

Improving the Reading Performance of Key Stage 3 Learners Through Home Reading Sessions (School Level) At The Domalandan Center Integrated School

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ABSTRACT

Reading is the foundation of all learning. Its significance to children's success in school and in life has made it even more imperative for teachers and parents to ensure that this foundational skill is attended to and developed per reading benchmarks. Undeniably, the new learning setup that stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic and paved the way for the hybrid delivery of curriculum brought to the fore concerns on learning losses where literacy is concerned. It underscored the need for mechanisms that will ensure the continuity of education and address as well the difficulties encountered by the learners in the new normal. For the reading teachers, their utmost concern was the intervention needed for learners with reading difficulties. It was in this context that home reading sessions was organized as intervention in addressing the reading difficulties of the Grades 7- 10 learners who were assessed as struggling readers. This intervention involved the participation of the parents or the learning facilitators as reading partners. Consequently, this study that looked into the influence of the said intervention, home reading sessions, in improving the reading ability of the high school struggling readers reveal that it yielded significant results. As a result, the reading ability of the struggling readers improved after the conduct of home reading sessions. It is hereby recommended that teachers optimize the tapping of parents as partners in programs with the end in view of enhancing the literacy skills of the learners.

Keywords: home reading sessions, literacy, new normal, reading, struggling readers

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Now more than ever, the impact of lockdowns on children's education has become evident. The United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) joint report in April 2021 with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) and the World Bank titled "Where are We on Education Recovery?" reveal that less than 15 percent of school children in the Philippines, or about three in every 20, can read simple texts. This has been accounted in large part to the schools' closure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Undeniably, learners are severely behind in reading. Such was the findings of the studies by researchers at Stanford Graduate School of Education in 2021 which provided new evidence about the impact of the pandemic on learning accounting for losses in reading. Add to this the Filipino learners' dismal performance in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment where the Philippines ranked the lowest among 79 countries in reading. Equally, the 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) Program indicated in the Main Regional Report revealed that only 10% of our Grade 5 students met the proficiency standards of reading. It can be said that the literacy crisis did not start with the pandemic. Rather, the pandemic has compounded the literacy crisis.

For the Department of Education (DepEd), such lackluster performance of the Filipino learners in

international assessments resulted to addressing curriculum and learning gaps in the basic education particularly where their literacy and numeracy skills are concerned. The agency reinforced its reading programs across all levels and contextualized in the school level to address the learners' declining reading skills compounded by the absence of face-to-face classes. Equally, the development or enhancement of their reading fluency or the ability to quickly and accurately read aloud largely stopped after the abrupt school closures brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the Domalandan Center Integrated School (DCIS), results of reading assessments conducted in the last week of September 2021 revealed the secondary learners' declining performance in reading. As such, results of the said reading assessment indicated high school learners across grade levels whose reading difficulties had them classified or identified as struggling readers. Moreover, their comprehension of content words in their different subjects were observed to be poor. Analogous to this, their performance in class was affected by their comprehension skills and poor reading skills.

Given the context in which instruction was carried out in the hybrid delivery of the curriculum and the data on the learners' literacy, the DCIS has reinforced its reading program. The proponent backed the school's reading program, Enhancing the Art of Reading, with a corresponding intervention. The participation of the parents or of the learners' identified learning facilitators has been tapped as reading partners. They were ably guided by the reading teachers in the concerned grade level. This was on account of the restrictions imposed by the government on the conduct of face-to-face classes as well as of mass gatherings or where the observance of physical distancing was compromised.

With the conduct of the Pre-reading assessment, it was noted that 30 among the 735 Junior high school students of Domalandan Center Integrated School were struggling readers. Most of them were under printed modality. Thus, home reading sessions was devised, both as an intervention and as a strategy, in attending to the literacy needs of the 30 struggling readers in Grades 7 to 10.

According to Richardson (2018), reading sessions done at home by the parents is a guided reading strategy that helps children who struggle with reading and in comprehending what is being read. Mc Chure (2019) upheld such observation in a study he conducted on the impact of consistently reading to children at home as it helped children become more aware of how print works and better able to create meaning. Likewise, Salcedo (2020) maintains how home reading sessions facilitate learning and enhance literacy. It was in this context that this study was conducted. It looked into the influence of home reading sessions as a strategy in improving the reading performance of the key stage 3 learners at Domalandan Center Integrated School during the school year 2021 – 2022.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to improve the reading performance of key stage 3 learners at Domalandan Center Integrated School through home reading sessions during the school year 2021 -2022.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of reading performance of the key stage 3 learners before the intervention?
2. What is the level of reading performance of the key stage 3 learners after the intervention?
3. What is the significant difference on the level of reading performance of the key stage 3 learners before and after using home reading sessions?

INNOVATION, INTERVENTION, STRATEGY: Home Reading Session

Home reading session was an intervention intended for the 30 key stage 3 struggling readers of

DCIS whose preferred learning delivery modality kept them from accessing reading materials or guided reading sessions online.

