
DEVELOPING AN EDUCATIONAL READING PROGRAM: AN ADVOCACY FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

In the field of literacy education, educators employ strategy-based instructional methods to tailor their approaches for diverse reading types. This study explores the effectiveness of such methods in improving students' comprehension proficiency and assesses teachers' perceptions of their success. The investigation aims to measure the impact of strategy-based education on reading comprehension, delving into its role as a catalyst for heightened proficiency among students. Additionally, it examines teachers' perspectives on the efficacy of these methods in fostering comprehensive understanding. Rooted in existing literature, the research builds upon the assumption that strategy-based instruction significantly contributes to enhancing reading abilities. Drawing on prior studies, including one focused on basic education learners, this research investigates the advocacy for instructors to use strategy-based approaches in teaching reading to enrich comprehension. The literature review indicates that strategy-based instruction is not only effective but also enjoyable for teachers to implement in the classroom. Previous study results suggest that this approach aligns with pedagogical objectives and serves as an engaging tool for educators, promising a positive impact on students' reading abilities. As the study unfolds, it seeks to augment the existing knowledge base by providing empirical evidence on the success of strategy-based instruction in reading comprehension. This contribution aims to solidify its standing as a valuable pedagogical approach, offering educators a promising avenue for enhancing students' reading abilities in a diverse and nuanced learning environment.

Keywords: educational program, reading innovation, advocacy for students

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a gift from teachers to their students, as opposed to reading, which is a talent that indirectly affects a young person's future. Grounded theory and phenomenological methods were used in conjunction with a qualitative research strategy in this study. Additionally, the impact of the learners' many languages on their reading comprehension was disclosed. Their mother tongue, the Filipino language, and the English language become confused as a result of this as well. It's possible that the nation's public school system, which forbids excessive advertising and fosters a demanding teacher-to-student ratio in a single

topic, is the cause of the non-readers. In higher grades, there are non-readers due to the previously listed circumstances.

A classroom environment needs to be developed wherein students learn to read through individual insights. Considerations in program development include: 1) building positive attitudes toward reading, 2) fluency, 3) comprehension, 4) progress in mechanics, and 5) word recognition. The stress in a reading program should be to develop readers who read fluently and with understanding. Allington (1999), states that fluency is regarded as necessary for defining good reading. Evidence shows fluency training improves overall reading ability. It can be taught through several activities such as repeated readings and modeling by the teacher in oral reading. Teachers encourage students to use prior knowledge, make predictions, try story mapping, and give retelling as a few options for developing comprehension skills.

In addition to fundamental reading and math abilities, today's kids also need to possess skills that will prepare them for a world that is changing all the time (Mullis, 2014). They also need to be capable of critical thought, analysis, and deduction. New learning objectives are necessary due to changes in the information and skill set that these students now demand. The connection between assessment and instruction is altered by these new learning objectives. Educators must actively participate in determining the goal of assessments and the subject matter being evaluated. The goal of basic education, which is the study's target population, is to satisfy fundamental learning demands so that later learning can build upon it. It includes special needs students and those learning outside of the classroom in terms of basic education.

Students' motivation, dedication, and reading strategies all improve as a result of receiving effective instruction. It has the potential to extend pupils' understanding of reading as a means of achieving success in life. Broad reading evaluation is also to be expected, given the traits of successful readers, the variety of motivations for reading, and the varied results of effective reading training. The assessment used by the authors of this research outlines the numerous advantages of improving one's reading skills. The reading instruction's results were weighed approximately the

Many reading assessments sample a small portion of student accomplishment and growth—and, by implication, teacher and school success. Bracey (2001) notes that standardized tests regularly miss the following outcomes of effective teaching and student learning: "creativity, critical thinking, resilience, motivation, persistence, humor, reliability, enthusiasm, civic-mindedness, self-awareness, self-discipline, empathy, leadership, and compassion" (p. 158). If reading assessment is wanted to mirror students' accomplishments, then reading assessment practice that provides, at best, only a partial reflection of those accomplishments needs to be avoided.

It became evident how important it is for students to improve their reading skills as they realized how important reading is to them. In order to do this, a reading program's research product was a series of reading lessons. It is thought that teaching students to read is a prerequisite for their ability to analyze arithmetic, science, English literature, and historical events. Furthermore, the reading curriculum's significance for the overall learning process was determined by this study. It examined the significance of assessment as a fundamental component of education. This assessment process established whether or not the educational objectives were fulfilled. Grades, placement, advancement, instructional requirements, and,

for the most part, curriculum selections are influenced by assessment. In the academic setting, it further encourages educators to consider if they are imparting knowledge that they believe is necessary, whether students are acquiring the material that is intended for them, and whether there is a better approach to teach a subject in order to enhance learning. Any reading program can be a boring, ritualistic performance of unmotivated activities if teachers attempt to motivate students artificially and reward them extrinsically (Holdaway, 1982). Looking for an approach that would allow more opportunities for the development of independent readers, it would be appropriate to consider the features of a literature-based program.

