



# PROJECT SARS (SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT AS READING SPECIALIST): IMPROVING READING OF FOURTH GRADERS IN PAGADIAN CITY DIVISION

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## **Project SARS (Special Assignment as Reading Specialist): Improving Reading of Fourth Graders in Pagadian City Division**

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### **Abstract**

The study aimed to highlight the reading abilities of fourth-graders in selected primary schools in the Pagadian City Division through a Special Assignment as a Reading Specialist (Project SARS) for the School Year 2021-2022 by determining the level of reading abilities before and after implementation of Project SARS. The study also gathered feedback from the reading specialists on the reading program and the abilities of the participants. The study was conducted in Districts 2 and 14 of Pagadian City Division. The research participants were determined with the use of the PHIL-IRI assessment. The intervention was implemented for learners that acquired a school reading profile of less than 14. One hundred fifty-seven (157) pupils have scored below 14, which means that their reading level is at the Frustration level. Nineteen (19) teachers out of all class advisers in the elementary schools, ten (10) and nine (9) from Districts 2 and 14, respectively, were purposively chosen in observance of the Health and Safety Protocols as prescribed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). Before the research was carried out, a pretest was given to evaluate their reading abilities. After the intervention, a posttest was given to assess the effect of the intervention on their reading abilities. The study revealed that there is a significant difference in the reading performance of the learners before and after the implementation of the reading intervention. However, the Reading Specialists emphasized their challenges encountered with Project SARS such as time management, lack of motivation, and inaccessibility of learners.

*Keywords: PHIL-IRI Assessment; Reading; Reading Specialist; Special Assignment as Reading Specialist (SARS)*

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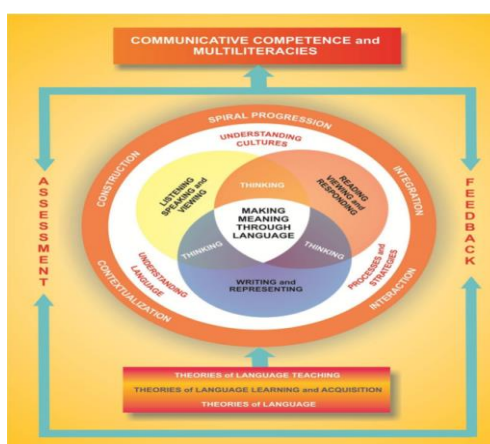
## Context and Rationale

"Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP)" under DepEd Order No. 70 s. 2011 is a program that covers the whole nation. It addresses the conviction of the Department to equip every child to be a reader concerning his/her grade level. This program supports the Education for All (EFA) goal, to which there is an active school involvement for reading and elimination of dropouts and repetition in the first three (3) grades. It is implemented through the design, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation of early reading interventions, and development, administration of reading assignments, and treatment and reporting of data. This program is crucial, especially at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic following the guidelines on the optimum allocation of funds for Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) based on DepEd Order no. 50, series of 2012.

The English Curriculum Framework in the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum is anchored in language acquisition, learning, teaching, and assessing principles. Language examines experiences and knowledge concerning prior knowledge and experiences. It is learned by engaging with and studying texts, which may be in written form (reading and writing), visual, and oral communication (listening and speaking). Enhancing the reading abilities of students to which language is learned increases the learner's ability to understand introduced basic and complex concepts more clearly and be able to make connections, anticipate probabilities, reflect on notions, and address them.

The English Curriculum Framework aims for communicative competence and multiliteracies. Moreover, this aspiration can be achieved through a continuous assessment cycle and feedback to and from the students. Communicative competence and multiliteracies make meaning through language that involves intensive thinking by listening, speaking and viewing, reading, viewing and responding, and writing and representing, which results in understanding language, processes and strategies, and language. This is made sense through the interaction, integration, spiral progression, construction, and contextualization of language teaching theories, language learning and acquisition, and language itself (K to 12 Curriculum Guide in English 2016).

**Figure 1: English Curriculum Framework**



Administrators can assess this through the standards set by the Department of Education, such as the Use of Content and Prior Knowledge, Comprehension Strategies, Comprehending Literary Text and Informational Text, and Attitude. This is

demonstrated by activating prior knowledge conceptually akin to the text, establishing a purpose for reading, and appreciating literary devices by responding to the literary text. The standards also include self-awareness in analyzing text and creating new meanings and knowledge. The learners are also expected to demonstrate mastery in performing literacy-related tasks.

