for big schools.

With the unacceptable numbers of high school students who do not read proficiently, it is imperative for a school to provide the best reading intervention practices to improve both reading fluency and reading comprehension particularly on the 7th grade students because fluency and comprehension are important at this stage of development and early intervention can impact the progression of reading difficulties. Due to its high accountability on reading programs, DBSQMHS is increasingly providing instruction in reading to a large proportion of high school students performing below the basic level. Also,

remedial reading intervention programs are becoming more widespread in the school. Additionally, literature was reviewed systematically in an effort to find the best reading intervention programs to intervene with students who are at-risk of reading disabilities.

The purpose of the study was to determine the reading proficiency levels of Grade 7 students in oral reading based on the Phil- IRI reading scale categorized into three levels: frustration, instructional and independent. Also, this research work was carried out to implement the school's reading intervention program named Project RePo designed to improve the reading proficiency levels of Grade 7 students. Hence, the efficacy of the reading intervention program was examined since the result of tests on the three skills in reading were used to determine the significant difference in the pre and post test result after the implementation of the school's reading intervention program.

Proposed Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy

This study proposed a reading program named Project RePo (Reading is Power) designed to improve the reading proficiency level of the Grade 7 students of DBSQMHS performing below their basic reading level. Project RePo consisted of effective reading interventions as means of solving secondary students' reading problems. In an effort to cast a fairly wide net in my search for reading interventions designed for teaching and learning at high school levels, the researcher also did a hand search on research concerning intervention programs for high school students who find school literacy a challenge. These reading

*Corresponding Author: Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
Doña Basilia S.Quilon Memorial High School, Camarines Sur

interventions focus on the most critical components of reading instruction necessary for students to become proficient readers. These critical components include decoding, word recognition, fluency and comprehension for improving reading proficiency level.

This project RePo which is a game-assisted reading intervention was validated, evaluated and finalized through focus group discussion (FGD) with the faculty of the locale, during the school-based Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions of the school. Reading interventions included in the program have undergone thorough review and analysis by the experts in the field who were composed of one public school district Supervisor, one Teacher-in-Charge, one English coordinator of the school and the keynote speaker during the School-Based Learning Action Cell for Teachers: Focus Group Discussion on Schools Reading Intervention Program. They checked, critiqued and validated the reading interventions. After the validation, the comments, suggestions and recommendations of the validators were incorporated in the revision of the said reading interventions.

Literature Review

The review describes methods and outcomes of individual studies and programs, and places studies in well-justified categories to find patterns that may have broader applicability and may suggest where additional development and research may be most fruitful. A systematic review focused to investigate the effectiveness of interventions designed to support the reading skills of secondary school students.

Reading Interventions which targeted specific skills in reading

With regard to critical component training, one of the studies reviewed was evaluation of Computer Aided Instruction (CAI). In each finding, CAI generally had few effects on reading outcomes. Additionally, Khan and Gorard (2012) reported that previous studies have failed to demonstrate the effectiveness of computer-based instruction as a means of solving illiteracy in reading. On the other hand, Mercer et al. (2000) studied the effects of reading fluency intervention for fluent reading (e.g., repeated reading in phonics, sight phrases and oral reading) and found significant growth in reading level and reading rate. The other studies of fluency focused on improving oral reading fluency, often through word or phrase reading fluency and/or repeated reading. Results were mixed with inconsistent improvements in oral reading fluency compared to baseline (Freeland et al., 2000; Mercer et al., 2000). The data trend from the studies of fluency indicates that increased reading rate and accuracy did not always result in improved comprehension. For educational leaders, the message from these findings is that an intense focus on fluency instruction in reading skills or advanced decoding strategies must be provided to the secondary struggling readers—particularly for students whose word reading skills are exceedingly low. Penney (2002) and Scott and Shearer-Lingo (2002), conducted an experimental word-level study which examined the effects of advanced word reading strategies. Penney (2002) compared a structural analysis approach to typical reading instruction. The effects on word reading were moderate (effect size = 0.43 to 0.48). As indicated by the meta-analysis, word-level interventions are associated with small to moderate effects

*Corresponding Author: Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
Doña Basilia S. Quilon Memorial High School, Camarines Sur

