

Scanning The Pages: Struggles and Successes of Learners in the Reading Literacy Program (RLP)

Imelda N. Binay-an, Ph.D.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8132360X>

binayanimelda74@gmail.com

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College
Quirino, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

Abstract

This qualitative research using documentary analysis assessed the struggles and successes of learners in the reading literacy program. More specifically, it sought to determine the problems encountered by the learners; assess how the total development of the learners are being improved; identify what particular methodologies are being employed; and find out what the learners gained from the said program. In the analysis of data, the interview recordings were transcribed to arrive at extended texts. Interview with thematic analysis was used. Finding revealed that Multi and varied problems are faced by the learners during the conduct of the reading literacy program. There were mechanisms employed by the teachers that show development to the learners. Reading Methodologies vary to reach the level of the learner. Learners gained and experienced much during the conduct of the reading literacy program. Thus, it is recommended that the teachers, parents and learners must help one another to eradicate reading problems. Coping mechanisms shall be religiously carried out by the learner for them to improve and develop in their reading skill. Teacher must continue to be patient in teaching struggling readers by employing different methodologies applicable to them. Motivation is needed both internal and external. Parents must show their 100% support to their children particularly on remedial programs. Further studies maybe conducted with other variables not specified within the study.

Keywords: Struggles and Successes, Reading Literacy Program, Skills, Coping Mechanism

Introduction

Impact assessment is a method for measuring the efficacy of projects or activities and evaluating the significance of the resulting changes. The easiest way to verify these activities is to directly ask the beneficiaries what benefits they derived from the extensionists' intervention.

Research-based reading instruction provides children with opportunities to both comprehend the building blocks and expand their oral and written language skills. As children learn to read, they discover the relationship between spoken and written language.

In addition to professional, technical, and other academic competencies, literacy in reading also ranks among the most important skills. It is the fundamental academic competency for processing acquired information, innovating it, and producing new knowledge. The definition of reading proficiency evolves to reflect societal, economic, cultural, and educational changes. Reading cannot be considered a simple skill because it requires decoding and comprehension. Literacy in reading requires comprehension of both the explicit and implicit meanings of the text. It is the capacity to evaluate texts and apply their context to innovate and generate new knowledge based on the information received. (Cunningham and Stanley, 1998)

There are a variety of manifestations of academics' involvement in the community. Since they are equipped with scholarly abilities, it is anticipated that they will engage in extension work that is directly related to their area of expertise and is likely the result of their research output.

BASA Pilipinas (Read Philippines) was implemented in order to enhance literacy instruction in the classroom. The USAID-funded program aims to improve reading delivery systems and promote access to high-quality reading materials across the country by reforming reading instruction. The initiative evaluated novel reading remediation strategies and used ICT applications in reading classrooms. In addition, it assisted the Philippine Department of Education with the creation of legitimate and dependable early grade reading standards. In addition, it created and delivered high-quality opportunities for teacher professional development and expanded access to quality reading materials in certain rural and high-need schools. The Literacy Program made use of books and activities from BASA Pilipinas.

The Department of Education (DepEd) supports Every Child is a Reader Program, which seeks to make every Filipino child proficient in reading and writing at his or her grade level. The Phil-IRI utilized a classroom-based assessment instrument that measures and describes the reading performance of learners in both English and Filipino in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension. The three methods of evaluation aim to identify the learner's instructional independence and level of frustration.

A literacy curriculum includes all of the necessary components to master reading and writing. Reading and writing instruction are regarded two of the most difficult tasks a teacher must perform. A successful literacy program assists teachers in accomplishing a challenging task. This curriculum includes Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Instruction, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension, and Writing.

One of the fourfold functions of ISPSC is the mandate to undergo extension activities aside from instruction, research, and production. The prepared institutional Extension Agenda is in consideration with the vision of the previous administration which was “An Institution for Total Human Development” and the vision of the new administration; “A vibrant Nurturing Polytechnic Service College for Transforming Lives and Communities”. To cope with this mandate, the ISPSC, Tagudin Campus came with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) with Pudoc West Integrated School, Pallogan Elementary School, and Barangay Quirino Day Care Center to serve as service areas and became recipients of extension activities that ISPSC may offer. The Extension Program of the Tagudin Campus evolved into a sustainable extension activity dubbed as the ISPSC-Tagudin Campus Community Transformation Initiatives, (ICCTI) that encompasses or unifies the various extension activities in the past years. This is also the mandate of AACUP accreditation that for Level IV, programs must have conduct impact assessment of their extension activities. Hence, this study was conceptualized.

