Strengthening Projects Implementation for Literacy and Numeracy through Design Read 'N Count Habit

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ABSTRACT

This action research strengthened the implementation of Project KATIG (numeracy) and Project LAMBAT (literacy), in support of Project 6B's, by integrating both into the daily class program as the Design Read 'n Count Habit at Cristeta C. Bagano Memorial High School during the second quarter of School Year 2024–2025. An earlier one-hour reading intervention had tired the learners and reduced their attendance, so the activities were redesigned as short 15-minute blocks, signaled by a school buzzer and held regardless of the subject scheduled. The first ring cued Project KATIG and the second ring cued Project LAMBAT. Twenty-five

Grade 7 learners at the deficit level in reading who also needed major support in computing (the "conventional students") were randomly selected from five sections. A mixed-methods design was used: pre- and post-test mean performance scores analyzed with two-way ANOVA, Likert-scale classroom observation, and written reflection journals analyzed phenomenologically.

The mean literacy score rose from 20.24 to 38.08, and the mean numeracy score on the fiveitem test rose from 1.16 to 2.84 (an increase of 1.68). Two sections (Curie and Newton) moved from the deficit to the coping level in reading. The ANOVA showed a significant intervention (interaction) effect ($F = 3.28$, $p = 0.020$), while the difference between literacy and numeracy as skill areas was not significant ($p = 0.910$). Observers rated the participants at about 4.0 to 4.2 on a five-point scale, and the reflections described enjoyment, learning gains, and gratitude toward teachers and parents. The findings suggest that short, daily, buzzer-cued reading and counting practice is a promising way to build literacy and numeracy habits among struggling learners. The researchers recommend continuing the intervention, extending it to higher grade levels, and developing school-based learning materials anchored on Projects KATIG and LAMBAT.

Keywords: Read 'n Count Habit, conventional students, self-paced learning, Project KATIG, Project LAMBAT, literacy, numeracy

INTRODUCTION

Context and Rationale Literacy and numeracy are essential to students' academic performance because they build the skills needed to work with words, numbers, and symbols. They allow learners to maximize their learning, develop their potential, and prepare for life in the real world. According to Regional Director Gilbert B. Sadsad, an estimated 10% of the region's total enrollment from Grade 4 to Grade 10 in School Year 2023–2024 was poor in mathematics and reading (Manjares, 2024). For schools that offer these grade levels, this is a concerning issue.

The Department of Education continues to close literacy and numeracy gaps through interventions and innovative learning materials. Catch-up Fridays, for example, have been implemented to give students dedicated time for reading. In support of these efforts, the regional office and the Division of Masbate Province crafted and implemented programs such as Project 6B's, Project LAMBAT, and Project KATIG. The quality of the intervention materials of these projects was evaluated by education specialists and made available to teachers for standardization. The problem therefore lies not in the materials but in the schedule of implementing each program in the classroom.

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At the start of School Year 2023–2024, Cristeta C. Bagano Memorial High School conducted rapid literacy assessments among its 1,082 learners in Grades 7 to 12. The results showed that 10.63% were at the coping level and 5.08% at the deficit level in reading. The mid-year post-test of the electronic numeracy assessment tool across all grade levels averaged 4.0% at the anchoring level and 2.67% at the emerging level. These data served as the baseline for the school's best practices and innovations. The school provided a daily reading intervention for all coping and deficit readers from 3:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon, supported by the approved school innovation "Drop and Read" (Division Memorandum No. 068, s. 2024), in which learners drop unreadable words as they read at their own pace.

Monitoring and observation showed, however, that learners became overloaded by reading sessions lasting an hour or more, and their attendance reflected a loss of interest. Wulandari (2021) reported that students typically read 0 to 30 minutes a day and that motivation is reduced by limited books, fatigue, boredom, and the cost of books. The same factors were evident in the school's intervention. The language teacher reported that learners tired and bored easily; some asked to be excused for family concerns, and others left class for sanitary reasons and did not return.

These observations prompted the researchers to create a reading and counting habit in a short period of time without compromising the quality of results. Short practice periods are consistent with the literature: lower-ability students who read independently for only 15 minutes showed significant gains in reading speed and vocabulary (Samuels, 2006), and adolescents' attention spans are only about 10 to 15 minutes (Zhu, as cited in Wycombe Abbey International, 2022).

