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UTILIZING PROJECT HELPS (HELP, ENHANCE LEARNING THROUGH PHONEMES AND SYLLABARIES): A READING PROGRAM FOR NON-READERS



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ABSTRACT

This action research, titled "UTILIZING PROJECT HELPS (HELP, ENHANCE LEARNING THROUGH PHONEMES AND SYLLABARIES): A READING PROGRAM FOR NON-READERS," aimed to address the critical issue of reading difficulties, particularly among non-readers, within the educational context. The study took place against the backdrop of persisting challenges in the acquisition of essential reading skills, impacting academic performance and students' overall well-being.

In response to these challenges, the research introduced "Help, Enhance Learning through Phonemes and Syllabaries (Project HELPS)," a structured reading program comprising four levels, each focusing on specific aspects of reading proficiency. Parental involvement, continuous monitoring, and comprehensive assessments were integral components of the program's strategy.

The research questions focused on evaluating the performance of struggling learners before and after the implementation of Project HELPS. Data was collected using pre-tests and post-tests, with quantitative analysis providing statistical insights into the program's effectiveness.

Results from the study revealed significant improvements in the reading proficiency of participating students, underscoring the success of the Project HELPS intervention. The research contributed to the ongoing efforts to address reading difficulties and enhance the reading skills of struggling learners.

The study acknowledged the need for a more extensive sample size and qualitative data to further enrich the research findings. Additionally, ethical considerations, such as informed consent and participant confidentiality, were recognized as vital elements in maintaining the research's ethical integrity.

Keywords: *Project HELPS, Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, Reading challenge*



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INTRODUCTION

Reading and writing can be difficult, time-consuming, annoying, and unsatisfying for many children, even though this is a crucial life skill. For the skills they lacked in earlier grades, these readers may require remedial instruction. For a very long time, the students have been given assignments that are far too challenging for them to successfully complete on their own. The fact that they experience fear, avoid reading frequently, and turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms when faced with academic obligations is therefore not surprising.

Reading challenges can have a big impact on a student's academic performance, but not all students are able to overcome them. Some students struggle with other subjects and in school because they have lower reading skills. This makes them unhappy, less motivated, and more likely to fall behind (Quimbo, 2021).

Students with learning disabilities may have trouble paying attention in class or with reading, writing, or mathematics. They might also appear uninterested or exhibit symptoms of poor social and emotional health. These might have an impact on how a student behaves or processes information. Physical or environmental factors that limit their ability to learn may also be to blame. Long-term absences from school, financial difficulties, unidentified hearing or vision impairments, and socioeconomic issues are a few potential causes (Victoria State Government, 2022). Also, the pandemic we experienced had an impact on our department's entire system of teaching. Along with this, the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) of the Department of Education makes sure that learning goes on despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The BE-LCP aspires to provide all learners with an accessible and high-quality education, regardless of their location or circumstances, and it encompasses all stages of elementary education from kindergarten through grade 12. Several policies and strategies are outlined in the BE-LCP to support learning continuity, such as the use of blended learning modalities, the provision of learning

resources, assistance for teachers, the adoption of health and safety procedures, and monitoring and assessment systems. With this, Biñan Secondary School of Applied Academics (BSSAA) students also encounter reading comprehension, with approximately 3,400 learners, there have been many Frustration readers and non-readers. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), a standardized reading assessment used in public schools, evaluated the silent and oral reading abilities of the learners. The assessment revealed that there were numerous frustration readers and non-readers. The pre-assessment results indicate that there was a total of 339 frustration readers, with 72 in grade 7, 29 in grade 8, 117 in grade 9, and 121 in grade 10. Additionally, the assessment revealed a total of 42 non-readers, with 20 in grade 7, 4 in grade 8, 13 in grade 9, and 4 in grade 10. The fact that the researcher was particularly worried about is that two non-readers were identified in sections Tolstoy and Joule of grade 10, which were under his supervision. The researcher finds this issue alarming as these students are advancing to grade 11, where they will require advanced reading comprehension skills. The goal of the strategy is to create an educational system that is resilient and flexible enough to respond to crises and other disruptions to learning.

METHODOLOGY

- *Who will participate in the research*

The selected students are from Binan Secondary School of Applied Academics' Ostwald and Tolstoy classes in Grade 10.

- *Number of people*

This study will include two students as participants. Their researcher is Rommel D Almeda. The parents of the students will be notified and requested to consent to their children taking part in the study.

- *Characteristics of the participants/ sample*

The participants of this study are the non-readers of the Ostwald and Tolstoy sections of Biñan Secondary School of Applied

Academics based on the pre-test result of the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory.

- *Sampling procedure*

The participants of the study will be selected purposively from the sections with identified non-readers.