The Graduate School, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur has associated to some elementary schools of Tagudin district to conduct a reading literacy program through the use of Big books as the main instructional material. Pallogan Elementary School and Pudoc West Integrated School are the college partners with this activity. It was already more than years since the activity started.

Objectives of the Study

Primarily, the researchers aimed to determine the impact of the reading literacy program has brought changes to the lives of the learners, teachers, and community folks. In accordance, it sought to:

1. To determine the problems that were encountered by the learners in the reading literacy program
2. To assess how the total development of the learners are being improved by the literacy program
3. To identify what particular methodologies are being employed to help the learners in the reading literacy program

4. To find out what the learners gained from the said program

Methodology

The research employed a qualitative design. Through in-depth interviews, data were collected. The participants of the study were 15 teachers of the two partner schools, Pallogan Elementary School and Pudoc West Integrated School. The participants were chosen using purposive sampling in which three criteria were set. A) They are teachers from the given schools. B) They are from the barangay where the schools are located. C) They are willing to be interviewed. The extension activities started in Summer 2017 so it's high time to know the impact of such a study on the teachers where the adopted schools are found. Special participation of learners and the community folks of the barangay is also acknowledged.

This study used a qualitative approach using documentary analysis. In gathering pertinent data, the researcher used an interview schedule. An interview schedule is a guide in an interview and it contains possible questions which were asked during the interview proper. The interview protocol was constructed based on the problems of the study. Approval or consent from participants was appended in the conduct of the study.

Before the implementation of the study, permission from the District Office particularly the district supervisor was sought first. Upon approval of the conduct of the study, the participants were identified using the set criteria. Individual interviews were set in the convenience and willingness of the identified participants. The interview was transcribed every after the interview so that the interview transcripts were validated immediately by the participants: Then, focus group discussions with willing colleagues of the participants and community members were done to triangulate the data. Finally, the data were analyzed qualitatively.

In the analysis of data, the interview recordings were transcribed to arrive at extended texts. Interview with thematic analysis was used. The interview transcript was analyzed using the cool and warm analysis. In the cool analysis, significant statements were culled out to facilitate the coding process. On the other hand, the warm analysis was done to formulate themes and meanings among the significant statements of the respondents from the interview. The checking of the transcripts and clarification of the participants' responses were done to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data.

Results and Discussion

1. Problems on the Implementation of a Reading Literacy Program (RLP)

The Reading Literacy Program is a challenging and tiresome task. Lack of learners' comprehension and interest were some problems encountered by the learners during the conduct of the study. As emerged from the responses of teacher-participants, below are the excerpts from them:

As a faculty member, I can say that this program is tiresome yet worthy. Besides that, it was done during Saturdays some learners can read but not comprehend. They are fast readers but slow comprehenders. They have a hard time coping with other learners of their age. (T1)

Learners found no interest to cope with reading even though there were reading materials given to them, they were lazy to open these resources at home, as per observation, there was no follow-up by their parents. (T2)

It was challenging yet exhilarating to teach these struggling readers. Challenging in the sense that it was observable that they displayed poor reading skills. So, I have to strategize ways to teach them easier like the CVC pattern, meaningful approach. To please me, I said, I need to be patient because these learners come from varied backgrounds, levels, and cultures in the different subjects set by DepEd. (T3)

Teaching slow readers need patience. It was the time that I, being a teacher won't lose hope. Giving extra time in the preparation of the resources was a must. Due to limited reading resources, there was a need to sacrifice time, effort, and money. In the end, it was the target goal that manifests to improve their performance in reading. (T4)