The Innovation The Design Read 'n Count Habit integrates the activities of Project KATIG and Project LAMBAT into the last 15 minutes of class periods each day, for a total of one hour of intervention per day, or five hours per week. By avoiding excessively long reading and counting sessions, the strategy aims to develop learners' interest in reading and counting gradually. The comprehensive rapid literacy assessment for School Year 2024–2025 served as the basis for the intervention, while the continuing progress of students who underwent intervention in School Year 2023–2024 was also monitored.

Objectives and Action Research Questions

The study aimed to support and strengthen the implementation of literacy and numeracy projects through the Design Read 'n Count Habit among Grade 7 students of Cristeta C. Bagano Memorial High School in School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What was the level of performance of the students at the beginning of the school year in (a) numeracy and (b) literacy?

2. What was the level of performance of the students at the end of the intervention in (a) numeracy and (b) literacy?

3. Is there a significant difference between the levels of performance in numeracy and literacy after the strategic intervention? 4. What are the students' perceptions of the reading and counting habit intervention?

METHODS

Research Design

The study was an action research using a mixed-methods approach. The quantitative component used pre-test and post-test mean performance scores, analyzed with a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA, $\alpha = 0.05$), together with Likert-scale classroom observation. The qualitative component used a phenomenological approach, drawing on the participants' written reflection journals to capture their lived experience of the intervention.

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Participants

All Grade 7 students in School Year 2024–2025 took part in the class-wide activity, but the study focused on the conventional students: those identified through the comprehensive rapid literacy assessment and the electronic numeracy assessment test as being at the deficit level in reading and needing major support in computing and solving. There are five sections of 35 to 40 students each. Five conventional students were randomly selected from each section, for a total of 25 participants. No student in the sixth section, Einstein, was at the deficit level, so it contributed no participants. Students at the established level in reading were not the focus of the study; they worked at their own pace using the same project materials, and the researchers did not reveal learners' categories to the class.

The Intervention

The intervention was implemented in the second quarter of School Year 2024–2025. For 15 minutes within the teacher's lesson, regardless of the subject scheduled, a buzzer signaled the teacher to end the lesson and shift to a project activity. The first ring signaled Project KATIG, and the second ring signaled Project LAMBAT. The activities ran daily to build the reading and counting habit of conventional students and to enhance the skills of established students. The researchers used the intervention materials of the two projects as integration of the lesson, allowing self-paced learning among established students while giving thorough assistance to conventional students.

Table 1. Design of the Read 'n Count Habit intervention

Project	Focus	Competency covered	Facilitator
KATIG	Numeracy: computing and solving	Mathematics 7 (MATATAG): perform operations on rational numbers	Lead researcher and the co-researcher specializing in mathematics
LAMBAT	Literacy: reading	English 7 (EN7LIT-II-1): analyze literary texts as expressions of individual or communal values within tone and mood	Co-researcher

Note. Each project ran for 15 minutes per cue, signaled by a school buzzer. The schedule of implementation and the competencies covered are in Appendix D of the original report.

Instruments

- **Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (English).** Used at the beginning and end of the intervention to measure literacy; issued through Regional Memorandum No. 363, s. 2023.
- **Electronic Numeracy Assessment Tool (e-NAT).** Used as baseline data for numeracy; issued through Regional Memorandum No. 133, s. 2022. Participants' lowest rating, 13.67 in computing and solving, was interpreted as needing major support.
- **Project KATIG Worksheet 1-A.** A five-item test administered as the numeracy pretest and post-test.
- **Likert-scale observation tool (Appendix B) and observation form (Appendix C).** Used by the observer teacher, the assigned master teacher, during classroom observation. Corrective measures noted by the facilitators were addressed ethically as directed by the school head or the lead researcher.
- **Reflection journal.** Given to every student, participant or not, to collect the advantages and disadvantages of the activity.

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Data Gathering Procedure

The class program for School Year 2024–2025 was crafted to include the project interventions, and signal devices (buzzers) were installed within the school premises to ensure that the activity started at the same time in all classes. The pre-test results of the rapid literacy assessment and the electronic numeracy assessment determined the participants. Each participant and the parent or guardian was informed of the results and of the intervention and monitoring, and signed the letter to the parent (Appendix E). The pre-test and post-test were attested by the language teacher and the numeracy teacher.