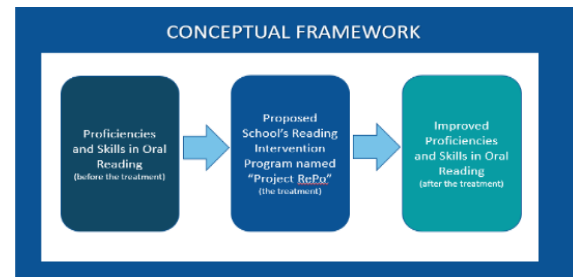
on comprehension. Although the average effect was not significantly different from zero, the small to moderate effect is an important finding, particularly for older students with very low decoding skills who require extensive instruction in word-level skills. It is valuable to know that there is a small to moderate effect for comprehension from word-level interventions.

Moreover, results from the meta-analysis indicated that students with reading difficulties can really improve their comprehension when provided with a targeted reading intervention in comprehension, multiple reading components, and word reading strategies. The synthesis also shows that struggling readers can improve in their reading comprehension when taught reading comprehension practices. This observation should be given a high regard because many struggling readers in older grades (6 through 12) are not provided effective instructions in reading comprehension. Further, the synthesis suggests that explicit instruction in comprehension benefited students with reading related problems.

Finally, students who lack word reading skills must improve these word-level skills while being taught with the process of comprehension so that access to increasingly difficult levels of the rudiments of reading can be achieved.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1
Project RePo



As shown in the diagram, the researcher first determined the current oral reading proficiencies and skills that were acquired by the students using the Phil-IRI data gathering tools before the treatment was implemented.

After getting the reading profile of the students, the researcher then implemented the school's reading intervention program named Project RePo that would improve the said skills. These reading interventions focused on the most critical components of reading instruction necessary for students to become proficient readers. These reading interventions also gave the teachers additional information in improving the proficiencies of the students while reading.

All these efforts led to improved reading skills of the students after the implementation of Project RePo. The analysis and interpretation of the test results gave a clear picture of the reading proficiencies and skills of Grade 7 students.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the effect of the school's reading intervention program named Project RePo designed to enhance the reading proficiency level of Grade 7 students based on their reading profile.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the reading proficiency level of Grade 7 students in oral reading based on the Phil-IRI assessment tool?
2. What is the effect of the implementation of Project RePo in the reading skills of Grade 7 students?
3. What specific skills in oral reading were improved after the implementation of Project RePo?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed 3 months of quasi-experimental research design, covering the administration of pre and posttests and the 15 weeks of conducting 5 sessions of 350 minutes teaching learning process. The design was quasi-experimental with one group pre and posttest design. One single group of 30 students composed the samples of the study. Following this design, the experimental group was measured and observed before and after being exposed to treatment (Project RePo). The implementation of Project RePo that focused on the specific critical component skills such as decoding, word recognition, fluency and reading comprehension was embedded in the group reading lessons. These students were

taken out from their respective classes every afternoon to receive the treatment. The administration of reading interventions involved 1 week of conducting 5 sessions of 60 minutes reading instructions every day. Accordingly, before the implementation of the school's reading intervention program, the group was given the pre reading test. Then after the implementation of the reading interventions, the group was given the post reading test. The difference between posttest over pretest results was considered a positive cause of the improvement of the students' reading skills.

Research Locale

Over the recent years, the percentage of Grade 7 students performing below the basic level in reading increased rapidly. Hence, the study was conducted in this public school in Camarines Sur. Additionally, the school reports a large number of frustrated and nonreaders who demonstrate difficulties in reading. With the increasing numbers of high school students who do not read proficiently, it is imperative for the school to provide the best reading intervention program to improve the reading skills, particularly on the 7th grade students. The skills on decoding, word recognition, fluency and comprehension are important at this stage of development and early intervention can impact the progression of reading difficulties.

Thus, well-evaluated reading interventions that would enable these high school students with poor reading skills to meet the demands of academically challenging tasks are needed to ensure that they would succeed in their work-related reading tasks. In this context, suggesting the importance of ensuring the availability of

*Corresponding Author: Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
Doña Basilia S. Quilon Memorial High School, Camarines Sur

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Referred Journal

reading intervention program is essential for the students to get the proper instruction they need to find success in the rudiments of reading. This serves then as the basis of selecting the school as the locale of the study.