This suggests that teachers enjoyed the extended activity and that what they did was worthwhile, as the primary objective was to increase students' reading skills. Even though it was an additional duty assigned to them, especially since it was to be completed on a Saturday, they accepted it with commitment and diligence. As even the cartoonist Chan Lowe 2019 Teacher's Association of Lancaster stated, teachers, are willing to execute the essential mandate they have been given, which is the education and wellbeing of society's most valuable people. As if they were their own children, teachers are even expected to place themselves in danger to safeguard the lives of their students. Tiffany Carr (2019) underlined that self-sacrifice is linked with the teaching profession. Teachers frequently go above and above. They arrive at school early, stay late, bring work home, plan and attend special activities, and donate their time, energy, and money to ensure the success of their pupils. On the topics of the learner's lack of interest, they struggle with reading, lack understanding, and receive little parental support. As evidenced by the learner's lack of interest and the absence of parental follow-up, motivation is low. The student will be more motivated if they observe their parents' efforts to improve their academic performance. According to Srivastava's (2018) research, pupils can perform better if they are awarded and recognized for their exceptional work in school. Malik and Asif (2012) Parents effectively inspire their children. Students' educational attainment can be enhanced by the provision of appropriate guidance and incentive. Another topic developed from the research is the instructor factor or the teacher's actions in achieving the desired outcome. Although the effort is somewhat sacrificial on the side of the teacher, they must devise strategies to instill a love of reading in their students.

To become an engaging and transformative educator, the following tactics should be implemented: a) Change through the development of instructional methods; b) change through the development of academic shells. c) subject matter competence and d) adult learning of knowledge. Duke and Pearson (2002) explained that competent readers actively engage with the text and are cognizant of its processes. They used to comprehend their needs. Students will create a more meaningful reading experience if they are taught reading practices that promote awareness. (<https://sciencedirect.com>) Dales Cone of Experience according to Tabadda and Buendia's (2015) is a methodology that integrates various instructional design and learning process-related theories. He theorized that learners retain more information by doing than by hearing, reading, or observing.

One predicament encountered that needed attention was when a learner cannot pronounce words correctly. So being a reading teacher, I find time to be with them (usually after lunch) or during their reading period. Strategies implemented like the alphabet method. It was a sacrifice and challenging experience teaching pronunciation to non-readers. (T5)

Aside from pronunciation was a problem with reading, a tendency of skipping the word because they do not know how to read, and stuttering or stammering was the result of poor

reading. Finger-pointing was observed. Reading pronunciation was implemented inside the classroom. (T4)

Poor pronunciation and poor reading were the results of learners' non-interest in reading. As observed, they only read in school and not continued at home because of limited reading resources. It was associated with the social status of the family that parents can't buy additional reading resources for their children. (T7)

This indicates that bad pronunciation was identified as a problem requiring a quick remedy. This suggests that there is a need to concentrate on the pronunciation, which necessitates a substantial amount of time spent rehearsing. Teachers must develop a variety of pedagogical approaches and pronunciations. As stated by Ladder (2018), insufficient emphasis on pronunciation might severely impact pupils' overall speaking abilities. Not only do they struggle with speaking exercises, but also with course comprehension. Consequently, they may fall far behind their peers. In addition to the first reason, having a recent story can make a student feel awkward when speaking English. Even though they are familiar with the grammatical rules of English and have an extensive vocabulary, their inability to speak in a natural manner can lead to misunderstandings. In most instances, pupils who are aware of their poor pronunciation are less motivated to improve their language skills. Poor reading is mentioned as a second situation that needs immediate action. This implies that reading is a basic life skill. Anderson (2001) et.al stated that reading is a life-long skill to be used both at school and throughout life.

The respondent's reading problem was due to word decoding and phonics, which includes knowledge of letter patterns and precise pronunciation of written words. In addition to the previously indicated comprehension words, there must also be effective communication words. Learners have difficulty locating the vocabulary they need to comprehend what they read. Regarding reading fluency, they must master reading with speed, precision, and correct expression. For reading comprehension, they struggle to comprehend what they read and make connections between what they need to know and what they already know. They require a sufficient vocabulary or an understanding of word meanings. Tamor K.Q. (2016).