Wiseman (2012) cited a study by Good and Nicols (2001), which indicated that performance gaps in “at-risk” students are partially linked to instructional opportunities in classrooms. I agree with Wiseman that a deficit-based approach to teaching is often taken in schools rather than one that builds on strengths. In efforts to improve my reading skills, I often become disenchanted and overwhelmed by what individual students cannot do, and I forget to look at all that they can do and how far they have progressed as readers. Wiseman also cited the work of Allington and Cunningham (2002) to provide an example of an ineffective teaching strategy that decreases engagement: “When students spend more time on isolated skills instruction and extensive repetition, the result is disengagement and frustration” (p. 257). Understanding this statement and seeking to teach in a manner with which all students can be successful, active participants in lessons, Wiseman identified interactive read-aloud as an effective strategy that increases student engagement and literacy skills.

Reflecting on experiences with the Reading Recovery program, the teaching methods and professional development received have proven invaluable in the role as an educator focused on instructing young children to read. The skills acquired through this training are embedded in the daily instructional approach, leading to a consistent assessment of other reading programs against the benchmark of the highly regarded and research-proven effective Reading Recovery program.

While the Reading Recovery program boasts numerous positive elements, including one-to-one teaching by a highly trained adult, individualized instruction, quality materials, and a consistent routine, critical examinations reveal certain drawbacks. One concern lies in the student selection process, mandating that the weakest grade 1 student enters the lesson series, irrespective of potential hindrances such as cognitive delays, behavioral issues, or a lack of English language fluency. Advocating for equal learning opportunities for every child is paramount; however, the scarcity of Reading Recovery spots prompts consideration for alternative interventions tailored to the specific needs of the individual, as opposed to a rigid adherence to the selection process.

Another notable limitation is the absence of autonomy for students in choosing their reading materials. In the Reading Recovery program, teachers exclusively select books from an approved series, potentially lacking appeal to students. This lack of engagement with the learning material may exacerbate challenges for students who need it the most. The literature review underscores a prevalent theme across various research articles, emphasizing the importance of direct instruction in literacy skills (Ransford-Kaldon, Flynt, & Ross, 2011; Slavin, Lake, Davis, & Madden, 2010; Spencer, 2011; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Hedrick, Ginsberg, & Amendum, 2010). As educators critically assess and refine reading intervention

programs, the balance between structured methodologies and personalized, student-centric approaches emerges as a pivotal consideration for fostering effective literacy development.

According to its website, ALL (n.d.) is a business owned by Susan Radley Brown. The ALL program provides a balanced literacy reading and writing curriculum to strengthen instructional practice and leadership. ALL uses a content-based coaching model. ALL provides K-12 reading and writing units. It also provides teacher training to assist teachers in fully understanding the program and how to implement it to meet student needs (www.acceleratedliteracylearning.com).

The benefits of reading for pleasure have been widely researched and include both educational and personal development. There is a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment, and attainment. The OECD (2002) reported that reading enjoyment was more important for children's educational success than their family's socioeconomic status. Reading for pleasure has also been linked to greater text comprehension, grammar, positive reading attitudes, and increased general knowledge. Research suggests that frequent reading is associated with significant benefits across a range of literacy outcomes, such as syntactic knowledge and word recognition, reading comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, and oral reading fluency. Reading quality literary fiction has been shown to increase empathy and positive interpersonal characteristics (Comer Kidd & Castano, 2013; Oatley, 2016).

A large portion of research on the development of literacy centers on the process of learning to read. After reading has been mastered, children run the risk of becoming literate, which means they have the knowledge and abilities to understand literature but lack the motivation to read on a regular basis (Nathanson, Pruslow, and Levitt, 2008). Early childhood educators and parents collaborate to help children develop their reading abilities. The amount of time students spend reading for pleasure decreases as they progress through the school years (Merga, 2015). This may happen if there is a breakdown in communication between the family and the school and neither institution actively encourages youngsters to read. According to Merga (2019), this is known as "orphaned responsibility."

