

Effectiveness of the Read Like Me Program for Grade 3 Struggling Readers

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ABSTRACT

Literacy skills are fundamental to academic growth, and issues with these skills can hinder learners' ability to learn in different subjects or areas later in life. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Read Like Me program for struggling readers in Grade 3. The researchers selected 11 participants from Sumapang Bata Elementary School using a quantitative quasi-experimental design through purposive sampling. Pre-intervention, students faced challenges in word reading and comprehension, primarily at the frustration level. Post-intervention improvements were evident, with fewer students experiencing frustration and more reaching instructional levels. Pairing t-tests confirmed significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores, with a significant level of less than 0.05. The Read Like Me program had a positive impact on word reading and comprehension. This study emphasizes the efficacy of the Read Like Me program in enhancing literacy skills among Grade 3 students.

Keywords: Reading intervention; struggling readers; word reading; reading comprehension; Read Like Me program

INTRODUCTION

Literacy skills are fundamental to academic growth, and issues with this skill can hinder learners' ability to learn in different subjects or areas later in life. At least nine out of 10 children aged 10 struggle to read and write simple text, according to the World Bank's latest statistics on learning poverty in 2021. As a result, learning loss occurred, particularly in young children in the formative years of learning to read. The absence of face-to-face classes and hands-on learning severely impacted the development and academic performance of young learners. According to Domingue et al. (2021), time is a critical factor. By the time they enter Grade 3 and Grade 4, when word problems are numerous and reading comprehension is crucial, children who haven't mastered reading could potentially face failure. Early graders experienced struggles in learning how to read and write. People view the early childhood years as crucial for the development of reading and writing skills (Wang et al., 2015). Furthermore, acquiring early reading abilities represents the foundation of children's later academic success.

According to Chen (2021), a child's early years are the foundation for his or her future development. Parents and educators must provide a solid base for lifelong learning and learning abilities. Providing a solid foundation helps young learners acquire the skills they need to become well-functioning adults. Exposing children to meaningful experiences early in life plays a vital role in the development of the brain. However, a pandemic struck, leading to the closure of schools. Young learners during this period struggled to cope

with the new mode of learning. At times, teachers provided learners with modules and online classes. As a result, young learners spent most of their early years at home, with few opportunities to learn critical skills to help them develop their learning. Along with this, many young children have experienced delays in cognitive and motor skills, which affected their learning progress today.

Kindergarten equips children with opportunities to learn and practice the essential skills they will use throughout their schooling. However, in this academic year, Grade 3 learners were the ones who went through kindergarten and Grade 1 without face-to-face classes and finished these years in the comfort of their homes. Engaging students with the lesson is fundamental for their academic success, and a lack of this may lead to learning losses and delays. Struggling readers need expert, research-based instruction significantly as expectations grow for young readers. Identifying children at risk of reading problems is particularly important, as research indicates that poor readers at an early age tend to be poor readers in later grades. According to a prior study, the intervention, Read Like Me, is a multifaceted approach consisting of several researched interventions, including reading aloud, repeated reading, assisted reading, and the gradual release of responsibility. Young et al. (2020) combined the methods due to their significant impact on students' reading, resulting in a synergistic and potentially effective intervention. Moreover, the Read Like Me program utilizes a stacked approach of research-based methods, including reading aloud, assisted reading, and repeated reading.

Multiple studies have established that reading aloud improves memory. Colin MacLeod, a psychologist at the University of Waterloo, has studied the impact of reading aloud on memory and has repeatedly shown that people consistently remember words better if they read them aloud. Multiple studies have referenced these findings for over a decade. In one study (Gayathri, 2023), researchers presented a list of words to a group of seven-to-10-year-olds, asking them to read some silently and others aloud. After that, they correctly recognized 87% of the words they would read aloud, but only 70% of the silent ones. According to Serrano and Huang (2018), students can learn vocabulary even when assisted repeated reading focuses on comprehension.

Lagrone, McCauley, and Young developed the Read Like Me program in 2020 as a new reading intervention for struggling primary learners in the USA. An eight-year-old Grade 2 student with ADHD and dyslexia participated in this program. The student was two years behind the reading level prior to the intervention. Overall, incorporating Read Like Me into regular instruction effectively advanced the reading growth of the Grade 2 learner's research participant. However, the previous study suggests that future researchers should monitor reading comprehension throughout the study. In addition, a larger experimental or quasi-experimental study could further examine the benefits and effectiveness of the intervention program. Contrary to the previous study, the present researchers will have more than one participant from Sumapang Bata Elementary School. We will administer monitoring assessments after each session throughout the intervention to track the progress of Grade 3 learners and assess their improvement in word reading and reading comprehension skills.

The primary objective of this study was to provide intervention for Grade 3 learners who were struggling readers. Additionally, the study aimed to determine the program's effectiveness in combating low literacy skills and assisting young learners in achieving academic success.

The researchers wanted to use this study's findings to demonstrate that the Read Like Me program benefits learners in the Philippines. The researchers hypothesized that the study significantly contributed to addressing illiteracy in the country and resulted in the development of proficient readers. Additionally, they anticipated that the Read Like Me intervention program would enhance the word-reading and reading comprehension skills of the Grade 3 learners involved in the study. Furthermore, the researchers presumed that the intervention supported teachers in reducing the number of struggling readers in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

The general problem of this study is: “How may the implementation of the Read Like Me Program to Combat the Lost Literacy Skills of Grade 3 learners be analyzed?”

