



IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING FLUENCY AND INTEREST USING SCIENCE CONCEPTS READING MATERIALS THROUGH MICROSOFT TEAMS READING PROGRESS TOOL

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

We/I hereby attest to the originality of this research paper and have cited properly all the references used. I further commit that the final research study emanating from the approved proposal shall be original content. We/I also declare that the intellectual content of this BERF study is a product of our/my work.

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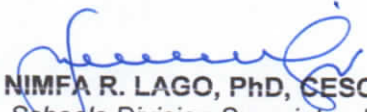
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APPROVAL SHEET

In fulfilment of the requirements for the Basic Education Research Fund, this study entitled, **"Improving Students' Reading Fluency and Interest Using Science Concepts Reading Materials through Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool"** prepared and submitted by **Marvin S. Tusoy**, is hereby recommended for acceptance and approval.

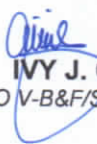

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Improving Students' Reading Fluency and Interest Using Science Concepts Reading Materials through Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool in improving the students' reading fluency and interest using science concepts among the seven Grade 9 students of Ozamiz City National High School during the 3rd Quarter of SY 2022-2023. The data were collected through pretest and posttest to assess the reading progress and interest of the students. Counts and percents of students' reading progress levels were analyzed. The study also included a qualitative analysis of the data collected through surveys or interviews with students to gather their perceptions and attitudes in using the tool. The results indicated that students improved their reading accuracy after using the tool. The project intervention improved the student's confidence, increased engagement and motivation, and enhanced teacher-student interaction. The research findings provide valuable insights for teachers on using technology to support their student's reading progress and promote a positive learning environment.

Keywords: *engagement, motivation, reading material, struggling readers, technology in education*

I. Context and Rationale

Reading is the process of interpreting and understanding written or printed text. It involves the ability to decode written words and derive meaning from them, as well as the ability to comprehend and analyze information presented in a text. Reading can be done silently or aloud, involving various materials, such as books, newspapers, magazines, articles, websites, and more.

The reading status of students in the Philippines has been a concern raised by educators and policymakers in recent years. While there are certainly many students in the country who are enthusiastic readers and who understand the importance of reading for learning and personal growth, there are also several challenges and barriers to widespread reading among students.

One of the main challenges to reading among students in the Philippines is access to reading materials. Many schools, particularly those in rural and remote areas, lack access to

libraries and other sources of reading material. Additionally, many students may not have the financial resources to purchase books or other reading materials.

Another challenge is the lack of emphasis on reading in the educational system. While there are certainly many schools and teachers who prioritize reading instruction and encourage students to read, there is often a lack of emphasis on reading as a leisure activity and a means of personal growth. Additionally, the focus on standardized tests and exams may lead to a narrow focus on reading for test preparation rather than for the sake of learning and personal enrichment.

Despite these challenges, efforts are certainly underway to promote reading among students in the Philippines. The government has launched several initiatives, such as the DepEd's National Reading Month (DM No. 244 s. 2011) and the Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiatives) (DM No. 173, s. 2019), which aim to promote reading and literacy among students. Additionally, several non-governmental organizations focus on promoting literacy and reading culture among students through various programs and activities.

One of the applications developed by Microsoft is Microsoft Teams. According to Sharapova (2019), Microsoft Teams offers a range of features to support effective communication and collaboration among team members, making it a popular choice for businesses and organizations of all sizes.

Reading Progress Tool, one of the embedded features of Microsoft Teams enhances the students' reading performance. It was launched in March 2021 and is available for Microsoft Teams for Education users. It is a tool designed to help educators track and monitor student progress in reading comprehension and provide detailed insights into each student's reading performance, including the number of words read, reading rate, and accuracy, which allows teachers to identify areas of strength and weakness and provide targeted support. The tool includes features such as audiobook support, comprehension quizzes, and built-in reports to help educators monitor student progress over time.

For Octavo and Vargas (2022), the tool is greatly acceptable regarding its content, goals, and overall usefulness. In other words, the teachers found the tool satisfactory and effective in achieving its intended purpose.

Evaluation and feedback from experts in the field can ensure that educational tools and resources are effective, relevant, and appropriate for the intended audience. The positive evaluation of the Microsoft Teams reading tool by English experts and master teachers implies that the tool is expected to be successful in enhancing students' reading fluency. In other words, the tool has been deemed effective by experienced professionals and is likely to aid students in improving their ability to read easily and quickly.

