



Intervention to Enhance Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade 7 Students through Background Knowledge Activation, Repeated Readings, Reading Aloud, and Asking Questions

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Abstract: This study sought to assess the reading proficiency of 23 purposively selected seventh-grade students at Caponayan National High School during the academic year 2023-2024, focusing on their reading comprehension levels. These assessments were the foundation for developing an effective reading program tailored to students' needs. Over four weeks, data collection involved repeated reading-aloud sessions and immediate questioning post-reading. In the educational process carried out in the Philippines, the Informal Reading Inventory standard is used. The analysis revealed that the respondents demonstrated mastery of essential sight words, with only a few identified miscues. Significantly, the number of students experiencing frustration decreased from 16 to 4 after the intervention, accompanied by notable improvements in reading comprehension. The instructional level increased from 7 to 13, while the highest comprehension level, classified as independent, rose from 0 to 6. Assessing the students' overall performance before and after the intervention indicated substantial progress. Statistical analysis demonstrated a significant difference before and after the intervention. Based on these findings, the study concludes that even a brief intervention can significantly improve students' reading abilities.

INTRODUCTION

Reading intervention techniques are measures taken to assist pupils with reading difficulty. Reading comprehension requires substantial information processing skills, particularly regarding working memory capacity (Kim, 2017). There may be various reasons why a kid is having trouble reading. Still, educators can support these pupils in developing their reading abilities by implementing particular reading intervention tactics. Students frequently have trouble decoding words, have weak comprehension abilities, and have limited reading fluency (Wang, 2019). The development of reading comprehension is greatly facilitated by teaching reading strategies (Okkinga, 2018). For pupils who are having trouble reading, reading intervention strategies are crucial. Teachers can assist these pupils in developing their reading abilities and becoming effective readers by utilizing

targeted interventions that are suited to the needs of the individual students (Idulog et al., 2023).

Many educators and policy-makers have previously expressed worry about reading proficiency in the Philippines. It has been undertaken to identify the cause of the issue and different interventions have been implemented to raise pupil reading competency (Llego, 2022). The high poverty level in many regions of the Philippines is another factor affecting students' poor reading abilities. Many kids come from homes where English is not their first language, depriving them of the books and resources they need to advance their reading abilities. Despite these difficulties, some teachers and institutions are progressing in raising pupils' reading proficiency. These schools frequently feature motivated educators dedicated to teaching reading, giving children plenty of opportunities to read inside and outside the classroom. According to PISA 2018 results released on December 3, the Philippines scored 353 in mathematics, 357 in science, and 340 in reading, all below the average of participating OECD countries. This shows that the basics of reading must not have been taught in primary schools. Another significant finding from the PISA 2018 data analysis was that 37% of children who attended early childhood programs for just three years could read at least at Level 2 (World Bank, 2018). The EGRA tool evaluated students' basic literacy abilities, which included the ability to recognize the names and sounds of letters, recognize the initial sounds of words, read words that are frequently used in their language, read non-words using their knowledge of phonics, read narrative texts fluently and with comprehension, respond to comprehension questions about short stories after listening to them, and write a dictated sentence using proper writing convention (Aguhayon et al., 2023; De la Fuente, 2018).

Reading comprehension issues are a relatively widespread deficit among students today and in the past. Reading difficulty is the students' main issue that affects their capacity to comprehend the meaning of words and passages (Hall, 2012; Idulog et al., 2023; Zuhra, 2015). Nobody should disregard or neglect these issues since they are not common ones. To develop reading comprehension, one must read and become familiar with new words, concepts, and terminology to comprehend what is being read completely. This requires a severe, wide attention span. After reading aloud to the class and completing other tasks that help students clarify their understanding of how to interpret a given situation based on what they have read, the teacher has utilized various reading materials to assess the student's reading comprehension skills. Properly implementing the reading intervention program as a pedagogical innovation (Hamora et al., 2022) requires the instructors' presence and quality time, as well as that of the parents and the school administrator (Vaughn, 2015).