Specifically, this study will find answers to the following questions:

1. How was the adapted and modified Read Like Me Intervention Program developed?
2. What is the reading level of the participants in the word reading and reading comprehension on the pre-test and post-test before and after implementing the Read Like Me program on Grade 3 learners?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test of the Grade 3 learners in terms of word reading and reading comprehension?

Related Literature

The researchers constructed five themes, which are: Read Like Me: An Intervention for Struggling Readers; The Early Childhood Education Sector in the Time of Pandemic; DepEd Memorandum in Mitigating Learning Losses Through Creating and Implementing Intervention Programs for Young Filipino Learners; Low Literacy Skills of Young Filipino Learners; Factors Why Struggling Learners Exist in the Philippines; and Academic Success of Learners is a Shared Responsibility.

Read Like Me: An Intervention for Struggling Readers

Stacey Lagrone, Joyce McCauley, and Chase Young developed the Read Like Me intervention program for struggling readers in the United States of America in 2020. The intervention utilizes a stacked approach of research-based methods, including reading aloud, assisted reading, and repeated reading. The study used a single-case experimental design. An eight-year-old, grade 2 student, identified as dyslexic and diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), participated in this program. In this study, the student received the intervention three times per week for 12 weeks.

For levelled passages, the preceding researchers utilized Grade 2 Oral Reading Fluency passages from Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS-ORF). The DIBELS-ORF was administered weekly to measure the word recognition automaticity score, representing the number of words read correctly per minute. Concurrently, the researchers evaluated the students’ reading prosody using the Multidimensional Fluency Scale (MDFS) during oral reading sessions. Additionally, the principal investigator conducted the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test (4th Edition) for second grade (GMRT-4) both before and after the intervention phases. The GMRT-4, a standardized reading assessment, gauges a student’s reading comprehension, word knowledge, and decoding abilities.

Single-case experimental research has inherent limitations, particularly in its inability to generalize findings beyond the specific case under investigation. In this case, the intervention yielded positive outcomes for a second-grade student with ADHD and dyslexia. Although Read Like Me may not guarantee similar outcomes for every student struggling with reading, it offers a viable alternative for educators and interventionists. A large experimental or quasi-experimental study incorporating treatment and control groups could provide a deeper exploration of the intervention’s usefulness and effectiveness.

Overall, regular instruction and the implementation of the Read Like Me program effectively enhanced the second-grade participant’s reading progress in the research. The layered approach improved the student’s automatic word recognition, reading prosody, decoding skills, word knowledge, and reading

comprehension. Although the study's findings may not be universally applicable, they suggest that educators or interventionists working with students facing reading challenges could find this approach a promising option.

The Early Childhood Education Sector in the Time of Pandemic

The long-running pandemic (COVID-19) has affected every aspect of education. However, the disruption to the early childhood sector has been severe (Sullivan, 2021). According to Barshay (2022), many educators and parents shared concerns over kindergarten students studying online. It appears reasonable to show concern now that evidence is beginning to mount on how detrimental remote school and socially distanced instruction are to young children's reading development. Children's academic performance, mental health, and general well-being have all suffered due to school closures (Engzell et al., 2021; Lee, 2020). Additionally, the closure of schools due to the pandemic or other crises results in learning losses (Lu, 2023). The pandemic is currently causing extreme "learning poverty" in the Philippines.

The World Bank defines learning poverty as being unable to read and comprehend a short text or story by the time a child is ten years old. The World Bank estimated that 69.5 percent of Filipinos lived in learning poverty before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by 2021, it had risen to 91 percent, indicating that nine Filipino children under the age of ten cannot read a basic paragraph. According to the World Bank, our country has the highest level of learning poverty in East Asia and the Pacific region. The Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP) said that "the damage to children's education is likely to reduce children's well-being, including mental health, and productivity for decades, making education disruption one of the biggest threats to medium- and long-term recovery from COVID-19 unless governments act swiftly."

To address the gap and for learning recovery and to be aware of the studies of the World Bank, a learning recovery program meant to mitigate the effects of a prolonged lack of face-to-face classes, Senate Bill 1604, known as the ARAL Program, is filed. The bill aims to establish a national learning intervention program called Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL). However, this program has yet to benefit all of the Philippines' schools. It will be greatly beneficial to Filipino students to receive the intervention as soon as possible. Hence, the researchers of this study aim to offer the Read Like Me program to Sumapang Bata Elementary School with 11 participants to help mitigate the learning loss the country is suffering today.

DepEd Memorandum on Mitigating Learning Losses Through Creating and Implementing Intervention Programs for Young Filipino Learners

The Department of Education (DepEd) has restated its commitment to addressing Filipino students' "learning losses" following school closures and the shift to distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. DepEd Order No. 13-S2023, otherwise known as Adoption of the National Learning Recovery Programme in the Department of Education, set the learning recovery efforts in motion. Chapter IV, Section 8 of the aforementioned DepEd memorandum implies that the critical outcome of DepEd's recovery plan is to address learning gaps among all learners, particularly those who are most vulnerable and in situations of disadvantage. The National Reading Program is one of the NLRP's subprograms. This encourages literacy development through supplemental reading programs that promote enhancement, intervention, and remediation. According to Hall et al. (2022), evidence-based instructional treatments can potentially improve or even eradicate a wide range of reading difficulties. Furthermore, the Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) is a national program that addresses the Department of Education's (DepEd) goal of making every child a reader at their grade level. The program aims to equip elementary school pupils with strategic reading and writing skills, fostering their independence as young readers and writers. Adriano (2023) conducted a study which, contrary to DepEd Order No. 70-S2011, suggested discontinuing the deployment of the Every Child a Reader Program 2 ECARP at the school due to its failure to increase

students' reading proficiency.