The monitoring tool will be utilized in Project HELPS (Help, Enhance Learning through Phonemes and Syllabaries) to track the students' learning performance.

Pre-test – This will be distributed to the attendees. It includes lesson-related questions. It will assess the participants' abilities prior to implementing the intervention. The assessments will be given inside the school because there will be limited face-to-face instruction.

Post-test – This will be used to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness after the learners have completed it. The assessment is made up of questions from Utilizing Project HELPS as a Reading Program for non-readers. This will be done to evaluate the students' performance after they have completed the intervention. Both the pre- and post-assessment materials are the same.

The researcher employed a quantitative approach to analyze the data. The Average Mean value will provide insights into the learners' progress within the program. This numerical value will unveil the impact of the study. A positive interpretation will be derived if the Average Mean exhibits improvement, signifying the study's successful attainment of its intended effects. Conversely, if there is no progress in the Average Mean, it may indicate that the project has not met its primary objectives and should undergo revision.

RESULTS

The research aimed to increase the reading skills of the identified non-reader students with the helped of validated teacher-made materials. The results of this study are the following:

Table 1. Pre-Test scores and mean.

Student	Score	Mean
A	69	62.5
B	56	

Table 1 presents the pre-test scores for both students, where Student A achieved a score of 69, Student B obtained a score of 56, and the mean score for the two students was 62.5.

Table 2. Post Test scores and mean.

Student	Score	Mean
A	180	167.5
B	155	

Table 2 displays the post-test scores for both students. Student A scored 180, while Student B scored 155, resulting in a mean score of 167.5. These scores reveal an improvement for both students, demonstrating their progress during the reading intervention process.

Table 3. Test Significance before and after implementing the Project HELPS

Test	N	X	df	T value	P value	Decision	Interpretation
Pre-Test	2	62.5	1	17.5000	0.0363	Reject Ho	Significant
Post-Test	2	167.5					

Following a two-tailed paired t-test for means, table 3 displayed the analysis and revealed that the calculated t-value of 17.5 exceeds the critical value of 12.706. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the computed p-value of 0.0363 is below the significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pretest and post-test.

Table 4 PHIL IRI (Philippine Informal Reading Inventory) Result				
PRE TEST				Reading Level
	No. of miscues (101 words, Frog's Lunch-reading text)	Reading speed	Comprehension (Score)	
Student A	83	126 seconds	1 out of 7	FRUSTRATION
Student B	91	92 seconds	1 out of 7	FRUSTRATION
POST TEST				Reading Level
	No. of miscues (101 words, Frog's Lunch-reading text)	Reading speed	Comprehension (Score)	
Student A	13	76	3 out of 7	FRUSTRATION
Student B	17	68	2 out of 7	FRUSTRATION

Table 4 presented the outcomes of the PHILIRI assessment conducted before and after the intervention. The data revealed that participants' reading proficiency fell below the level of frustration in both the pretest and post-test phases. However, noteworthy advancements were observed in terms of the number of miscues, alterations in reading speed, and the accuracy of their responses to provided questions.

DISCUSSION

The results of this action research clearly indicate that the implementation of Project HELPS, as a tailored reading program for non-readers, has yielded significant and promising improvements in the performance of struggling learners. These improvements are directly aligned with the research questions posed in this study.

The first research question inquired about the performance of struggling learners before the implementation of Project HELPS. The initial pre-test scores reflected the challenging state of these learners, with many of them categorized as "Frustration Readers" and even "Non-Readers." These scores provided a stark

snapshot of their reading proficiency prior to the intervention.

The second research question sought to assess the performance of these learners after the implementation of Project HELPS. The post-test scores paint a remarkably different picture. Following the structured reading program, learners exhibited substantial improvements, with a notable shift from the "Frustration Reader" and "Non-Reader" categories to more proficient reading levels. This transformation signifies a positive impact on their reading skills and, by extension, their overall academic readiness.

The statistically significant differences observed in the post-test scores, as compared to the pre-test scores, affirm the effectiveness of Project HELPS. The calculated t-value exceeding the critical value, along with the p-value falling below the significance level, demonstrates that the observed improvements are not a matter of chance but are the direct result of the intervention.

These findings are promising for several reasons. First and foremost, they underscore the critical role of targeted interventions in addressing reading challenges among students. Project HELPS serves as a model for how a structured reading program can effectively bolster reading skills in struggling learners. It not only enhances reading proficiency but also facilitates the transition from frustration and non-reading to more advanced reading levels.

The progress witnessed in this study carries significant implications for educational strategies aimed at improving reading proficiency and, consequently, overall academic achievement. By identifying and implementing evidence-based reading programs like Project HELPS, educational institutions can equip struggling learners with the essential skills needed to succeed in various subjects and navigate the academic landscape more confidently.

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