The researcher recognizes teachers' vital role in achieving this curriculum framework's goals. This implies that with the active assistance of the teachers, students are more likely to learn the basics of the language, that is, reading and writing, listening and speaking, and visual communication.

In 2016, under the Aquino administration, the education reform aimed for children to be a reader in the first grade but started with the third grade with the ECARP in 2001. A mandatory pre-schooling was then implemented where necessary infrastructures such as libraries were built, reading books, and teachers were trained in teaching reading (Cruz 2011).

The 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), participated by 79 countries, was conducted in 2019, in which Reading was the main subject assessed among 15-year-old participants. The average reading score of the country was 340, which exceeds 200 points below China (555) and greater than 100 points less than the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, which is at 487. This outcome placed the country at the lowest among PISA-participating countries (San Juan 2019). Multiple factors contribute to low reading fluency and comprehension scores, demonstrating how traditional teaching could have been more effective with students' learning. Although the Department of Education has stayed within the allocated budget to improve learning in the country, clearly, changes have to be made to address this problem.

In a group of learners who have performed below grade level expectancy on reading tasks related to comprehension and fluency guided reading intervention with a specialist increases their confidence in a group of learners who have performed below grade level expectancy on reading tasks related to comprehension and fluency. A variety of reading titles have augmented their interest. Also, graphic organizers were used to simplifying processes and allow participants to experience success (Gabl et al. 2007).

Reading specialists are professionals with advanced degrees in reading, giving them the responsibility to prevent reading failures in their assigned schools. They contribute in three (3) specific areas, such as (1) instruction, (2) assessment, and (3) school leadership. In the Instruction area, reading specialists support, supplement, and extend classroom teaching and work collaboratively to implement a scientific quality reading program that addresses the students' needs. As for the Assessment area, the reading specialist has proficient knowledge and understanding of assessment that is necessary in developing, implementing, and evaluating the literacy program. With leadership, the reading specialist may provide leadership and guidance as a resource person to other educators and stakeholders (International Reading Association 2000).

The researcher aimed to increase the fundamental literacy skills of fourth graders of selected schools in Pagadian City Division, specifically those schools that are located in districts 2 and 14, by assessing the effectiveness of designating a reading specialist for non-readers.

In order to do so, the researcher intended to conduct a training workshop for selected class advisers on how to provide intervention before their designation as reading specialists and utilize the Philippines Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) to measure and describe the reading performance of the respondents. It is an assessment tool comprising of graded passages designed to identify a student's reading level.

However, it is limited to the approximation of the learner's abilities. It may be combined with other reliable assessment tools focusing on the study's objectives.

PHIL-IRI is an initiative to support ECARP. Prior to the design and provision of appropriate instruction for students, the teachers should have equipped themselves with knowledge of their students' current reading levels and abilities. Under the K-12 Curriculum, fourth graders are offered under word recognition with different sounds of words within the first quarter of the school year, as shown in the table below, which is the focus of the study. It is the act of seeing a word and recognizing its pronunciation without any conscious effort.

**Table 1: Word Recognition Fourth Graders within the First Quarter**

| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Week</b>  | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week</b>   | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Week</b>   | <b>4<sup>th</sup> Week</b>   |
|---|--|--|--|
| Read words with short o and u sounds in CVC pattern and common sight words; read 2-syllable words comprising of short e to u sound. | Read words with initial consonant blends followed by short vowel sounds; read words with initial and final consonant digraphs ch and sh. | Read words with long a, i, o, and u sounds, one-syllable, and 2-syllables. | Read words with vowel digraphs ai, ay, ea, ee; read words with vowel diphthongs oy, oi, ou, and ow; read some irregularly spelled words. |

*Source: The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual, 2018.*

This study is significant due to the proper recognition of improving Reading Abilities through the Designation of a Reading Specialist for Non-Readers of the fourth graders. The study findings will benefit pupils, teachers, parents, school administrators, supervisors, the Department of Education, specifically Pagadian City Districts, Curriculum planners, the community, and future researchers.

### **Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy**

The area of focus of the study is enhancing the reading abilities of the participants through the Designation of a Reading Specialist. With the foundation of reading skills, children will succeed in school and adult life. By equipping teachers to be Reading Specialists, they will be able to teach children the best comprehension strategies to provide a solid foundation.