Prior to the implementation of the intervention, the researcher reassessed the reading level of the identified struggling readers of DCIS students during the last year's reading assessment. For the incoming grade 7 students, the researcher coordinated with the reading teachers of the catchment areas of DCIS. To verify the given data the researcher gave a survey to be answered by the parents as to the reading ability of their children. Follow up calls were conducted to check the assessment done by the parents.

With this intervention, the researcher and the reading teachers brought with them their reading kit, activity sheets and other instructional materials in the designated learning area / home to conduct reading sessions. Schedule was agreed upon by the parents and the researcher to ensure that protocols were observed and met.

Health and other safety protocols were the top priority in conducting this intervention to ensure that researcher, student and the family members were safe.

Due to the challenges brought about by the pandemic and the socio-economic status of the students under the reading program, the researcher adhered to the Inter- Agency Task Force (IATF) guidelines and health protocols as to the conduct of the home reading sessions.

The researcher coordinated with the barangay officials for protocol purposes. Provided that the parents gave their permissions to the conduct of home reading sessions, the researcher oriented the parents on their roles as reading facilitators/partners of the school and the reading program. Home reading sessions were done once a week for every student under the reading program with at least 1 – 2 hours per session using the reading kits, interventions and reading activity sheets of the school. Home reading session materials were adapted and modified from other reading materials or references to better suit the capabilities of the students under the program. Parents were tapped to monitor the students' home reading activities and served as a guide if needed.

Just like in clinical filing, each student had individual folders to keep notes on their developmental needs and improvement during the sessions. Updates and weekly accomplishments of the program were also posted on projectearreloaded.com, the official reading website of Domalandan Center Integrated School. Posttest was conducted to assess the reading performance of the students after the implementation of the intervention.

Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions or Online "Kumustahan" were also conducted to keep track on the improvement of the students in terms of reading; effectivity of the implemented reading interventions and convened on how to improve the program based on the experiences that they had on the program's implementation.

ACTION RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test control group design was used in this study. A quasi-experimental study is a type of evaluation which aims to determine whether a program or intervention has the intended effect on the study's participants (Moore, 2014). A single group design was used in this study. The multiple-choice test scores for the experimental group were compared before and after their exposure to the intervention.

Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

Thirty (30) Grades 7 – 10 learners of Domalandan Center Integrated School identified as struggling readers during the pretest served as the subjects of this study. They were chosen as respondents of the study as they were under the reading program, of which the researcher served as the coordinator. The respondents, which comprised 23 males and 7 females, were from Grade 7 – 10. Likewise, DCIS was selected by means of convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, the selection of subjects from the population is based on easy availability or accessibility.

Data Gathering Methods

In order to conduct the study and collect data from the struggling readers in Grades 7 – 10 under the reading program during the academic year 2021–2022, the researcher coordinated the investigation's conduct with the Principal of the Domalandan Center Integrated School in Lingayen, Pangasinan. A letter duly signed by the researcher was given to the Principal. In addition to ensuring confidentiality during the study's conduct, the researcher clarified the study's objectives and methodology.

The principal of Domalandan Center Integrated School and a master teacher from the Senior High School Department content validated a 30-item teacher-made test, which was used as a tool for both pretest and posttest before and after the intervention.

The researcher was able to select the appropriate respondents for this study with the use of the administration of a pretest for students' reading performance and abilities from Grades 7 – 10. Prior to the conduct of the home reading sessions, proper orientation to the students, and their parents was done by the researcher. Furthermore, there was a prepared schedule on when to conduct the study.

After the intervention, the researcher determined the significant difference before and after the exposure of the students to the intervention. After which, the data gathered through the posttest were analyzed and treated with appropriate statistical tools.

Ethical Standards

According to Zukauskas, et al. (2018), research ethics are closely related to social responsibility's ethical principles. This research covers a broad context of working with people. The researchers raised a task to gain confidence in the respondent's eyes, receive reliable data, and ensure the transparency.

Autonomy. The researchers obtained informed agreement and approval from the participants before conducting the research process. The researchers clarified the purpose of the research and gained a consent form.

Confidentiality. The researchers guaranteed the respondents that they would not disseminate the results they are working on during the research process. If the researchers disseminate the information, they need to ask permission from the study participants. The researchers will protect participants' data. Therefore, the information results and gathered data will be kept and protected.

Anonymity. The researchers guaranteed that they would respect the respondents' or participants' privacy during the research process. The participants' identification was protected, and they are given freedom if they wanted to withdraw from the study if they feel uncomfortable during the research process. Therefore, the gathered information and data will be kept private and protected.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTION

This section presents the level of reading performance of the struggling readers in English of DCIS from Grades 7- 10 based on the results of the pretest and posttest. The 30- item content validated teacher-made test in English was administered to the learners before and after the conduct of the intervention, home reading sessions. The results of the level of reading performance of the said struggling readers in English based on the results of the pretest and posttest as well as the difference in their levels of reading ability before and after their exposure to the intervention are presented in the foregoing tables.