The study added that the lack of monitoring and follow-through made it difficult for the school to carry out the program. The study also recommended the implementation of new reading interventions in the classroom, including the "Sa Aklat Sisikat" program for third-graders and the Marungko method for nonreaders in grade 1, both proven to enhance students' reading proficiency. Given this, the Department of Education (DepEd) has committed to making every student a reader at the grade level by launching the Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiatives) and stepping up reading advocacy. Moreover, DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018, known as Policy Guidelines on the Administration of the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, states that the Phil-IRI data shall serve as one of the bases for planning, designing, or redesigning the reading instruction of the teachers and the school's reading programs or activities to improve the overall school's reading performance. Given this context, the current study aims to leverage the Phil-IRI's pre-test and post-test to assess the reading proficiency of third-grade students, thereby facilitating the implementation of the Read Like Me intervention program.

The Literacy Skills of Young Filipino Learners are Poor

Reading is one of the critical skills a learner should familiarize themselves with. This contributes to everyone's success in school. It is considered a prerequisite for all learning areas because it enables every learner to also learn in other subjects in school (Idulog et al., 2023). The 2018 PISA evaluated reading as the primary subject for pupils aged 15 years. With an average reading score of 340, the Philippines fell more than 200 points short of China's score of 555 and more than 100 points short of the OECD average of 487. Reading is vital since it is the foundation of most learning (Dadzie, 2008), including science, numeracy, and even home economics. However, according to UNICEF (2021), less than 15% of Filipino kids, or around three out of every twenty, are literate. This only demonstrates how poorly Filipino pupils comprehend and read at a basic level.

Factors Explaining Why Struggling Learners Exist in the Philippines

We consider learners who are more likely to experience academic setbacks or discontinue their education to be at risk. DepEd Order No. 2002, Section 45, stipulated that students would advance to the next higher grade upon demonstrating mastery of fundamental reading abilities at a specific grade level. In addition, DepEd Order No. 31 s. 2020 states that "teachers must ensure that learners receive remediation when they earn raw scores that are consistently below expectations by the fifth week of any quarter" to prevent learners from failing any learning area at the end of the year. However, some schools continue to put learners at risk of going on to the next grade level without meeting their reading needs. This practice only results in an increasing number of struggling readers in the country. Children who experience poverty, have inadequate English proficiency, come from households where their parents read little or nothing, or have speech, language, or hearing impairments are more likely to struggle with reading, which is one of the reasons why struggling learners exist.

Academic Success for Learners is a Shared Responsibility

According to an African proverb, "It takes a village to educate a child." As a result, a child's development necessitates teamwork to reach their full potential. Students must take ownership of their education to improve and sustain their grades. To effectively educate a diverse group of pupils and inspire and motivate them even when they are feeling down, educators should also participate in seminars, workshops, and training. To help students who receive failing grades improve their academic standing and realize their full potential, the school administration should create a program (Boiser et al., 2019).

Related Studies

The researchers created three themes, which are Literacy as an Integral Part of Children's Development and Academic Growth, The Important Role of Intervention for Children, and COVID-19 and Its Effects in Today's World.

Literacy as an Integral Part of Children's Development and Academic Growth

Teaching young learners how to read is no easy task. Perkins and Green (2018) present strategies on how to effectively teach reading. Some of these are modelling through read-aloud and performing think-aloud, turning and talking, and small group discussion. In comparison to Adhanhani and Abu-Ayyash's (2020) study, they identify the strengths of modeling, repeated reading, and assisted reading. Bergen et al. (2022) discovered that early reading proficiency predicts later reading quantity and comprehension, as well as fluency. Children proficient in essential reading may start an upward cycle, whereas kids who are not proficient could start a downward spiral. If the children have adequate reading skills, they will integrate them into all their subjects across all educational levels (Nwosu and Osuchukwu, 2022). By understanding the factors that influence reading fluency, educators may design more effective programs to improve the reading abilities of all students. This study has identified four factors as predictive of reading fluency: quick naming, semantic fluency, inhibitory control, and selective attention. Rapid naming was the sole significant predictor of reading fluency for kids in the second grade, whereas semantic fluency, inhibitory control, and selective attention were the major predictors for students in the third grade.

For third graders, semantic fluency was the second-best indicator of reading fluency. Interestingly, Biscevic et al. 2019 found little research on the correlation between reading fluency and semantic fluency. The practice of reading employs various approaches, with reading-aloud strategies being crucial among them. According to Sajid and Fraidan (2019), the read-aloud strategy helps develop confidence, especially in poor readers who feel shy about reading the text in front of people. Through the application of read-aloud strategies, a reader can enhance their ability to utilize personal knowledge to derive meaning that extends beyond literal content. This includes making inferences related to sequence, cause-and-effect relationships, and interpreting figurative language. On the other hand, reading stories with enthusiasm, using inflection, maintaining proper cadence, and employing distinct voices for different characters captivate children's attention. Initiating a dialogue with them about the unfolding events in the story engages them in the narrative, making them active participants in the experience and enriching the learning opportunities during the read-aloud session (Tello, 2019).

With all these available strategies and findings, the present researchers will have knowledge of techniques and strategies when giving the intervention. This will support the students' learning process and help them improve their literacy skills. The Read Like Me program will incorporate reading aloud, modeling, repeated reading, and assisted reading.