Additionally, the tool is designed to support personalized learning and is intended to be used alongside other teaching strategies and resources. Microsoft Teams Reading Progress is part of a broader effort by Microsoft to support educators and improve learning outcomes through technology. Microsoft Teams Reading Progress is a valuable tool for improving reading fluency and comprehension. By providing audiobook support, comprehension quizzes, progress tracking, and personalized learning opportunities, the tool can help students develop the skills they need to become fluent readers.

According to Molenda and Grabarczyk (2022), employing the Reading Progress tool for delivering individualized manual feedback on orthographic words can prove trustworthy and time-saving. Despite the usefulness of Reading Progress in providing manual feedback for individual orthographic words, caution is advised for researchers intending to assess the accuracy of an automated pronunciation assessment module. It is crucial to proceed with care while testing such modules to ensure reliable results.

Oral reading fluency involves reading a written passage accurately, quickly, and with appropriate intonation, emphasis, and expression while also understanding its content. It requires quick and automatic recognition of words, enabling the reader to understand and enjoy the text. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with natural rhythm and phrasing. Oral reading fluency is crucial for children and adults as it is closely associated with reading comprehension, allowing readers to understand and absorb the content more effectively.

Improving reading fluency can also positively impact speaking ability, as fluent readers are generally better able to comprehend and produce spoken language. Additionally, the Reading Progress Feature promotes motivation and engagement among EFL learners, who can see their progress and receive recognition for their accomplishments, Prasetya (2022). However, it is important to note that speaking is a complex skill involving many aspects, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse. While improving reading fluency can be helpful, it may not be sufficient to fully develop all aspects of speaking ability.

According to Aldhanhani and Abu-Ayyash (2020), oral reading fluency is a vital aspect of reading acquisition, and numerous research studies have established its strong correlation with reading comprehension. An individual with good oral reading fluency can accurately and swiftly read words with appropriate expression, allowing them to concentrate on comprehending the written material. Conversely, individuals with fluency difficulties may need to expend more cognitive effort on word decoding, resulting in challenges with reading comprehension.

Assessing oral reading fluency typically involves having a person read a passage of text aloud while being timed and evaluated for accuracy, rate, and expression. There are also commercially available assessment tools for assessing oral reading fluency, such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and the Aimsweb Plus. These tools provide standardized procedures for assessing fluency and offer norm-referenced data for comparison with other students of the same age or grade level.

On the other hand, reading interest refers to a person's level of curiosity, engagement, and enjoyment when reading. It is the degree to which someone is interested in reading, both in terms of the topics they choose to read about and the act of reading itself. Although having a comfortable and inviting reading environment can play a significant role in fostering a positive reading experience, the teacher's role in promoting and inspiring reading is equally important. In other words, while a pleasant reading space can be conducive to reading, the teacher's efforts to motivate and encourage students to read can profoundly

impact their reading habits and preferences. Therefore, both factors are essential to promote a reading culture among students (Juliansyah and Rukmana, 2022).

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is a reading assessment tool developed by the Department of Education in the Philippines. It measures students' reading skills in accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. In this study, Individual Reading Progress Monitoring will be utilized. The level is categorized into Proficient (Performs 75% to 100% of the required tasks), Developing (Performs 50% to 74% of the required tasks), Emerging (Performs 25% to 49% of the required tasks) and Beginning (Performs 24% and below of the required tasks). The following early-grade tasks were employed in this study: orientation to print, letter name knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, initial sound identification, familiar word reading, invented word decoding, oral passage reading, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, listening comprehension, and dictation.

Figure 1 on the right reflects the Individual Reading Progress Monitoring Chart. Based on the data, 7 students belong to the Beginning Level. This level refers to students who perform 24% and below of the required tasks.

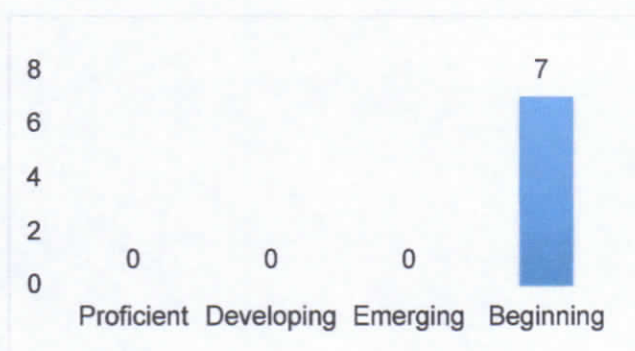


Figure 1. Learners' Reading Progress

Although this number is not as high, it will still affect the student's learning ability since reading difficulties can affect their ability to comprehend lessons in other subjects. Reading is a foundational skill necessary for success in many areas of academic study, and difficulty with reading can impact a student's ability to access and process information across all subjects. In addition, reading difficulties can lead to frustration and disengagement from learning, as struggling readers may feel discouraged or overwhelmed by the demands of reading-based assignments and assessments. This can further hinder their academic progress and motivation.