Despite our culture's rapid expansion and addiction to technology, teachers must assist children in learning how to be self-reliant, productive members of society. To do this, one must first acquire a crucial life skill called reading comprehension. Reading and comprehension are vital skills for a student to achieve and comprehend the lesson and the instructions in the activity given by the teacher. A recent study showed that comprehension skills benefit students' academic achievement (Cimmiyotti, 2013; Mufarrodah, 2021). Teachers can use a variety of reading interventions to assist the learner in becoming a better

reader. This study focuses on implementing the reading intervention BRRA (Background Knowledge Activation, Repeated Readings, Reading Aloud, and Asking Questions). These interventions can involve teaching the student to read aloud more frequently, using a phonics program, or breaking words down into syllables. Having the pupil read books or articles on diverse subjects may also help them improve their reading skills. Reading is essential for learners of foreign languages to develop their language competence (Chiang, 2015). Together, teachers and parents should choose the approach that will benefit each pupil the most, offering ample support to help them advance their reading abilities. Reading is one of the most effective and quickly learned tools for maintaining the cornerstone of learning. Reading proficiency is necessary to learn new things and develop new learning abilities that need to be fostered in students. Reading comprehension is crucial to children's learning, as is the growth of their reading skills and active social participation (DepEd, 2019). Therefore, being able to read well is seen as the foundation for all other academic learning.

According to the results of the PHIL IRI conducted during the Brigada Eskwela Pabasa school year 2022-2023, the objective of the reading intervention program is to assist Grade 7 students at Caponayan National High School in improving their reading comprehension skills by providing them with reading materials appropriate for their reading level. DepEd Order No. 14 (2018), the "Implementing Guidelines on the Administration of Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI)," stipulated that one of the precedences of the department is to improve literacy. Students' thoughts and knowledge will expand by implementing a reading comprehension intervention program approved and legally signed by the school administration (Balan et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2017; Abril et al., 2022). The commitment of continued support from the teachers, parents, and school administration is one of the most crucial elements for successfully implementing the reading intervention to address the reading comprehension issue, where regularly reviewing and monitoring results based on outcomes with a step-by-step interventional approach (Casingal, 2022).

As students become distant in reading habits, their reading comprehension deteriorates through the years. A reading intervention was conducted to help the students regain their interest and improve their reading skills and reading comprehension (Marual-Gillaco, 2014). Reading techniques are crucial for enhancing the students' capacity for understanding reading (Oakhill et al., 2014; Pourhosein & Sabouri, 2016). With this, the study determined if the BRRA reading intervention is an effective tool in improving the reading performance of grade 7 students. Specifically, this study described the reading performance of the grade 7 students before and after the intervention and distinguished if there was a significant difference in the grade 7 student's reading performance before and after the intervention.

METHOD

This research has employed a quantitative research design and allowed the researchers to use a nonrandom selection of the participants from the total population and did not require random assignment of individual cases for the comparison of results of the

pretest and posttest of the participants exposed to the reading intervention (Mbugua & Muthomi, 2014). This study identified the reading comprehension skills of selected Grade 7 students that need improvement using reading intervention BRRA (Background Knowledge Activation, Repeated Readings, Reading Aloud, and Asking Questions). These interventions involve teaching the student to read aloud more frequently, using a phonics program, or breaking words down into syllables. After determining their weaknesses, the researcher developed an intervention program to improve the reading comprehension issue in the allotted time. Carries out ongoing home visits by the researcher and the parent to check on the reading habits of the pupils who underwent the reading comprehension intervention program. Twenty-three randomly selected seventh-grade students participated in the study. The selection of participants was based on their poor performances. The researchers used a purposive nonrandom sampling criterion to select the 23 most behind readers perceived from their pretest results as their participants to conduct an intervention to improve the reading comprehension of selected grade seven students because of their poor performance in English. Participants were informed before being allowed to engage freely in the study and provide the researchers access to their personal and academic information. The participants received the strictest privacy and anonymity. Nonrandom selection was used in purposeful criterion sampling, which enables accurate statistical judgments about the entire group. The purposive, nonrandom sampling method allowed the intentional selection of participants who met the study's requirements, ensuring that the results accurately reflected the effects of the intervention on the targeted group.