Data Analysis

Mean performance scores were computed per section for the pre-test and post-test in literacy and numeracy. A two-way ANOVA tested differences by section, by skill area (literacy versus numeracy), and their interaction, which the researchers interpreted as the effect of the intervention. Observation ratings were summarized as mean scores, and the reflection journals were read for common experiences and meanings.

Ethical Considerations

To protect confidentiality, only the participant and the parent or guardian were informed of the pre-test results, and learners' categories were not disclosed to classmates. Participation in the reflection journal was voluntary, and the choice of students who declined to write a reflection was respected. Parental consent was documented through the signed letter to the parent.

RESULTS

Level of Performance at the Beginning of the Intervention

Literacy

Table 2 shows the baseline literacy performance of the 25 students at the deficit level in the five sections of Grade 7. They had a mean performance score of 20.24. Section Curie had the highest mean (21.60), followed by Hawking (21.40), Edison (21.00), Newton (19.20), and Maxwell (18.00).

Table 2 Level of performance in literacy at the beginning of the intervention

Section	**Frequency (n)**	**Mean**
Curie	5	21.60
Maxwell	5	18.00
Newton	5	19.20
Edison	5	21.00
Hawking	5	21.40
Einstein	0	0.00
Total	**25**	**20.24**

Note. Section Einstein had no student at the deficit level and therefore no participants.

Numeracy

The five-item Project KATIG Worksheet 1-A pre-test yielded a mean score of 1.16 (Table 3). Section Maxwell was highest with 2.20, followed by Edison (1.20), Newton (1.00), Hawking (0.80), and Curie (0.60). These results confirm that the participants needed major support in computing and solving.

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Table 3. Level of performance in numeracy at the beginning of the intervention (5-item test)

Section	Frequency (n)	Mean
Curie	5	0.60
Maxwell	5	2.20
Newton	5	1.00
Edison	5	1.20
Hawking	5	0.80
Total	**25**	**1.16**

Level of Performance at the End of the Intervention

Literacy

The mean literacy score increased from 20.24 at the pre-test to 38.08 at the post-test, a gain of 17.84 points (Table 4). Sections Curie (48.80) and Newton (45.60) moved from the deficit to the coping level, while Maxwell (25.20), Edison (43.40), and Hawking (27.40) remained at the deficit level, although their mean scores were higher than at the pre-test. The largest gains were in Curie (+27.20), Newton (+26.40), and Edison (+22.40); Maxwell (+7.20) and Hawking (+6.00) gained least.

Table 4 Literacy performance of students at the deficit level, pre-test and post-test

Section	n	Pre-test mean	Pre-test level	Post-test mean	Post-test level	Gain
Curie	5	21.60	Deficit	48.80	Coping	27.20
Maxwell	5	18.00	Deficit	25.20	Deficit	7.20
Newton	5	19.20	Deficit	45.60	Coping	26.40
Edison	5	21.00	Deficit	43.40	Deficit	22.40
Hawking	5	21.40	Deficit	27.40	Deficit	6.00
Total	**25**	**20.24**	**Deficit**	**38.08**	**Deficit**	**17.84**

Note. Gains were computed from the reported pre-test and post-test means.

Numeracy

The mean numeracy score increased from 1.16 to 2.84, an average increase of 1.68 points (Table 5). Section Curie gained the most (2.20), followed by Hawking (1.80), Maxwell (1.60), and Newton and Edison (1.40 each). Section Maxwell, which had the highest pre-test mean, also had the highest post-test mean (3.80).

Table 5. Numeracy performance of students needing major support in computing and solving, pre-test and post-test (5-item test)

Section	n	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Increase
Curie	5	0.60	2.80	2.20

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Maxwell	5	2.20	3.80	1.60
Newton	5	1.00	2.40	1.40
Edison	5	1.20	2.60	1.40
Hawking	5	0.80	2.60	1.80
Total	**25**	**1.16**	**2.84**	**1.68**

Difference Between Numeracy and Literacy Performance After the Intervention

Table 6 presents the two-way ANOVA at $\alpha = 0.05$, and Table 7 presents the post-test section means entered in the analysis. The section effect ($F = 3.26$, $p = 0.021$) and the interaction effect ($F = 3.28$, $p = 0.020$), which the researchers interpret as the effect of the intervention, were both significant. The p-value for the skill-area (columns) effect was 0.910, which exceeds α, indicating no significant difference in performance level between literacy and numeracy. In practical terms, high performance in one skill area did not go together with high performance in the other across sections.