The preceding discussions above support a need to provide a classroom-based intervention to address the students' reading fluency and develop a love for reading, which leads to an increase in early-grade tasks and individual reading progress.

II. Action Research Questions

The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool in improving the students' reading fluency and interest using science concepts among the seven Grade 9 students of Ozamiz City National High School during the 3rd Quarter of SY 2022-2023.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' reading fluency and interest level before and after using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool?
2. Is there a significant difference in students' reading fluency and interest before and after using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool?
3. What other improvements are notable among the participants after the project intervention?

III. Intervention, Innovation, and Strategy

This action research project was conducted among the seven Grade 9 students at Ozamiz City National High School during the 3rd Quarter of SY 2022 – 2023.

The Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool is utilized within the Microsoft Teams for Education platform to assist educators in monitoring and supporting students' reading progress. Teachers can assign reading materials, track student progress, and create assessments related to the assigned materials to gauge comprehension and reading proficiency. The tool generates insights and analytics to help educators assess class performance, offer personalized feedback, and make data-driven instructional decisions. It integrates seamlessly with other Microsoft 365 tools and offers accessibility features. Educators can adapt instruction based on the tool's data and insights to meet individual

student needs. Specific features and availability may vary based on subscription and updates, so it's advisable to consult official Microsoft documentation for the latest details on its usage.

In this study, the students used the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress tool as instructional support, while the researchers used the tool to track each student's reading progress, including the time they spent reading, the number of words they read, and the number of errors they made. The researchers used this information to identify areas where students may need additional support and provide targeted instruction.

Initially, the teacher and students downloaded the tool in Google Chrome. To effectively use the tool, they logged in the Microsoft Teams using their Office 365 email accounts. Then, the teacher set up preliminaries such as creating assignments in the Reading Progress and uploading the science reading material. Upon setting up completion, the teacher generated the code and gave it to the students to access the assignment.

The research was conducted for 6 weeks. During this time, students participated in daily reading activities, and the teacher used the Reading Progress tool to track student progress. The data was gathered through pretest and posttest to assess the reading progress and interest of the students. The pretest was administered to all students to assess their initial reading level and interest. The posttest was administered after the completion of the instruction to assess the effectiveness of the different instructional methods.

The students' initial and final accuracy ratings were recorded and tabulated to get the percentage of increase and determine the intervention's success. The study also included a qualitative analysis of the data collected through surveys or interviews with students to gather their perceptions and attitudes toward using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool and the reading materials. Journals were also collected to ascertain the respondents' significant changes.

Table 1. Work Plan, Time Estimates, and Deliverables

Phase/Activity	Strategies/ Activities	Time Estimates	Person/s Responsible	Deliverables
A. Pre-Implementation Phase				
Craft the Action Research Proposal	Craft the action research proposal	February 2023	Researchers	Attendance
Ask permission from the Head of the Agency for Approval	Write an intent letter to the Head of the Agency for approval	February 2023	School Principal Researchers	Intent letter for approval
Validate the science reading materials	Validate the science reading material/tool.	March 2023	Researchers	Minutes of Meetings/
Conduct of orientation to the identified respondents.	Orient the respondents on the use Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool	March 2023	Researcher	Minutes of Meetings/
B. Implementation Phase				
Implement the use of the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretest • Assess the reading fluency and interest of the students • Posttest 	Implement the use of the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool Create a student account in the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool	March-April 2023	Researchers Class Adviser	Desktop/ Laptop/ Camera /Speaker
C. Post-Implementation Phase				
Gather of data	Gather data based on the result of the assessment	April 2023	Researchers	Action Research Manuscript
Analyze and Interpret Data Collected	Analyze and interpret data collected based on the responses of the students.	April 2023	Researchers	Action Research Manuscript
Write the findings, discussion, conclusion, tips/ recommendations	Complete the findings, discussion, and conclusion	May 2023	Researchers	Action Research Manuscript
Prepare an action research report.	Furnish the copy of the final result	May 2023	Researchers	Project Reports

IV. Action Research Method

Research Design. The study was action research by design. Action research was initiated to solve an immediate problem or a reflective process of progressive problem-solving, Chamundeswari (2013). The researcher followed the procedure in action research,

such as identifying the problem, action planning, implementation, and assessment (Mertler, 2021) through pretest and posttest to assess the reading progress and interest of the students.