Reading efficiency relies on rapid and automatic tasks of word recognition, retrieval, and application of proper world knowledge (Lin, 2008, 2009b). This integrated process can be trained by extensive exposure to second language (L2) texts through reading. As Grabe (2002) pointed out most reading curricula in school did not provide L2 learners sufficient time to develop their reading skills. The instructors encourage their students to practice reading skills further out of the class. Extensive reading (ER) is currently the most easily utilized approach to reading efficiency. Over the past decade, there have been many studies focusing on ER, and even in the turning period of the 21st century ER research still causes attention in both foreign and second language contexts (Bell, 2001; Camiciottoli, 2001; Jacobs & Gallo, 2002; Powell, 2002). As well, the ER program's benefits for first- and second-language learners are well reported that ER is positively related to literacy development (Coady, 1997; Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2001). More specifically, ER effectively leads L2 learners to read fluently (Hill, 1997), to recognize sight vocabulary automatically (Day & Bamford, 1998), to reinforce L2 learners' vocabulary (Nation, 1997),

to wean off excessive dictionary use (Brown, 2000) and to develop positive attitude (Day & Bamford, 2002). From the ER literature, it can be found that relatively few studies focused on male and female learners' reading performance in an extended reading activity. In this study, reading materials at three levels of difficulty were used to examine whether there were significant differences between male and female student reading comprehension in an outside reading program.

DISCUSSIONS

In the needs assessment stage of this research, it was found out that sixty-seven percent of the Reading Efficiency Index of the respondents belong to the Frustration Level. This reading level implies that readers do not have an adequate background level for a topic and do not meet the criteria for instructional levels of accuracy and rate. Hence, these types of readers require extensive assistance from their teachers. The frustration reading level is also the lowest reading level where students show withdrawal from reading situations by refusing to read. Additionally, the focus group discussion as one of the research instruments in this paper was likewise an avenue for the researcher to find out the teaching and assessment techniques that the respondents were exposed to in their Reading classes.

Inclusive design for diverse learners is foundational to the advocacy for an educational reading program that centers on struggling students. This implies the crafting of pedagogical strategies that cater to diverse learning needs, prompting literature discussions to explore the merits of inclusive educational models and their contribution to addressing the unique challenges faced by struggling readers. A pivotal aspect of the proposed reading program is the necessity to tailor instructional approaches to the specific needs of struggling students. Literature should delve into various pedagogical methods and interventions proven effective in providing targeted support for learners facing difficulties in reading, encompassing personalized learning plans, differentiated instruction, and the integration of assistive technologies.

The significance of teacher training and ongoing professional development must be addressed to effectively implement an advocacy-driven reading program. Analyzing existing studies and best practices will shed light on how educators can be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to support struggling readers effectively. An exploration into the literature should emphasize the potential benefits of incorporating multisensory approaches within the educational reading program. Studies highlighting the impact of engaging multiple senses in the learning process can provide insights into fostering a more holistic understanding and retention of reading skills through visual aids, auditory cues, and kinesthetic activities.

An effective educational reading program necessitates a robust framework for assessment and progress monitoring. Literature discussions should evaluate existing assessment tools and methodologies, considering both formative and summative assessment strategies, to gauge their suitability for tracking the development of struggling readers. To ensure the success of the advocated reading program, the literature review should explore the role of parental and community involvement. Studies highlighting successful models of collaboration between educators, parents, and community stakeholders can provide valuable insights into creating a supportive learning ecosystem for struggling readers.

The approaches in reading instruction were more extensive, varied, and teacher-directed involving class and group dynamics. Yet in the new normal, these were limited to self-paced independent reading using printed modules and few digital reading resources. An alternative performance-based reading assessment was the main approach used by teachers during these trying times. They also attempted to use mobile and video-based assessments providing reading materials.

Ensuring quality service and optimal performance among remedial reading teachers necessitates a profound understanding of the multifaceted components influencing their growth and effectiveness. A comprehensive review of existing literature underscores the imperative for remedial reading teachers to cultivate the requisite knowledge and skills essential to their profession. Factors influencing their development are intricately interconnected, requiring teachers to comprehend them as integral aspects of the entire teaching experience. This understanding empowers them to reflect on their professional needs, fostering continuous improvement.

The findings from the analysis of two questionnaires reveal a notable deficiency in essential requirements for reading and processing literary texts among both teachers and students. Teachers, as identified in the research, often assign literary texts without considering fundamental criteria for successful reading. Instead, they frequently rely on preferred texts and comprehension questions, assuming that students possess adequate skills in reading literary texts. This assumption may stem from a belief that students inherently possess these skills or a lack of awareness among teachers regarding effective techniques and strategies for literary text treatment. Consequently, the responsibility is left to chance and improvisation.