The Importance of Intervention for Children is Crucial

Providing intervention for young learners in reading is essential for a variety of reasons, including addressing potential difficulties and improving their overall literacy skills. Early intervention is crucial to preventing persistent academic challenges and establishing a solid foundation for future educational success. According to the International Literacy Association (2018), early literacy was considered a hot topic and deemed the most important in the 2018 What's Hot, What's Not survey. Despite centuries of reading research, the need for additional reading interventions persists, given that no single intervention is effective for all students. Moreover, Young et al. (2020) developed Read Like Me, an intervention program that utilizes a stacked approach of research-based methods, including reading aloud, assisted reading, and

repeated reading. On the other hand, the Promotion of Reading Skills Program (Susena et al., 2023) aims to promote the foundation skills for future reading skills in the last year of preschool education. The program places particular emphasis on the development of phonological awareness, which includes rime and phoneme, epiphoneme, metaphoneme, and phonemic segmentation, as well as language skills, which include expressive and comprehensive language.

Early intervention is important for effectively overcoming problems with reading. Read Like Me successfully enhanced the reading development of the study's one second grade participant. The stacking approach enhanced the student's automaticity in word identification, reading prosody, decoding abilities, word knowledge, and reading comprehension. While the findings of the Promotion of Reading Skills mainly contribute to a better understanding of the important role of phonemic awareness and language in the early stages of learning to read, They also emphasize the significance of early literacy intervention beginning in kindergarten, with children learning to read. Engel de Abreu et al. (2020) demonstrated that after just 12 weeks of kindergarten instruction, the intervention group of children significantly improved their phonological awareness skills in Luxembourgish, compared to those who did not participate in the program. Furthermore, this positive effect persisted nine months later in Grade 1. The program also proved successful in improving the children's letter-knowledge skills.

The early stages of childhood are crucial for the growth of language and literacy abilities. Early intervention during this phase is essential, as it enables the detection and resolution of reading challenges before they become firmly established. Taking action at the early stages helps avoid extended academic difficulties and reduces the likelihood of developing negative perspectives on learning.

COVID-19 and its Implications in Today's World

The spread of COVID-19 has resulted in lockdowns, fewer learning hours in kindergarten, and distance learning, which have affected children's exposure to learning opportunities (Nevo, 2023). The disrupted learning impacted not just elementary school students but also preschoolers and kindergarteners. Tadesse and Maluye (2020) say that the coronavirus affects the education system around the world. To stop the spread of the coronavirus, authorities have shut down educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities. The shutdown affects students, educators, and parents alike. Additionally, Argallon et al. (2022) state that numerous students are facing challenges in their learning while utilizing modules, with a majority unable to finish the assigned activities and performance tasks. This difficulty stems from an abundance of activities, numerous exercises, and a lack of sufficient guidance and instructions from their teachers. According to Wheeler and Hill (2021), parents are experiencing stress in an attempt to satisfy the demands of work, family, and COVID-19 concerns.

Because children are home from daycare and school, parents are solely responsible for taking care of or teaching their child until schools can handle it. To fully and effectively meet the needs of educating students in an adapted format is the primary responsibility of parents. Moreover, Ardington (2021) conducted research in South Africa and found that in 2020, grade 2 students lost between 57 % and 70 % of a year of learning relative to their pre-pandemic peers. Before the pandemic outbreak, parents taught their children to read, serving as their primary educators. As a result, parents rarely compensated for the short instructional time, particularly during school closures, which raised concerns about impaired student learning (Förster et al., 2022). All students missed critical learning experiences during COVID-19 (Domingue et al., 2022).

These studies will show how COVID-19 has had a negative impact on learners' development. Many preschoolers show delays in reaching their developmental milestones. Children acquire the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical developmental foundations for the rest of their lives through the cumulative and rapid process of learning. According to Tadesse and Maluye (2020), schools and universities should design curriculum, prepare learning strategies and techniques for post-COVID-19, and transform the education

system itself. The formation of knowledge links cognitive development to social, emotional, and psychomotor development. Developing these skills in children will give them better chances at achieving an enhanced quality of life (Zengin et al., 2023). There is only one thing that needs to be done to reduce these negativities and turn them into long-term improvements: the realization of quality education starting from early childhood (Uğraş et al., 2023).

Engzell et al. (2021) found that children from low-education families lost 60% of their school-learned knowledge. Sanhadi Rahayu and Asanti (2021) discovered that the COVID-19 pandemic encountered problems such as teacher-student alienation, learning loss, demands for school rules, and disagreements among colleagues. Cordeiro et al. (2021) argued that infrastructure and system problems that prevent access to the internet increase learning loss. The early childhood education process has encountered numerous difficulties, including difficulties in accessing online learning during the pandemic, insufficient resources, a lack of adult support, and a lack of direct communication with teachers. As mentioned by Uğraş et al. (2023), beyond the short-term effects of the pandemic, countries will experience significant long-term losses in human capital due to a lack of education. However, achieving quality education from early childhood is the only way to mitigate these negative effects and transform them into long-term improvements.

METHODOLOGY

Methods and Techniques of the Study

To conduct this study, the researchers utilized a quantitative quasi-experimental time series design to assess the effect of the intervention and determine if there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the learners. Quasi-experimental research resembles experimental research but does not involve true experimental conditions. However, quasi-experimental methods enable researchers to identify cause-and-effect relationships between variables and select participants for the program based on the Phil-IRI assessment (2018).