The researchers have sent and secured an approval request letter and consent from the public school district supervisor, school heads, parents, and teachers concerned, as well as the participants' participation and cooperation. The credibility of the research and protection of the research subjects: The names of participants were kept confidential during the research. The names of the participants were kept unknown throughout the study. In addition, all participants were made aware of the study's objectives. Data was collected in four weeks, with a variation of three times a week meetings from August 2023 to September 2023 through reading materials and quizzes to satisfy the necessary prerequisites. The pretest was given on August 01, 2023, a one-month intervention period. The said intervention process was done three times a week, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, in four conservative weeks to ensure the fair cooperation of the learners. Every learner was mentored and monitored by the researcher to observe the effect of the BRRA intervention process. The researchers used an adapted pretest and posttest reading materials of Phil-IRI (Philippine Informal Reading Inventory) and BP-PRIA (Basa Palaweño - Palawan Reading Inventory and Assessment) to categorize the personal information and school details of the participants and determine their scores in the pretest and posttest through quizzes. The researchers also used different reading materials while implementing the BRRA reading intervention. The adopted reading materials were used during the pretest and posttest to determine the participants' reading comprehension. In order to improve the reading performance, other reading materials, such as books, journals, storybooks, and periodicals, were used as reading resources. The researcher carried out its administration to establish the validity and reliability of the intervention process. The

statistician was the first to review the quantitative study's data to check for missing data and significant differences. Frequency count and percentage were utilized to represent the participants' reading comprehension level, whereas mean and standard deviation were used for the pretest and posttest. The significance difference between the participants' pre- and posttests was calculated using the t-test score.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Performance of the Students Before and After the Intervention

Table 1 shows the students' performance before and after the intervention program. It shows that the 23 respondents struggle with reading, and reading comprehension is shallow. In item number 1, it shows that only 7 out of 23(30.43) students got the correct answer after the intervention but got a perfect score. In item number 2 and 3, only 4(17.39) learners got the correct answer but increased after intervention with 17(73.91) and 15(65.22) learners. In item number 4 and 5, only 1(4.35) learner got the correct answer before intervention and 11(47.83) and 12(52.17) learners got the correct answer after the said intervention. From item number 6 to item number 10, none of the learners got the correct answer before the intervention. In contrast, the number of learners who got the correct answer rose after the intervention and got 13(56.52), 8(34.78), 9(39.13), 6(26.09) and 3(13.04) respectively. The results show a vast range of increases in the learners' performance. The said intervention is beneficial/impactful on their reading comprehension and helps the learners improve the number of correct answers in every item. It agrees with the study of Lagarto (2021) that intervention makes a huge change. The goal of enhancing the various reading initiatives and intervention programs is to achieve educational greatness is possible when there are enough reading resources available: books, periodicals, papers, and so forth (Morelos, 2021).

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the performance of the students before and after the intervention.

Item	Before Intervention		After Intervention	
	f (n=23)	%	f (n=23)	%
Who were the couple on the island?	7	30.43	23	100.00
Who disturbed the island?	4	17.39	17	73.91
What did the enemies do when they reach the island?	4	17.39	15	65.22
Why did Pala and Juana leave the island?	1	4.35	11	47.83
What would be the reason of Juana for hiding her child?	1	4.35	12	52.17
Why did the neighbors trace the way of Pala and Juana?	0	0.00	13	56.52
What is referred to by the idiomatic expression "bundle of joy" in the story?	0	0.00	8	34.78
From the passage "a group of strangers disturbed the serenity of the whole island", what is meant by the underlined word?	0	0.00	9	39.13
What do you think happened to the couple?	0	0.00	6	26.09
What lesson did you get from the passage?	0	0.00	3	13.04

Comparison Between the Reading Comprehension of the Students Before and After the Intervention based on Phil IRI Reading Level