Table 6 Two-way ANOVA of post-test performance

Source of variation	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F**	**p-value**	**F crit**
Sample (section)	1,199.72	4	299.93	3.26	0.021	2.61
Columns (literacy and numeracy)	15,172.82	1	15,172.82	164.76	0.910	4.08
Interaction (intervention)	1,209.08	4	302.27	3.28	0.020	2.61
Within	3,683.60	40	92.09			
Total	**21,265.22**	**49**				

Table 7. Post-test mean performance by section (as entered in the ANOVA)

Section	**Literacy**	**Numeracy**
Curie	48.8	3.4
Maxwell	25.2	3.8
Newton	45.6	2.4
Edison	43.4	4.0
Hawking	27.4	2.6

Note. [Authors: the Curie (3.4) and Edison (4.0) numeracy values differ from the post-test means in Table 5 (2.8 and 2.6). Please verify before submission.]

The section data illustrate this pattern. Section Curie had the highest literacy mean (48.8, coping level) but not the highest numeracy mean. Section Newton rose from deficit to coping in literacy (45.6) yet had one of the lowest numeracy means (2.4). In contrast, Section Maxwell reached a numeracy mean of 3.8 but remained at the deficit level in literacy (25.2), although its literacy score was higher than at the pre-test.

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The significant interaction effect (p = 0.020) shows that the intervention made a difference in the performance of the students. On this basis, the researchers recommend continuing and disseminating the intervention to support Projects KATIG and LAMBAT, not only in Grade 7 but in higher grade levels as well, and developing school-based learning materials anchored on both projects.

Observed Performance of Conventional Students

Using the Likert-scale observation tool, the observer teacher rated the conventional students after the intervention (Table 8). Satisfaction or pleasure in reading and counting received the highest mean rating (4.24), an indicator that the participants found enjoyment in the activities. Participants also used the 15-minute period well, often exceeding it (4.20), which suggests that the time was used effectively and that reading and counting were gradually becoming a habit. Frequently asking the teacher for help (4.16) showed that students recognized their own areas of difficulty in computing and actively sought assistance, which may indicate a desire to improve.

Table 8 Observed performance of conventional students

Indicator	**Mean rating**
Shows satisfaction or pleasure in reading and counting	4.24
Consumes the 15 minutes for reading or counting	4.20
Frequently asks the teacher to facilitate reading or counting	4.16
Shows excitement at the buzzer's ring	4.04
Collaborates with peers on difficult mathematical problems	4.04
Collaborates with peers on difficult words to read	4.00
Improves reading or counting ability	4.00

Note. Ratings are on the five-point scale of the observation tool (Appendix B).

Excitement at the buzzer's ring was rated 4.04. Observers noted that most participants initially showed little interest, but their excitement grew after the venue was transferred to the senior high school building. Collaboration on difficult mathematical problems (4.04) and on difficult words (4.00) was similar, suggesting that the participants prefer to work with peers and are willing to seek help and contribute to group efforts. The overall rating for improvement in reading or counting ability was 4.00.

Perceptions of the Participants

Table 9 presents the participants' written reflections in their original words, with a free English gloss. Four common threads emerged: (a) enjoyment of the daily afternoon sessions, (b) a sense of learning more in reading, English, and mathematics, (c) gratitude toward teachers and parents, and (d) motivation to study harder. One participant also mentioned occasionally missing sessions because of boxing practice, and feeling shy and afraid at times despite being happy.