To address this gap, literature teachers are urged to impart additional skills and strategies to students, surpassing what is typically acquired in secondary or preliminary education. Proficiency in reading literary texts requires an understanding that diverse texts demand distinct approaches and strategies. Teachers must design activities and strategies tailored to different text types, encouraging students to respond personally and critically. Equipping students with these skills, alongside appropriate strategies, facilitates the development of competent and confident readers.

Furthermore, this literature review emphasizes the complexity of reading a literary text, challenging the notion that it is a straightforward task often left to chance. While this research does not claim to provide all-encompassing answers, it aims to guide teachers and learners by elucidating key concepts about reading skills and proposing methods for integrating essential skills and strategies in literary reading. Acknowledging the ambitious nature of the project, the review suggests that more research is needed in the field to further support university teachers and learners and delineate fundamental requirements for literature teaching and literary text reading. This collaborative effort can contribute to the continuous improvement of reading education at the university level.

Although the basic education curriculum has reading competencies that comprise text processing and task management skills, categories stand out. Constructing an integrated text representation had the highest frequency. This competency requires learners to understand texts by making inferences from the level of individual sentences to the entire passage. This implies that the highest percentage of the reading competencies in basic education requires learners to make inferences. Using these data points, the Reading Program was designed and developed with various sections. The composition begins with an

introduction, objectives, preliminary activities, exercises and activities, and evaluative sessions. This was then tried out online among respondents. The evaluation was done by the experts involving the coordinator, faculty teaching language subjects and the respondents themselves. An evaluation instrument developed by Ong (2017) was used to rate the developed Reading Program. The results showed ninety-five percent of the evaluators composed of the 80 respondents, teachers, and school heads; rated the developed material with an excellent mark. By expounding on these dimensions in the literature review, we aim to construct a comprehensive understanding of the nuances and potential challenges associated with developing an educational reading program that places the needs of struggling students at its core.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the highlights of the discussions, the following conclusions were made:

1. Discussions highlight the crucial role of inclusive design in reading programs for struggling students. Recognizing diverse learning needs is vital, stressing the need for strategies that cater to a broad range of students. The literature review should explore the merits of inclusive educational models to overcome unique challenges faced by struggling readers.
2. The discussions emphasize the importance of tailoring instructional approaches for struggling students. The literature review should explore proven methods like personalized learning plans, differentiated instruction, and assistive technologies, providing educators with effective strategies to enhance reading skills in struggling students.
3. The discussions highlight the comprehensive nature of successful reading programs for struggling students. Teacher training, professional development, multisensory approaches, and robust assessment collectively form a holistic strategy. The literature review is poised to offer valuable insights into creating an effective reading program, emphasizing the integration of various elements to address the nuanced challenges faced by struggling readers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Contextualizing reading comprehension instruction places the learners in a vivid and meaningful authentic situation (Bonganciso, 2016). This can be done through designing the reading lessons and activities that center on the learners' field of interests and environment. As the study determined the effects of Advocacy for students on the reading innovation performance of the learners, the developed Reading Program aided the respondents in their comprehension problems. The reading comprehension performance of the learners after the intervention moved up to the Instructional Level from the lowest rank of the Frustration Level. Furthermore, there was a significant increase in the reading comprehension performance of the students from pretest to post-test. Hence, contextualizing the reading tasks of the learners had positive effects on their comprehension performance. It was recommended to help learners improve their performance in reading. The findings support the following recommendations:

1. Teacher should observe their students to learn what they can do, can almost do, or cannot do and keep records of teaching theories related to observed behaviors with dates of occurrence.

2. Teachers should include opportunities from the beginning for students to behave like readers who expect meaning from their reading and who use functional independent behaviors to support their early reading successes.
3. Teachers should offer a balanced program for individual learning that includes the incorporation of new knowledge and practice with familiar books for rereading during authentic reading opportunities. These behaviors should provide for flexibility and automatically, both critical in the early stages of reading development.
4. Teachers should instruct just beyond the student's current ability level and foster students by guiding them to be willing to make miscues that they detect and then self-correct.
5. Teachers should always consider the gradual reduction of teacher scaffolds as new knowledge is acquired. This supports independence especially when teacher support resumes if a student seems to flounder. These scaffolds should resume from least supportive to gradually increased help as behaviors suggest.
6. Teachers should foster the learner's disposition for independence as key to success when continual student learning is the goal.
7. Teachers should show or tell students what they did that was correct in early lessons and have students monitor their reading as a part of their repertoire of independent behaviors.
8. Teachers should allow the student freedom to learn in their own ways while teaching what needs to be known to solve current problems.
9. Teachers should check that taught strategies are learned. When learning has not occurred it is time to reteach in a different way.
10. Teachers' instruction should continually result from informed and reflective decisions to support student development based on observational data of student progress coupled with present need.

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