Sampling Technique

The respondents were selected from the three (3) sections of Grade 7 students. There were forty-nine students (24 males, 25 females) from Grade 7- Faith, forty-eight students (30 males, 18 females) from Grade 7- Humility, and fifty-two students (30 males, 22 females) from Grade 7- Prudence. The selection of the respondents was based on scores from Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) test result. Measures of reading comprehension were administered to the three (3) sections of Grade 7 students of the research locale in the first quarter of the school year. Those who qualified had the lowest comprehension skills based on the computed value of comprehension set by the Phil-IRI. Moreover, a simple random sampling technique was utilized to compose the samples of the study. This denoted that all the students who had frustration reading proficiency level based on the computed value of comprehension set by the (Phil-IRI) in the pretest had a legitimate chance of being selected as the respondents of the study. From the eighty (89) students who had frustration reading proficiency level in the pretest, thirty (30) students were randomly assigned using the application software Simplified Statistics for Beginners (SSB) version 1.0.

Data Collection

This research employed the use of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) testing materials in data gathering.

Phil-IRI material was used in determining the level of reading proficiency of the students before and after the implementation of Project RePo. This instrument was used to gather data needed on the reading proficiency levels of the respondents in oral reading. Further, the pre and posttest tests derived from Phil-IRI were used to determine the significant difference of the students' performance in reading before and after the implementation of Project RePo. Moreover, the Phil-IRI testing materials were employed as well to determine the effect of the implementation of Project RePo in the reading skills of Grade 7 students which probed the significant difference in the reading proficiency levels of Grade 7 students before and after the implementation of reading intervention. Furthermore, the same instrument was used to identify the significant increase from the pre and posttest result on the three skills.

Data Analysis

This study performed both inductive and deductive analysis. The researchers read the data quite a few times until the themes emerged. The themes were then analyzed in order to understand the senior high school teachers' lived experiences as out-of-field. Then, the researchers tried to compare and contrast the study's findings with relevant research findings so that they could create situations to establish the new formulated date into prevailing data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The conclusion of the study was derived from the discussion of the findings.

*Corresponding Author: Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
Doña Basilia S. Quilon Memorial High School, Camarines Sur

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Referred Journal

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Levels of Reading Proficiency of Section 1 to Section 3 Students in Oral Reading

Levels of Reading Proficiency in Oral Reading	Sections			Frequency	Percentage (%)
	1	2	3		
Frustration	29	29	31	89	77.39%
Instructional	4	6	10	20	17.39%
Independent	1	2	3	6	5.22%
Total	34	37	44	115	100%

Table 1 disclosed the pretest result of the administration Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) on the reading proficiency level of the respondents. It is revealed that 89 or 77.39% out of 115 Grade 7 students belonged to the frustration level in terms of their reading proficiency. Based on the inventory, about 20 or 17.39% of 115 students belonged to instructional level and it is shown that only 6 or 5.22% of 115 students were able to reach the independent level of reading proficiency. As a general interpretation, an alarming number of frustrated readers were revealed based on the Phil-IRI results.

Table 2

Difference Between the Pretest and Posttest Result of Student with Intervention of Project Repo among the three Skills in Reading

Raw Scores	Critical Components Skills in Reading							
	Word Reading		Fluency (words per minute or wpm)		Reading Comprehension (%)		Reading Proficiency Level	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1.	86	93	70	86	67	83	F	INS
2.	59	90	35	45	67	67	F	INS
3.	89	99	91	133	67	100	F	IND
4.	93	99	147	145	14	86	F	IND
5.	90	96	102	114	50	86	F	INS
6.	81	95	51	82	50	100	F	IND
7.	87	92	76	105	33	100	F	IND
8.	81	90	48	59	50	67	F	INS
9.	81	96	32	57	67	67	F	INS
10.	81	91	65	93	33	83	F	INS
11.	89	96	63	85	17	86	F	INS
12.	86	99	82	144	67	83	F	IND
13.	89	99	120	146	67	83	F	IND
14.	81	90	70	70	33	83	F	INS
15.	88	94	84	111	43	100	F	INS
16.	86	95	70	111	67	83	F	IND
17.	71	83	40	77	83	83	F	INS
18.	81	96	54	104	33	50	F	INS
19.	94	98	78	120	43	71	F	INS
20.	89	95	68	102	43	71	F	INS
21.	87	96	53	85	33	83	F	INS
22.	73	95	59	82	33	83	F	IND
23.	83	96	87	122	71	86	F	INS
24.	89	95	70	82	17	83	F	INS
25.	83	97	103	133	43	86	F	IND
26.	86	92	108	122	43	71	F	INS
27.	89	98	150	182	33	83	F	IND
28.	89	96	87	123	67	83	F	INS
29.	59	80	30	67	83	100	F	INS
30.	93	99	181	111	43	86	F	IND
Average/Mean	83.77	94.67	79.13	103.27	48.67	85.23		
SD	8.40	3.87	34.84	30.50	18.86	11.23		
t-computed	4.79		5.82		8.62			
t-tabular	1.64		1.69		1.69			
Interpretation	Significant		Significant		Significant			