Table 1 Level of Reading Performance of Key Stage 3 Learners Before Exposure to the Intervention

Score	Frequency	Descriptive Equivalent	Percentage
0-10	17	Poor	56.7
11-20	13	Satisfactory	43.3
21-30	0	Outstanding	0.0
Total	30		100
Mean		9.53	
Standard Deviation		3.8360	

From the data in Table 1, it can be seen that majority of the struggling readers in Grades 7- 10 at DCIS (17 or 56.7 %) have had their level of reading performance in English assessed as poor per results of the given multiple test prior to the conduct of home reading sessions. Also, the data in Table 1 reveal that there were 13 learners (43.3%) whose level of reading performance based on their performance in the test was found satisfactory while none or zero (0) proved to be outstanding. The results of the study bring to the fore what the Deped Order No. 12, s. 2020 or the Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan underscored in its mechanisms for addressing the literacy skills of the learners in the context of the new normal. Thus, reading program that tapped the assistance of the parents as reading partners was proposed to ensure that home reading sessions were carried out to address the reading difficulties of the learners, especially the struggling readers. Equally, the results uphold what Richardson (2018) maintains about reading interventions or strategies that tapped on the parents to read to their children at home as the conduct of home reading sessions is deemed a helpful strategy in helping children who struggle with reading and in comprehending what they read.

Table 2 Level of Reading Performance of Key Stage 3 Learners After Exposure to Home Reading Sessions

Score	Frequency	Descriptive Equivalent	Percentage
0-10	0	Poor	0.0
11-20	3	Satisfactory	10.0
21-30	27	Outstanding	90.0
Total	30		100
Mean		24.23	
Standard Deviation		2.7164	

A study of the data in Table 2 as to how the Key Stage 3 struggling readers fared in the posttest after the conduct of home reading sessions indicate a marked improvement in their level of reading performance as evidenced by their improved performance. It can be noted, too, that there was none or zero (0) learners whose performance was poor while there were only 3 or 10.0% whose performance were assessed as

satisfactory

It is noteworthy that there was an increase in the number of learners whose reading ability and/or performance in the posttest in English was outstanding after the conduct of home reading sessions. Moreover, results show that there were 27 or 90.0% learners whose scores or performance in the posttest equates to a reading ability of outstanding as shown in the data. Consequently, an increase in the statistical data relative to the mean (9.53 to 24.23) is also noted. The increase in the mean is reflective of an increase in the level of performance of the high school struggling readers in the posttest in English.

The results corroborate parallel studies on the impact of home reading session as a strategy in improving the reading performance of the key stage 3 learners. It brings to the fore the good there is to the utilization of such in addressing the literacy needs of the learners in English as supported by Mc Chure (2019) and upheld by Salcedo (2020) who underscored how home reading sessions facilitate learning and enhance literacy.

Table 3 Significance in the Reading Performance of the Key Stage 3 Learners in English Before and After Exposure to Home Reading Sessions

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Remarks (0.05)
30	9.53	3.8360			
30	24.23	2.7164			
			-16.8412	0.000	Significant

The data in Table 3 calculated the difference between the means, 9.53 and 24.23, respectively, representative of the pretest and posttest results of the Grades 7- 10 struggling readers in English. A significance value (P-value) and 95% Confidence Interval (CI) of the difference is shown, where, in the procedure, the P-value is the probability of obtaining the observed difference between the means if the null hypothesis was true. Specifically, the null hypothesis is the hypothesis that the difference is 0.

As presented in the tabular data, the *t*-value is -16.8412 while the *p*-value is .00001 which made the result significant. This means that the difference between the performance of the Grades 7- 10 struggling readers in English before and after the conduct of home reading sessions is significant.

From the results of the study, teachers handling reading programs or conducting reading interventions can take inspiration from the employment of strategies or interventions that tapped the parents as reading partners in aid of literacy skills enhancement.

Looking into the results of the study affirm the good there is to actively involving the parents or the learning facilitators in the programs of the school in general and of the literacy programs in particular. It can be drawn from the results of the study how the intervention was not just context-appropriate given the health and safety protocols imposed during the pandemic. Equally, the results of the study showed how the learners, their parents and the school stand to benefit from programs that tapped the parents as partners, in this case, as reading partners. Thus, it is hereby recommended that the intervention used in this study be explored in other areas of research in view of addressing learning outcomes and skills acquisition enhancement. Moreover, it is recommended that parallel studies be conducted in order to see if it will yield similar results.

ACTION PLAN

Program/ Activities	Objective	Strategy	Persons Involved	Timeframe/ Timeline	Remarks
Dissemination of the Results of the Study	Share the results of the study to the secondary teachers in DCIS.	Conduct of school LAC sessions at DCIS.	School Head, Head Teachers, All Teachers	September- October 2022	For coordination with the School Head.
Utilization of the results of the study.	Incorporate research-based strategies in teaching reading.	Adoption of the intervention used in the study.	School Head, Head Teachers, All Secondary Teachers at DCIS	September 2022- June 2023	For coordination with and approval by the School Head.
Wider dissemination of the results of the study.	Share the results of the study with the research community.	Publication of research conducted in a research journal.	RO/ SDO Research, Committees, Researcher	September 2022- June 2023	Has to conform the paper to the prescribed format.

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