The intervention program involved students from Sumapang Bata Elementary School, who underwent the 4-week Read Like Me intervention. Grade 3 learners underwent a series of assessments aimed at monitoring their progress and assessing the effectiveness of the intervention program in enhancing their literacy skills. These assessments included the Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test, as well as monitoring assessments conducted after each session.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the City of Malolos, Bulacan, which comprised 33 districts with a total of 331 elementary schools. However, due to time constraints and limitations in acceptance of proposals, only Sumapang Bata Elementary School agreed to participate in the Read Like Me intervention program.

Population and Sample of the Study

The intervention was conducted at Sumapang Bata Elementary School in the City of Malolos, Bulacan. All data were collected from Sumapang Bata Elementary School, with Grade 3 public school learners being the target participants. There was no specific gender requirement for participation. Each student's participation in data collection was deemed essential for the study.

A purposive sampling technique was utilized in this study. The Grade 3 teacher had previously administered the initial group screening test on her 34 students using the Phil-IRI assessment tool, identifying 11 students who scored below 14. These 11 Grade 3 learners from the participating school underwent both pre-test and post-test assessments. Criteria for program participation included (a) parent consent for study participation,

(b) being a bona fide third-grade student, and (c) scoring <14 on the Initial Screening (Phil-IRI Group Screening Test) assessment. Hence, the participants were Grade 3 struggling readers in need of intervention.

Research Instrument

The study underwent several phases of the data gathering process. It involved the collection and analysis of the pre-test using the Phil-IRI assessment tool (2018) to determine the reading level of the Grade 3 learners. Through the oral reading of Bloom Library (2013), the participants' word reading and reading comprehension were practiced and enhanced. The Phil-IRI Assessment Tool (2018) was used for administering the initial group screening test, pre-test, and post-test. The reading comprehension test consisted of 3 parts: (2) literal, (3) inferential, and (1) critical. Through the Phil-IRI, the oral reading and reading speed were also tested. The researchers monitored the participants' progress after each session by posing literal, inferential, and critical questions based on the story they read during that session. This monitoring assessment mirrored the format of the Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test. Furthermore, after implementing the Read Like Me intervention program, the post-test using the same assessment tool (Phil-IRI, 2018) was administered to measure if the reading level of third-grade students improved and see if there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection for this study occurred from February to March 2024. The researchers formulated a formal letter, noted by their research adviser, asking permission to propose the Read Like Me intervention program to the school head of the participating school. The researchers inquired with the Grade 3 homeroom teacher regarding the administration of the Phil-IRI Group Screening test. Upon confirmation that the test had indeed been administered, the researchers requested permission to review the results in order to identify potential participants for the study. However, the results were already submitted to the principal and the researchers were not able to see the actual results. But, the Grade 3 teacher had the list of names of those who scored less than 14 (<14). Those learners became the participants of the Read Like Me intervention program. Once the participants were classified, the researchers asked the parents of the participants to sign a letter of consent to ensure their understanding. This Informed Consent Form addressed to the parents indicates that all the information would be for academic purposes only. During the program, the researchers kept all personal information following the Republic Act 1073: Data Privacy Act of 2012. The participants were made aware that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could end it at any point if it made them uncomfortable. For the confidentiality and security of the respondents' information, the whole process was conducted in complete privacy.

When consent forms were approved and signed, the researchers and the Grade 3 teacher scheduled the administration of the Phil-IRI (2018) pre-test. The pre-test helped determine the reading level of the participants. The assessment was administered by their respective Grade 3 teacher. After the pre-test, the researchers started implementing the Read Like Me intervention program from February to March.

To start the intervention, the interventionist selected a text from Bloom Library (2013) that was one level higher than the student's current reading level. If, after applying the Read Like Me method, the text seemed too challenging, lowering the difficulty level may have been necessary. Conversely, if the student read effortlessly, the difficulty level could be raised. Moreover, there was a weekly meeting between the Grade 3 teacher and interventionists to assess the suitability of the materials for the learners, with final approval sought from the Grade 3 teacher. This collaborative approach ensured that the intervention materials were appropriate and aligned with the students' needs.

It was crucial for the interventionist to model the precise expression and fluency they desired the student to achieve while reading the text. Upon completing the text, the interventionist and participants engaged in a

collective re-reading process. The interventionist initiated by reading at a pace that was both comfortable for the student and yet challenged their regular reading speed. The objective was to encourage the student to achieve their maximum potential without causing overwhelming or frustration. Consequently, the interventionist customized the pace to suit the specific learner. This phase was conducted on a page-by-page basis. After jointly reading a page, the student proceeded to read the page independently to the interventionist. This pattern persisted until the completion of the entire text or the reading for that day was completed.

The last phase of the intervention was done solely by the participants. Starting from the beginning of the book or text, the student independently read aloud to the interventionist. While the interventionist provided assistance on significant errors, the emphasis was on allowing the student as much autonomy as possible during this phase. This stage was crucial for fostering the student's confidence. The third phase marked the conclusion of the day's session. It was imperative for the interventionist to continuously monitor the learner's progress during the treatment phase to ensure the selected book levels remained suitable. The researchers observed the participants' progress following each session by asking them (2) literal, (3) inferential, and (1) critical questions derived from the story they engaged with during that session. This assessment process mirrored the format of the Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test. This procedure continued in every session, conducted three times a week for 30 minutes, spanning 4 weeks. After completing the four-week period, the grade 3 teachers administered the Phil-IRI (2018) post-test to ascertain whether the reading level of the participants improved or not.

Furthermore, the researchers regularly ask feedback from the Grade 3 homeroom teacher on a weekly basis to identify areas for improvement. Weekly meetings are held to review the program's strengths and weaknesses, incorporating the teacher's insights. These meetings also serve to seek approval for materials to be utilized in the subsequent weeks. Moreover, at the conclusion of the program, an oral interview was conducted with the teacher to gain a comprehensive understanding of her insights, opinions, suggestions, and feedback.