Table 9. Reflections of participants after the intervention

No.	**Reflection (original)**	**English gloss**
1	"Ang aking natutunan ay ang pag maynos at ang pabasa ng mga babasahin na aklat. Salamat po sa pagtuturo sa kin ng pagbasa sa araw araw na pagpunta ko sa reading at	"What I learned is [subtraction] and reading books. Thank you for teaching me to read every day I go to reading and counting. Thank

	counting maraming salamat po sa inyo.ng lahat at sana marame pa kayong maturuan."	you very much, everyone, and I hope you can teach many more."
2	"Ang aking na experience ay maramin akong natutunan sa mga pinagagawa sa aming mga guro at dahil tinuruan kami na mag basa at mag math at maraming marami akong natotohan sa mga tinuturo sa aming guro."	"What I experienced is that I learned a lot from what our teachers made us do, because we were taught to read and do math, and I learned so much from what our teachers teach."
No.	**Reflection (original)**	**English gloss**
3	"Ang naramdaman ko kapag 3:15pm ay masaya ako kasi maraming maraming akong natotonan at nadadagdagan ang aking kaalaman at masaya ako kasi maraming natotonan ako at sisikapin ko pa ang pag aaral para sa aking magolang at para makabawi ako sap ag hihirap ng aking mga kapatid at sa laang aking gabay at maraming salamat po sa mga goro kasi marami akong natutunan at sa aking ama at ina at gostong gusto ko kapag 3:15 pm kasi gusto ko madagdagan ang aking kaalaman salamat sa mga guro at magolang."	"At 3:15 pm I feel happy because I learn so much and my knowledge grows. I will study even harder for my parents and to make up for the hardship of my siblings and for my guide. Thank you to the teachers because I learned a lot, and to my father and mother. I really like 3:15 pm because I want to add to my knowledge. Thank you to the teachers and parents."
4	"Ang na experience ko masaya at natoto ako ng english at mathematics hindi man po ako nakakarating minsan dahil may practice ako sa boxing nakakahiya man at nakakatakot masaya man kong minsan."	"My experience was happy, and I learned English and mathematics. I cannot always attend because I have boxing practice. It is embarrassing and frightening, but sometimes I am happy."
5	"Naga sulod ako taga hapon sa pagbasa at math para makaaram sa pagbasa at mayo maka aram"	"I attend every afternoon for reading and math so that I can learn to read…" [Bikol/Bisaya; second clause unclear]

Note. Reflections are quoted verbatim, including spelling. English glosses are free translations and are approximate. [Authors: please verify the translations, especially Nos. 1 and 5.]

These reflections were the motivation for the researchers to continue implementing the Design Read 'n Count Habit and to share the results with interested co-teachers, including at the district learning action cell.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings Participants' mean literacy score nearly doubled (20.24 to 38.08), and their numeracy score more than doubled on the five-item test (1.16 to 2.84). Two of the five sections moved from the deficit to the coping level in reading. The significant interaction effect ($p = 0.020$) is consistent with the researchers' view that the intervention contributed to these changes. Because there was no comparison group, however, the gains should be described as associated with the intervention rather than proven to be caused by it.

The results support the rationale of the study. A 15-minute daily block fits the short attention span of adolescents, and the earlier concern that long sessions erode interest (Wulandari, 2021) was not seen in the observation data: students found pleasure in the activity, used the full period, and often exceeded it. This agrees with the finding that even brief independent reading can produce meaningful gains for lower-ability readers (Samuels, 2006).

Gains were uneven across sections. Curie and Newton made large literacy gains, while Maxwell and Hawking made small ones. Gains in one skill did not predict gains in the other: Maxwell had strong numeracy results but remained at the deficit level in literacy. This is consistent with the non-significant difference between skill areas and indicates that literacy and numeracy need to be monitored and supported separately for each learner.

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The reflection journals add the learners' point of view: they described enjoyment, learning, and gratitude, and expressed a desire to study harder. They also revealed real barriers to participation, such as competing activities (boxing practice) and feelings of shyness or fear, which teachers should address. The move of the venue to the senior high school building appeared to raise excitement, suggesting that a change of setting may help sustain interest.