Table 2 shows the findings based on the analysis and examination of the vitality and crucial role of Project Repo on improving students' reading proficiency level in oral reading. The result revealed that there is significant increase in the posttest scores of the students under word reading, (T(28) = 4.79). From the average pretest score of 83.77, students obtained a higher score with an average of 94.67 in their posttest. The T-test results indicate a significant increase from pretest to posttest scores of the students under fluency, (T(28) = 5.82). From an average pretest score of 79.13, the students obtained an average posttest score of 103.27. On the reading comprehension, a similar result was revealed by T-test dependent.

*Corresponding Author: Jeff Jerhon J. Rubi
 Doña Basilia S. Quilon Memorial High School, Camarines Sur

There is a significant increase in the posttest scores of the students, ($T(28) = 8.62$). From the average pretest score of 48.67, students obtained a higher score of 85.23 in their posttest. The significant increase revealed by the tests on the three critical component skills in reading implies improvement in the students' reading performance.

Conclusions

Based on the results, the reading interventions were shown to be most effective in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. Meanwhile, the result showed least improvement on the word reading skills (decoding and word recognition), however, it does not necessarily mean lesser effectiveness of the intervention in reading. It just calls for the teacher's means and ways when employing such a strategy to address problems of students performing below their expected reading level.

It can be concluded that Project RePo was effective in enhancing students' reading proficiency skills. It is then recommended that schools may use the reading program – Project RePo as it was proven that the reading proficiency level of Grade 7 students has improved after implementing the said reading intervention. Also, teachers may implement other reading interventions that may enable high school students with poor reading skills to demonstrate reading progress. Further, the reading interventions in the Project RePo must be implemented for at least one school year to have a more conclusive result.

References

- Freeland, J. T., Skinner, C. H., Jackson, B., McDaniel, C. E., & Smith, S. (2000). Measuring and increasing silent reading comprehension rates: Empirically validating a repeated reading intervention. *Psychology in the Schools, 37*(5), 415-429.
- Khan, M. A., & Gorard, S. (2012). A randomised controlled trial of the use of a piece of commercial software for the acquisition of reading skills. *Educational Review, 64*(1), 21-35.
- Mercer, C. D., Campbell, K. U., Miller, M. D., Mercer, K. D., & Lane, H. B. (2000). Effects of a reading fluency intervention for middle schoolers with specific learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 15*(4), 179-189.
- Olivar, G. (2014). Remember the basic principles of journalism: Retrieved at <https://www.pressreader.com/>.
- Penney, C. G. (2002). Teaching decoding skills to poor readers in high school. *Journal of Literacy Research, 34*(1), 99-118.
- Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual First Edition, 2018
- Scott, T.M. and Shearer-Lingo, A. (2002). The effects of reading fluency instruction on the academic and behavioral success of middle school students in a self-contained EBD classroom. *Preventing School Failure, 46*:167-173.
- Therrien, W. J. (2004). Fluency and Comprehension Gains as a Result of Repeated Reading: A Meta-Analysis. *Remedial and Special Education, 25*(4), 252-261.
- Villareal, R. (2018). Reading Level, Intervention Strategies and Grade VI Public School Pupils in Pili West District of Camarines Sur.
- DepEd Administrative Order No. 324.2004. DepEd Memorandum No.402. s.2004