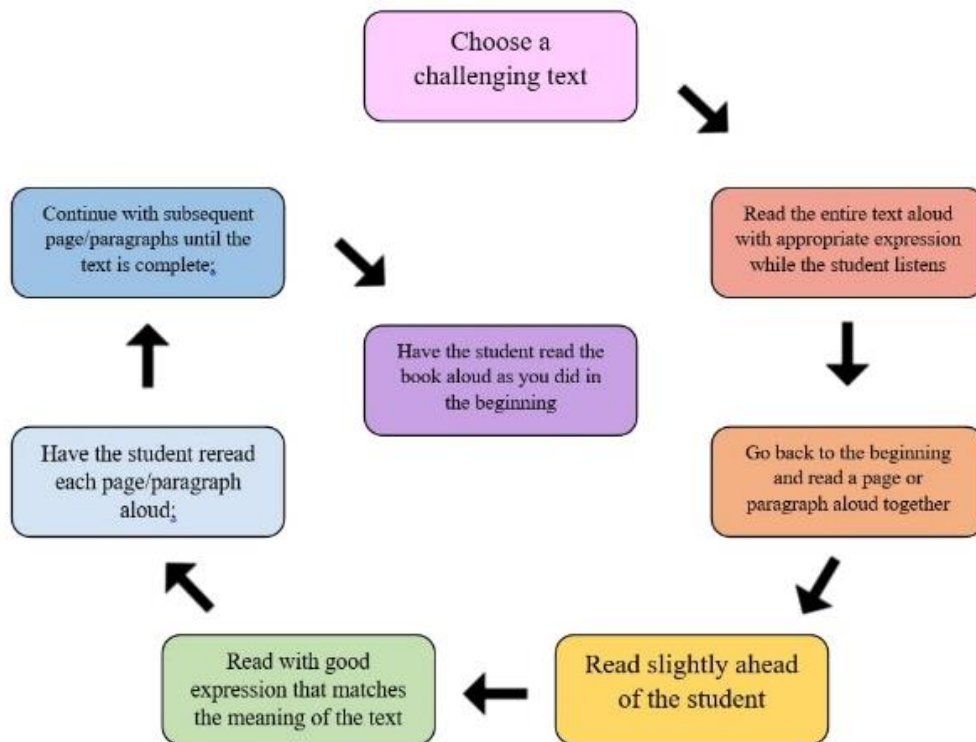


Fig 1. Adopted Steps in the Read Like Me Program

Figure 1 shows the illustration of the 8 steps used in the Read Like Me program.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

Quantifying pre-test and post-test scores involved utilizing various methods and procedures to accurately assess the impact of the Read Like Me program. In statistical analysis, to present the distribution of pre-test and post-test scores in word reading and reading comprehension among the participants, frequency and percentage distribution were employed.

Additionally, the Paired t-test Analysis was utilized to determine if there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the word reading and reading comprehension of the learners before and after the implementation of the Read Like Me intervention program. The Paired t-test Analysis enabled the comparison of mean scores from the same group before and after the intervention.

Regarding the data collection procedure, several steps were followed to ensure accurate assessment: Firstly, the Grade 3 teacher administered both the pre-test and post-test to the participants. Following this, the teacher computed the oral reading score and reading comprehension using the formula provided in the Phil-IRI manual. This involved subtracting the total number of miscues from the total number of words in the passage, dividing the difference by the total number of words, and then multiplying it by 100 for word reading. Similarly, for reading comprehension, the teacher computed the score by dividing the number of correct answers by the total number of questions and multiplying it by 100.

Furthermore, the teacher identified the oral reading level of the participants using the scoring criteria provided in Table 1 of the Phil-IRI Manual, which included frustration, instructional, and independent levels.

Table 1 Adapted Scoring Criteria for Word Reading and Reading Comprehension

Oral Reading Level	Word Reading Score (in %)	Comprehension Score (in%)
Independent	97-100%	80-100%
Instructional	90-96%	59-79%
Frustration	89% and below	58% and below

Ethical Consideration

The research considered the ethics of conducting research. Participants were free to choose to partake without any pressure. These students were given a letter of consent to be signed by their parents and were informed of the research's purpose, risks, and benefits beforehand. The researchers protected the privacy, identity, and data from unauthorized personnel. The researchers made sure that potential harm to their physical, social, and psychological well-being was minimized. The researcher conducted the study with morality and avoided bias, plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification. The participants' rights and dignity were respected throughout the research process. Methods and findings were fully disclosed.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Part I. Development of the Adapted and Modified Read Like Me Program

The program aimed to provide an intensive, tailored, and effective reading intervention for Grade 3 learners identified as struggling readers through modifications in the program's duration, materials, assessment tools, selection of participants, and number of interventionists.

Duration

The original program's 12-week span was condensed into a 4-week period, maintaining sessions at three times a week for 30 minutes each. This change was driven by the researchers' time constraints. However, even with the shortened duration, the participants' word reading and reading comprehension were still enhanced. This finding aligns with McNair's (2019) study on Implementing a Research-Based Reading Intervention Focused Upon Increasing Reading Comprehension Amongst Third-Grade Students, where interventions lasting 4 weeks, with 30 minutes per session, were successful in helping third-grade readers derive meaning from their reading. Similarly, Wanzek et al. (2016) found in their study on Meta-Analyses of the Effects of Tier 2 Type Reading Interventions in Grades K-3, that Tier 2 interventions typically meet for 20 to 40 minutes, between 3-5 times a week, were effective.