2. Total Development of the Learner Improved by the Reading Literacy Program.

The cognitive ability of the students was the first thing the reading literacy program enhanced. It was subsequently followed by grooming, after which they became socially evolved. Responses from teachers regarding how the RLP enhances the overall development of students:

To be a reading teacher is difficult particularly if the learners are poor ones. Taking all these challenges led me to take the risk. I prepared additional reading materials for them just to lift them from being frustrated readers to independent or better if they are instructional readers at the end of the school year. I aimed to develop my learners cognitively by applying many varied reading comprehension strategies. It was again another fight to take the reading skills one at a time and give different activities just for emphasis and attaining comprehension little by little. But in the end, it was also a fulfilling activity that at the end of the day I can see them reading smoothly and understanding at ease their reading materials. There was transformation every day compared to the first time I met them. (T2).

Teacher E. It was a fulfilling experience getting to see the growth of my learners. Due to constant practice on reading orally, they were able to gain knowledge like being able to read, write simple sentences, and the message of the reading selection. (T6)

Teaching struggling readers was also rewarding. Despite the volume of work being a teacher, I can smile because I am an instrument to their reading success. (T3)

The experiences endured being a reading teacher increased more of my passion for teaching. I feel the one being extended to these learners from a blank state to a more confident one. As they improved, there was also a change in their hygiene and grooming. There was a neat glow in their faces as they pronounced and read words properly in front of their classmates(T1)

The application of the ones learned must be put into practice. The target is to develop learners not only cognitively, but how they relate themselves to their peers and classmates. (T2)

How they manage to ably interact with their peers by also citing some of their concepts and opinions. (T4)

The most amazing part was how they brought out their rich ideas after all the not so easy ways of becoming a fluent reader. (T5)

Cognitive development refers to how children reason, investigate, and discover information. It is the development of knowledge, defense, problem-solving, and temperament that enables youngsters to consider and comprehend their surroundings. To enhance a child's cognitive growth, you must engage in everyday quality interactions, such as a) expanding on your child's interest in certain learning activities b) addressing the child's "why" questions c) offering him/her options and encouraging him/her to make meaningful decisions. d) encouraging your child to experiment with various problem-solving strategies.

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children progress through four distinct phases of mental development. In addition to focusing on how children acquire knowledge, this study examines the nature of intelligence. It comprises a) the Sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years) d) the formal stage (ages 12 and up).

Piaget's discovery supported his developing theory that children's minds were not merely miniature replicas of those of adults. The way youngsters think differs from that of adults. Even further, he claimed that intellect is something that evolves and develops with time. Not only are children less bright than adults, but they also think differently. Early cognitive development, according to Piaget, is characterized by action-based processes, which are followed by modifications in mental operation. In the reading literacy program, writing is another ability that is acquired. This means that learners were able to enhance their handwriting skills via consistent practice. They were capable of letter recognition, sound interpretation, print awareness, and word spacing. Learning to write requires numerous talents. For handwriting, fine motor abilities are required. Putting words on paper involves spelling and other reading-related skills. They must systematize their thinking. Students are required to increase their sentence structure and vocabulary as they age. (Belsky, 2014) When a youngster realizes that an image, letter, or word symbolizes anything in his/her reality, he/she is able to begin acquiring language words, whether they are spoken, written, or visual. When a youngster discovers, for instance, that the term "dog" refers to a four-legged, hairy animal and that "cookie" refers to a delicious reward, they have discovered the word/image-reality relationship.

Experimental, Early, Transitional, Fluent, and Proficient are the writing stages. Learning how the entire system of written communication operates is a multi-year developmental process. The second aspect of development was grooming. When someone cultivates a relationship, trust, and emotional bond with a child or young person, this is known as grooming. This indicates that these students were able to establish positive relationships with their peers and teachers. As they exchange ideas and request one another's input during the activity, their trust and emotional connection grow. Grooming can be speaking with or seeking to befriend a child, parent, or career, or establishing a bond or other emotional connection. Compliment them or do favors for them, such as giving them a ride or planning exciting activities, in order to create relationships. This may result in the child spending less time engaging in pointless activities. Then they were socially mature, which resulted in improved relationships with their peers and teachers. They improved their ability to converse and interact with their friend by meeting with them every Saturday.

Particular tactics, such as the use of configuration cues (changing text with images) and sight words, were introduced. To encourage struggling readers, attractive educational materials with a localized focus were supplied. It was tough to provide them with basic rewards in order to encourage students to participate in every meeting. Below are excerpts from instructor responses to the question, "How does the reading literacy program enhance the overall development of the students?"