This study also used the science concept reading materials to provide students with a rich and engaging learning experience, helping them develop content knowledge, vocabulary, critical thinking skills, reading comprehension skills, and interest in science.

The pretest was administered to all students to assess their initial reading level and interest. The posttest was administered after the completion of the instruction to assess the effectiveness of the different instructional methods.

Site. The study was conducted at Ozamiz City National High School, with approximately 5,000 enrollees for SY 2022-2023. It was located in Lam-an, Ozamiz City. The school offered different programs, namely, the Regular Curriculum, Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) Program, Special Program for Technical and Vocational Education (SPTVE), Special Program in the Arts (SPA), Open High School Program, Special Program in Journalism (SPJ) and Senior High School.

Participants. A total of 7 students of Ozamiz City National High School during the SY 2022 – 2023 were the participants in this study. As reflected in the PHIL-IRI pretest results, these students were categorized as beginning readers in their reading status and performed 24% and below of the required tasks. The list of students was obtained from the record of the Grade 9 English teacher.

Data Gathering Methods. In this study, the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool was used to assess the student's reading performance level and measure if there was a significant improvement after using it. The data were collected through the auto-generated reading accuracy results in the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool. The score generated before and after using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress was also used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in their reading performance. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Semi-structured interviews were also employed to discuss their experiences with reading instruction and related challenges or issues.

Other Sources of Data and Information. Other data sources included school Form 2 (SF2), Anecdotal records, and Grade sheets. The SF 2 was needed to monitor the attendance of the students. It was collected from the advisers of the respondents. The anecdotal record was used for behavior monitoring. Journal was also used to determine the respondents' perceptions and attitude changes.

Ethical Consideration. The data and information gathered in this study were treated with the utmost confidentiality. The names of the respondents and journals were kept confidential. Informed consent was given to the respondents before conducting the study, and parental consent was guided on its objectives and purposes.

Data Analysis Plan. The study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) in computing the mean and standard deviation to determine the significant increase before and after this research intervention. Quantitative data gathered in this study were tabulated, analyzed, and organized using descriptive statistics such as percents and counts.

The study also included a qualitative analysis of the data collected through surveys or interviews with students to gather their perceptions and attitudes toward the different instructional methods and reading materials. Data analysis was done objectively.

V. Discussion of Results and Reflection

The comparison of the pretest and posttest on the students' reading fluency and interest before and after using the Microsoft Reading Progress Tool is reported in Table 2. On average, students improved their reading accuracy by approximately 9.92% after using the tool, with individual improvements ranging from 2.06% to 15.38%. These results indicate that the tool positively impacted students' reading fluency and interest, with most students showing significant gains in reading accuracy.

The discussion above suggests that the project implementation, which involved using Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool with science concepts reading materials, positively impacted the student's reading progress. The result was supported by Octavo and Vargas (2022), that the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool is an effective interactive

instructional tool that improves learners' reading performance. Therefore, this tool can potentially enhance students' ICT skills.

Table 2. Level of Students' Reading Fluency and Interest (Accuracy Rate) Before and After Using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool

Students	Baseline (n=7) Accuracy Rate	Endline (n=7) Accuracy Rate	Percentage of Increase
1	86.00	99.00	15.12
2	90.00	97.00	7.78
3	87.00	98.00	12.64
4	87.00	95.00	9.20
5	97.00	99.00	2.06
6	78.00	90.00	15.38
7	83.00	89.00	7.23
Mean	86.86	95.29	9.92

Table 3 below shows the results of a statistical test that compares the mean scores of the pretest (baseline) and posttest (endline) scores.

The mean score of the baseline test was 86.86, with a standard deviation of 5.87, while the mean score of the endline test was 95.29, with a standard deviation of 4.19. The t-value is 6.77, and the p-value is 0.00. The p-value is less than 0.05, which indicates that the difference between the means of the two tests is statistically significant. Therefore, it can be inferred that the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool has significantly improved the student's reading progress.

A recent action research project by Almutairi (2022) supported this finding, stating that using Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool considerably improves learners' speaking abilities.