Materials

The adapted and modified program utilized Level 2 Oral Reading Fluency passages sourced from Bloom's Library, known for its leveled short stories and vast collection of digital children's books. These materials were also used in The Brigada Pagbasa Programme 2022, a national initiative aimed at enhancing reading skills among Filipino children. Initially, Level 1 passages were selected, with progression to Level 2 based on individual progress and in consultation with the homeroom teacher. This approach ensured that reading materials remained suitable and contributed effectively to improving reading proficiency.

Assessment Tool

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual 2018 (Phil-IRI) served as the primary assessment tool, offering a localized and pertinent measure of reading ability. The grade 3 teacher utilized this tool to select participants and administer both pre-test and post-test assessments. It facilitated the identification of students' reading levels, particularly in oral word reading and reading comprehension. This targeted assessment was essential for tailoring the intervention to meet the specific needs of the learners. Similarly, a local study conducted by Pocaan et al. (2022) also utilized the Phil-IRI Manual 2018 to determine the reading level of left-behind learners in the Philippines for pre-test and post-test assessments.

Participants

Eleven (11) Grade 3 Learners who scored less than 14 in the Phil-IRI Group Screening Test were selected as participants.

Interventionists

The program was facilitated by Six senior-level, undergraduate, BECED (Bachelor of Early Childhood Education) pre-service teachers, who accommodated two learners each, except for one interventionist who worked with a single student. This structure allowed for small group learning, facilitating more personalized instruction and enabling interventionists to better address individual learning needs and progress.

Methods and Strategies

The decision to maintain the original program's instructional strategies was based on Young et al.'s (2020) study, which demonstrated their effectiveness in improving reading fluency and comprehension in struggling readers. The 30-minute intervention sessions were meticulously structured to incorporate the original program's steps, ensuring each session was maximally effective.

Despite these adjustments aimed at better accommodating a new set of learners, the core of the program retained its stacked approach of research-based methods, including reading aloud, assisted reading, and

repeated reading. Additionally, the researchers followed the exact same 8-step structure used in the original study for the 30-minute session.

Part II. Reading Levels of Grade 3 Learners in the Word Reading and Reading Comprehension on Pre-test and Post-test Before and After Implementing the Read Like Me Program

Table 2 Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Participants in Word Reading

Level	Pre-test	Mean Score	Std. Dev	Post-test	Mean Score	Std. Dev
Frustration	10	80.44	8.82	5	90.59	4.32
Instructional	1			4		
Independent	0			2		

Table 2 provides an overview of the word reading assessment results. In the pre-test, participants demonstrated a mean score of 80.44 with a standard deviation of 8.82, indicating significant variance in the students’ word reading abilities. This variability suggests that there were notable differences in the students’ word reading level before the intervention. Through this data, the researchers presume that there are several factors that could contribute to the high standard deviation observed in the pre-test scores. Individual differences among students, such as prior reading experiences, exposure to literacy materials at home, and inherent cognitive abilities, could lead to variations in word reading skills. However, after undergoing the Read Like Me program, there was a noticeable improvement, with the mean score increasing to 90.59 and the standard deviation decreasing to 4.32 in the post-test. This shift indicates a more consistent performance across the participants.

Table 3 Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Participants in Reading Comprehension

Level	Pre-test	Mean Score	Std. Dev	Post-test	Mean Score	Std. Dev
Frustration	10	43.82	11.46	0	72.82	8.07
Instructional	1			7		
Independent	0			4		

Similarly, table 3 illustrates the results of the reading comprehension assessment. In the pre-test, students achieved a mean score of 43.82, with a relatively high standard deviation of 11.46. The high standard deviation in the pre-test suggests that students’ reading comprehension skills were widely dispersed, likely influenced by factors such as individual differences, varying levels of comprehension skills, and diverse cognitive development. However, in the post-test, a significant improvement was observed, as indicated by the mean score increasing to 72.82, accompanied by a reduced standard deviation of 8.07.

While the researchers anticipated that the participants’ reading profile would align with frustration level, the average scores revealed struggles in both word reading and reading comprehension. These findings from the pre-test serve as compelling evidence that despite the provision of free and accessible education, numerous students continue to face challenges in acquiring essential literacy skills.

Before the implementation of the Read Like Me program, pre-test results in both word reading and reading comprehension indicated that 10 Grade 3 learners were classified in the frustration level, and 1 was in the instructional level. This indicates the need for intervention among these students, who exhibited struggles in literacy skills. Similarly, research by Tomas et al. (2021) found a significant portion of the 4216 examined learners exhibiting frustration-level English reading ability. Furthermore, recent statistics from the World Bank in 2021 revealed that at least nine out of 10 children aged 10 encounter challenges in reading and writing basic text. The challenges experienced by participants in word reading and reading comprehension

may be attributed to socioeconomic factors, particularly as the study was conducted in a public school where a majority of students come from low-income households. Additionally, factors such as poor health, disinterest in reading, inadequate teacher training in reading instruction, and frequent student absenteeism may also contribute to observed outcomes (Tomas et al., 2021).

However, after the implementation of the Read Like Me program, post-test results in word reading revealed significant improvement. Only 5 students remained in the frustration level, with 4 moving to instructional and 2 reaching an independent level. Despite the majority of learners remaining in the frustration level, there was a remarkable improvement in their raw scores. Initially ranging from 61.4 to 78.95, the scores increased significantly to 84.98 to 87.93. This improvement indicates substantial progress in their reading abilities, despite their continued struggles within the frustration level.