Limitations

- The sample was small (25 learners) and drawn from one school, and the intervention lasted a single quarter.
- There was no control or comparison group, so improvement cannot be separated from regular instruction, maturation, or the effect of being observed.
- Literacy (rapid literacy assessment) and numeracy (a five-item test) were measured on very different scales, which limits direct statistical comparison between them.
- Results were reported at the section level; individual-level movement across reading levels was not reported.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue the Design Read 'n Count Habit in Grade 7 and extend it to higher grade levels to support the implementation of Projects KATIG, LAMBAT, and 6B's.
- Introduce randomized control group to isolate the intervention's true impact from normal classroom growth.
- Expand sample size across multiple grade levels. Test the normality of the data using Shapiro Wilk-Test.
- Reconcile the current numeracy score discrepancies between the text and ANOVA tables
- Replace five-item quiz with comprehensive, standardize numeracy test to allow uniform tracking.
- Develop school-based learning materials anchored on Projects KATIG and LAMBAT.
- Track individual learners' progress across reading levels and use a longer numeracy test with an adequate number of items in future cycles, preferably with a comparison group.
- Vary the venue and activities to sustain excitement, and provide flexible support for learners with schedule conflicts or low confidence.
- Disseminate the results through the School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) and the district learning action cell, and encourage teachers to conduct action research on literacy and numeracy.

Conclusion

Integrating 15-minute daily reading and counting activities into the class program through the Design Read 'n Count Habit was associated with higher literacy and numeracy scores among Grade 7 conventional students, was enjoyed by the learners, and was feasible within the existing class schedule. The researchers conclude that the strategy is a promising, low-cost way to strengthen the implementation of Projects KATIG and LAMBAT, and that its effectiveness will be greatest when reading and counting become a regular habit of the students.

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APPENDIX A. DISSEMINATION ACTION PLAN

The researchers will disseminate the results through the School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) in a workshop-training session, and will encourage interested teachers to conduct action research on literacy and numeracy issues inside and outside the classroom.

Training title

Training Workshop on Strengthening Projects Implementation for Literacy and Numeracy

Through Design Read ‘n Count Habit

Objectives

The participants shall be able to:

- Introduce the Design Read ‘n Count Habit to strengthen the implementation of Project KATIG and Project LAMBAT;
- Disseminate the results of the study to address literacy and numeracy; and
- Craft action research anchored on Project KATIG and Project LAMBAT.

Target participants

All teaching personnel of Cristeta C. Bagano Memorial High School. The facilitators are the lead researcher and co-researchers.

Table A1. Activities and timeline

Phase / activity	**Expected output**	**Date**
Approval of training proposal from the SDO	Approved training proposal	January 10, 2025

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Convening with the L&D Coordinator and the researchers	Program of activity; assigned technical working group	January 15, 2025
Preparation of school memorandum and training materials	School memorandum, attendance sheet, presentations, certificates	January 17, 2025
Conduct of the SLAC training workshop	Accomplishment report, attendance, and other means of verification	February 7, 2025
Evaluation of the training workshop	Monitoring and evaluation forms	February 7, 2025

Table A2. Program of activities, February 7, 2025

Time	**Activity**	**Resource person**
7:30–8:30	Registration	
8:30–9:30	Opening program	
9:30–10:15	Overview of DO 16, s. 2017: Research Management Guidelines and legal basis	Edmundo C. Escape Jr.
10:15–10:30	Health break	
10:30–11:45	Objectives and methods of the study	Daisy J. Abantas
11:45–1:00	Lunch break	
1:00–3:30	Results and findings of the study	Michelle B. Tagala
3:30–4:30	Ways forward	
4:30–5:00	Closing	L&D Coordinator

Table A3. Training budget (MOOE)

Item	**Quantity**	**Unit cost (Php)**	**Total (Php)**
Food for participants and resource persons	50 persons	100.00	5,000.00
Training materials: bond paper, A4	2 reams	280.00	560.00
Contingency: generator fuel (in case of brownout)	10 liters	62.40	624.00
Total			**6,184.00**

Note. The training will be evaluated using the Monitoring and Evaluation Tool (Annex 6.d), a five-point agreement scale with 10 session items and 9 facilitator items, plus comments and suggestions.

Appendix B. Financial Report

Financial statement of Design Read ‘n Count as of December 9, 2024.

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Table B1. Financial statement

Item	**Amount (Php)**
Cash from MOOE	3,365.00
Less: Expenses	
Buzzer	500.00
Bond paper, 5 reams	1,480.00
Ink (4 colors)	1,300.00
Folder (short), 5 pcs	50.00
Expanded envelope	35.00
Total expenses	3,365.00
Ending balance	**0.00**