Knowing my learners' abilities was my first concern. First, I thought of a particular methodology that sought up to their level. In the primary grades. The configuration clues were introduced, replacing the text with pictures. Using the sight words was introduced to them. Materials were no longer limited but additional and more colorful ones were distributed. (T1)

Teacher-made stories particularly localized ones were the ones used. (T6)

Before every meeting end, there was a time to convince the learners to come back to the next meeting for them to continue their reading sessions. As a way of convincing them, giving rewards like a notebook, ballpen and food was offered to the readers (T5)

During the implementation phases of the reading program, sending letters and programs to parents and barangay officials was done to let them know the performance of their children in school. If there was an increase in their reading performance. (T3)

For parents too, so that they can follow up their children at home and send them if there are meetings done particularly it was on a Saturday. (T4)

This refers to the strategies that must be implemented in order to aid the students in the reading literacy program. These are the favorable comments that will persuade students and community members to participate in the program or activity. Every reading instructor has his or her own methods of instruction, which serve as his or her pedagogical tenets. These lead to the development of suitable lesson plans, learning activities, instructional materials, and evaluation methods. The approaches utilized should be proportional to the pupils' abilities. (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015)

There are three motivating mechanisms: intrinsic, intrinsically identifiable, and introjected. Extrinsic motivation is an external influence that compels individuals to act or behave in a particular manner, such as completing a task or job, but it can also be a personal aim, such as losing weight. It contains incentives, promotions, and prizes. In a community extension project, invitation letters or programs to parents are decoded extensively in order to honor their assistance and significance. This will motivate them to enroll their children in this activity at least once.

Intrinsic motivation is an internal, subjective motivation considered to emerge from actions aligning with values or from the enjoyment of accomplishing a task. Despite being subjective, performance can be evaluated in a variety of ways, such as by awarding prizes that indicate value, such as "parent of the month" or "best participant." This is applicable to a community extension program based on what they can accomplish, such as the title. This is their input that results in their most successful output.

As I watched them developed, I observed that they dislike playing alone; they learn to cooperate in group settings and group games. (T2)

They spent a lot of time talking with peers thus developing lasting friendship with them. They focused on a common interest particularly on the same sex. (T1)

Learners were highly interactive. They felt light hearted and felt free to talk anyone and everyone. Their auras were much better as compared from the start of the activity. (T3)

They are extremely confident. As if they have nothing to worry about and can flaunt themselves in a very glib manner. They were able to develop their inherent charisma naturally drawing more people towards them. (T4)

They are very proactive. They make things done very efficiently. They do not postpone things to the last minute and get things done very smoothly. (T4)

Being close to them, I observed that they were able to distinguished right from wrong and they learned to behave accordingly from their actions. (T4)

Being their second parent in school, I observed that they were able to distinguish right from wrong and they learned to behave accordingly from their actions. (T1)

They want to accept and take given responsibilities to them. Appointing them to become leaders in a particular activity was liked and observed as change to these learners. (T4)

They became vulnerable of every day's routine in school. They were always present in class. (T6)

Their negative values changed, they became loving, respectful and generous. (T6)

This suggests that these students have benefited from the reading literacy program. They were transformed from an ordinary individual, becoming more robust and developed. They were transformed into a completely functional individual. Rogers, a humanist psychologist, stated that a fully functioning

individual is one who is in touch with his or her most profound feelings and wants. These people learned how to comprehend their own feelings and lay a great deal of faith in their own instincts.

Conclusions

The following are some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the study based on the findings. During the course of the reading literacy program, the students are confronted with a wide range of issues of varying degrees of severity. The instructors used a variety of different tools and strategies in order to demonstrate the learners' progress. Reading methods can be tailored to the individual learner in a variety of ways. During the course of the reading literacy program, participants gained a lot and had a lot of new experiences.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. Teachers, parents, and learners must help one another to eradicate reading problems.
2. Coping mechanisms must be religiously carried out by the learner for them to improve and develop in their reading skill.
3. Teachers must continue to be patient in teaching struggling readers by employing different methodologies applied to them.
4. Motivation is needed both internal and external. Parents must show their 100% support to their children, particularly on remedial programs
5. Further studies may be conducted with other variables not specified within the present study.

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