Table 3. Test of Difference Between the Generated Students' Reading Progress Scores Before and After the Use of the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool

Test	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Baseline	7	86.86	5.87	6.77	0.00**
Endline	7	95.29	4.19		

*Note: ** means highly significant at 0.00 alpha level.*

Table 4 below presents the survey results conducted to determine the overall level of interest of the students in using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool. The participants were asked to rate their interest level using a four-point scale ranging from

"Excellent" to "Poor." Out of the total number of participants (N=7), 6 or 86% rated their interest level as "Excellent," while the remaining 1 or 14% rated it as "Good." None of the respondents rated their interest level as "Fair" or "Poor." These results indicate high interest among the students in using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool.

Table 4. Overall Students' Level of Interest in Using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool

Statement	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
What is the level of your interest in using the MT Reading Progress Tool?	(6) 86.00	(1) 14.00	0.00	0.00

Other Notable Improvements of the Students

Improved Confidence among Struggling Readers. The Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool positively impacted the confidence of struggling readers. The tool provided a personalized and adaptive approach to reading instruction, allowing students to work at their own pace and receive targeted support where they needed it most. Using the tool, struggling readers could see their progress and gain a sense of accomplishment, which helped boost their confidence. One student stressed that:

"I am so excited to read using Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool because after using the tool, my confidence has been increased. I greatly help a lot for me". (Participant # 2)

Increased Engagement and Motivation: The tool offered a range of interactive features such as progress tracking, goal setting, and rewards that helped students stay motivated and engaged in their reading practice. The tool also provided immediate feedback, which helped students identify areas where they needed improvement and adjust their reading strategies accordingly. One student noted that:

"using Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool gives excitement because after reading, I saw my overall score." (Participant # 4)

Enhanced Teacher-Student Interaction: The tool provided real-time feedback to teachers about students' reading progress, allowing them to tailor their instruction and provide targeted support to students who needed it most. Another student noted that:

"I am so excited to see our teacher so that I can practice my reading skills through Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool." (Participant # 3)

Findings. The study found that implementing the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool with science reading materials positively impacted students' reading progress. Pretest and posttest scores increased significantly from 86.86 to 95.29 ($t\text{-value} = 6.77, p < 0.05$), indicating substantial improvement. Moreover, the tool boosted confidence in struggling readers, increased engagement and motivation, and enhanced teacher-student interaction. Survey results indicated a strong student interest in using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool.

Conclusion. Using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool with science concept reading materials significantly improved students' reading progress. This improvement was evident in higher reading levels, increased mean scores, and positive effects on student interest, confidence, engagement, motivation, and teacher-student interaction. The tool was found to be effective in enhancing students' reading progress.

Reflections. As a teacher, it is important to consider incorporating technology, such as the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool, in the classroom. Based on the results, it is clear that using this tool can significantly positively impact students' reading progress, confidence, self-esteem, engagement, motivation, and teacher-student interaction. They can explore using the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool to provide personalized and adaptive reading instruction, track progress, and provide targeted support where needed.

Additionally, teachers should support struggling readers and consider using the tool to enhance their confidence and self-esteem. The interactive features of the tool, such as progress tracking, goal setting, and rewards, can help students stay motivated and engaged in their reading practice. Teachers can also use the real-time feedback tool to tailor their instruction and provide targeted support to students who need it most.

Finally, engaging students in their reading practice and considering using the tool to increase engagement and motivation is important. The tool provides immediate feedback,

which can help students identify areas where they need improvement and adjust their reading strategies accordingly.

The research findings provide valuable insights for teachers on using technology to support their student's reading progress and promote a positive learning environment.

VI. Action Plan

With assistance from the school, the researchers provided training on the effective use of the Microsoft Teams Reading Progress Tool to enhance student reading progress, engagement and motivation. English and Filipino School Reading Coordinators worked collaboratively to monitor and analyze student progress and use this information to adjust instruction and provide targeted support to struggling readers.

The school conducted periodic surveys to gather feedback from students about their experiences with the tool and use this information to make necessary adjustments and improvements to its implementation.

To further enhance student motivation and engagement, the school considered incorporating additional interactive features and incentives within the tool, such as leaderboards and virtual badges. Teachers provided ongoing feedback to students about their progress, highlighting areas of improvement and offering praise and recognition for their successes.

This study was a fundamental reference for future researchers who aim to conduct further studies on this topic. Moreover, this research was presented at the Divisional Research Congress.

Finally, this action research will be disseminated in education journals and magazines, serving as a valuable resource for future educators and researchers.

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