Table 2 shows that in terms of students' reading comprehension, the lowest level, frustration, showed that, from 16 (69.57) before the intervention, decreased to 4 (17.39), which means that most of the students who fell from frustration improved their reading comprehension. While the instructional level shows the results from 7 (30.43) increase to 13 (56.52), and the highest comprehension level, which is independent, rose from 0 to 6 (26.09). It shows that the number of students who got the correct answer increases occasionally. Regarding reading comprehension, most students were considered instructional level, meaning they improved their reading comprehension. Although they are not the students refusing or withdrawing themselves to read, they can read with or without assistance. The product of this study was the reading profile of the students and the reading program designed based on the mentioned profile, which is hoped to be a good instrument in the development or progress of the participants' reading skills using the BRAA reading intervention made by the researchers. This calls for a continued evaluation of the proposed instructional intervention to meet outstanding reading performance among learners (Hamora et al., 2022).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the student's performance level before and after the intervention.

Item	Before Intervention		After Intervention	
	f (n=23)	%	f (n=23)	%
Frustration	16	69.57	4	17.39
Instructional	7	30.43	13	56.52
Independent	0	0.00	6	26.09

Comparison Between the Performance of the Students Before and After the Intervention

Before the intervention, the students got a mean score of 0.74 and 1.32 as their standard deviation, while the mean was 5.09 and 1.65 as their standard deviation (Table 3). The data was interpreted using the t-value with the score of -19.5 and .001 on the p-value, showing a significant difference before and after the intervention. This table revealed how the students improved their reading comprehension using the BRRA and letting the students read and read to activate their interest, which became their habit and improved their reading skills. It also revealed how the students improve their reading comprehension through repeated reading, reading aloud, and asking questions to facilitate them. Reading material such as story books, magazines, periodicals, articles, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and comic books helped the students improve their reading skills. Reading as the main problem, followed by their reading comprehension, was abruptly addressed, but they need to sustain their interest to let the students continue and become their habit. The BRRA intervention greatly impacts the student's performance, as shown in the table below. The indicators such as mean and standard deviation are the basis for interpreting how the students performed before and after the intervention.

Table 3. Comparative analysis of the performance of the students.

Scores	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Before Intervention	0.74	1.32	-19.5	.001	Significant Difference Exist
After Intervention	5.09	1.65			

Indeed, reading particular words in various contexts is necessary for vocabulary development, at least in part (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014; Nation, 2015). This shows the effectiveness of the BRRA intervention. It is thought that students will be able to understand texts if they have a sufficient vocabulary and solid grammar knowledge consistent with the effect of reading comprehension on an understanding of reading methods (Aguhayon et al., 2023; McMaster et al., 2014). In a similar study, reading comprehension improved after reading fluency, vocabulary, and working memory were managed (Muijselaar & de Jong, 2015), demonstrating sensitivity to a strategy intervention's impacts (Droop et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

The learners' reading skills before the intervention students belong to non-reader and frustration levels. As the intervention occurred, some students improved from being frustrated to being instructional learners. Students can quickly grasp what they have learned and answer some questions. The number of learners who got the correct answer significantly increased after the interventions becomes practical even in a short period. It was conducted for four weeks only to test if BRRA (Background Knowledge Activation, Repeated Readings, Reading Aloud, and Asking Questions) reading intervention effectively enhances the reading skills and reading comprehension of every learner. This research is limited only to selected Grade 7 students of Caponayan National High School. The limitation was set to limit the number of students involved in the said intervention based on the student's reading performance during Brigada Eskwela Pabasa, which was held during the enrolment phase.

The students need to be exposed to more instructional reading materials like books, articles, short reading selections, and different teaching methods and strategies to uplift their performance in reading and enhance their confidence to read independently. The students must be exposed to varied techniques, strategies, and exercises in executing reading activities for them to be able to achieve the highest level of reading according to standards set by DepEd, which is the Phil-IRI. This study's reading profile is a basis for the school stakeholders to assess the participants' reading performance. In implementing Phil-IRI and reading interventions, the teachers must provide the necessary means to improve the learners' reading proficiency in conformity with the results of their reading assessment. The DepEd may prioritize the conduct of training and programs for language teachers to hone their innovative skills in designing and developing instructional reading materials, especially in attaining mastery in reading comprehension. The proposed reading program is recommended to enhance the participants' reading performance.

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