Similarly, in reading comprehension, there was notable enhancement, with none of the students remaining in the frustration level post-test, 7 advancing to instructional, and 4 achieving an independent level. Building upon these findings, Boiser et al. (2019) recommend implementing a program by the school administration to support students with failing grades in improving academic performance and maximizing potential.

Part III. The Difference Between the Pre-test and Post-test of Grade 3 Learners in terms of Word Reading and Reading Comprehension

Table 4 Paired t-test Between Pre-test and Post-test of Both Groups

Variables	t	Sig-value	Decision	Interpretation
Word Reading (Pre-test) (Post-Test)	6.510086	0.00007	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test
Reading Comprehension (Pre-test) (Post-Test)	8.876879	0.00001	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test

Table 4 shows that for word reading, the t-value obtained was 6.51, with a corresponding significance value (sig) of 0.00007. Since this p-value is less than the predetermined significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the researchers reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for word reading. In other words, the intervention had a significant impact on participants' word reading abilities.

Similarly, for reading comprehension, the t-value was found to be 8.88, with a sig value of 0.00001. Once again, since the p-value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, the researchers reject the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for reading comprehension. Thus, the intervention also had a significant effect on participants' reading comprehension skills.

These results provide strong evidence to support the effectiveness of the intervention in improving both word reading and reading comprehension skills among participants. In line with the findings of Young et al. (2020), the integration of the Read Like Me program into regular instruction significantly promoted the reading development of the eleven Grade 3 learners. The substantial progress and improvement demonstrated among the learners highlight the effectiveness of targeted interventions. The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that the observed differences in performance between the pre-test and post-test in word reading and reading comprehension are not due to random chance but are indeed a result of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Read Like Me program.

Additionally, during the ongoing intervention and after the post-test was done, the homeroom teacher of the participants provided feedback, noting significant positive changes in her learners. She observed enhanced

confidence among them when reading aloud in class, along with a noticeable shift in their attitude towards reading. The teacher reported increased engagement in the reading corner, extended reading durations, heightened participation in class activities, and improvement across other subject areas. Additionally, some parents reached out to express their observations of their child's progress, noting improved comprehension and heightened interest in reading. Overall, there was a palpable increase in enthusiasm for reading among the students. However, the teacher highlighted a limitation of the program, stating that its duration of four weeks was relatively short. She expressed that if such remarkable improvements could be observed in a brief timeframe, extending the program duration could potentially lead to even greater learning outcomes for her students.

Overall, the findings from Table 4 demonstrate the positive impact of the Read Like Me program on participants' literacy skills and highlight the importance of targeted interventions in educational settings to promote enhanced literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

This study significantly contributed to addressing illiteracy in the Philippines. The adapted and modified Read Like Me program effectively reduced the number of Grade 3 struggling readers in Sumapang Bata Elementary School. Following the four-week intervention, participants demonstrated notable improvements in both word reading and reading comprehension skills, evidenced by decreased frustration levels and increased instructional and independent levels post-intervention. These findings highlight the effectiveness of the Read Like Me program in enhancing reading skills, emphasizing the importance of such interventions in mitigating lost literacy skills among learners.

The researchers have learned that the Philippine education system, particularly the Department of Education, needs to prioritize reducing the number of struggling readers by implementing and sustaining research-based intervention programs. It is crucial to ensure consistent and serious implementation of these programs, as many interventions are developed but not effectively executed. Statistical analysis revealed significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores for both oral word reading and reading comprehension were below the 0.05 significance level which means that the researchers rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. The implementation of the 'Read Like Me' program in schools has significant implications for improving literacy outcomes among struggling readers. The program has the potential to prevent reading difficulties and promote academic success through providing tailored interventions and fostering collaboration between teachers, parents/caregivers, and school administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After a thorough assessment and careful consideration of the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed: or in light of the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Extend the duration of the intervention program beyond four weeks to provide sustained support for Grade 3 students in improving their literacy skills. While the initial four-week intervention demonstrated significant effectiveness, extending the program could further reduce the number of students remaining at the frustration level. Given the notable improvements observed within a short timeframe, prolonging the program duration has the potential to yield even greater learning outcomes for students.
2. Following the successful implementation of the intervention program, it is recommended that teachers supplement classroom resources with a diverse selection of reading materials tailored to meet the needs of varied students. Additionally, educators should carefully choose developmentally appropriate

texts that align with the reading levels and interests of learners. Establishing dedicated reading corners within classrooms can further support continuous improvement in both reading skills and comprehension among students.

3. To further strengthen the supporting data and the effectiveness of the intervention, include a more diverse range of Grade 3 learners coming from different socio-economic backgrounds, locations, and educational settings. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the Read Like Me program's impact across different contexts and populations.
4. For future researchers, to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences with the Read Like Me intervention program, integrate qualitative research techniques, like conducting interviews or organizing focus groups with diverse teachers. Qualitative data can provide important insights into the effectiveness of the program and areas for improvement.
5. For future researchers, it is recommended to emphasize the importance of selecting reading materials that are culturally relevant and contextualized to the diverse backgrounds of students. By integrating literature that reflects the students' cultural heritage and experiences, their engagement and comprehension, fostering a more inclusive and meaningful learning environment.
6. For future researchers, it is recommended to create original short stories tailored to the age, word reading skills, and reading comprehension level of Grade 3 learners. Utilizing language familiar to the students, these short stories should be developed to engage and challenge the students while fostering their reading abilities.

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