The researchers utilized the Designation of a Reading Specialist for Non-Readers to the Philippines Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI). To do this, three (3) major activities were conducted to achieve the objectives: 1. Capacity Building of Research Specialists; 2. Development of Materials used for instruction; and 3. Actual Implementation.

**Capacity Building of Reading Specialists.** Before dwelling on the actual implementation of the innovation, the identified teachers were subjected to capacity building. Advisers of the 4<sup>th</sup> graders were automatically selected as Reading Specialists since there are no other options for most teachers are lone teachers from far-flung barangays, especially District 14. During the training, the teachers were oriented on the relevant information on the objectives of the study and the significance of their roles, among others, to ensure that the plan worked out. The activity aimed to increase and

develop skills and competencies at an individual level. This intervention ensured their capability and competency as Reading Specialists.

***Development of Materials for Instruction.*** The developed materials were designed during the training of Reading Specialists as to the varying students' levels of reading abilities. Providing the general design on how the lesson will be delivered following the English Curriculum Framework, the developed reading materials are expected to enhance the learning process for students to become active in learning. These materials were subjected to Quality Assurance by trained personnel from the Division Office.

***Actual Conduct of the Reading Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy.*** To ensure that the innovation, intervention, and strategy work effectively on the students, a pretest was given to the students to evaluate their reading abilities. After the pretest, data on their performance were documented as a reference.

They were subjected to the proper instruction after finding out the students were eligible for the study. The materials used were developed during the training of the teachers, which is the main innovation of the study. A follow-up posttest was also given to assess whether the intervention had been adequate for the students. The reading specialists were interviewed individually to determine their perceptions on improving the reading abilities of the fourth graders.

### **Action Research Questions**

There have been empirical studies regarding the different approaches in the elevation of reading abilities of learners, such as public acknowledgment of improvement, scaffolded instruction through differentiated teacher-created matrices, and graphic organizers (Stenson 2006), incremental increases in the difficulty of materials (Jinks and Lorschach 2003, 113-118), provision of feedback to students regarding their work (Linnenbrink and Pintrich 2003, 119-137), usage of images (Taylor 1978), the introduction of unfamiliar vocabulary, structured instructional procedure for guiding student reading (Schwartz and Sheff 1975, 150-154), development of visual imagery (Lesgold et al. 1975, 663) retelling technique, close-type exercises (Lopardo 1975), request procedure (Manzo 1979, 123-126), structured comprehension procedure (Cohn 1969), repeated readings (Samuels 1979, 403-408), etc. However, only a few, particularly on the Special Assignment as Reading Specialists.

This study intended to probe the impact of the Designation of a Reading Specialist for Non-Readers approach on selected schools in Districts 2 and 14 of Pagadian City Division. Specifically, this action research sought to answer the following:

1. What is the level of learners' reading abilities as revealed by the PHIL-IRI assessment result prior to the implementation of Project SARS?
2. What is the level of learners' reading abilities as revealed by the PHIL-IRI assessment result after the implementation of Project SARS?
3. Is there a significant difference between the learners' reading abilities before and after the implementation of Project SARS?
4. What are the perceptions of the reading specialists on improving the reading abilities of fourth graders?
5. Based on the findings, what instructional reading materials can be designed to improve the learners' reading performance?

## **Action Research Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized the mixed method research design since it is both interested in the quality of the information and the quantity of data. The quantitative research design involves measuring the incidence of views and opinions in a chosen sample or aggregate results, while the qualitative research design provides insights into the setting of the problem and generates ideas and hypotheses.

In determining the level of the reading abilities of the participants before and after the implementation of the intervention and their significant difference between them, quantitative research was employed, whereas in the part wherein perceptions of the reading specialists on improving the reading abilities of the fourth graders were utilized a qualitative design.

### **Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information**

The study was conducted on currently enrolled fourth graders of selected schools from Districts 2 and 14 of Pagadian City Division during the first grading period of the school year 2021-2022. Students are expected to read to learn by third grade (Casey 2010). In effect, fourth graders were chosen as the study's target participants to ensure that students were already equipped. Target research participants were determined with the use of PHIL-IRI assessment results. The intervention was implemented for students that have acquired a school reading profile of less than 14.

After assessing the students from the different elementary schools, it has been found that out of 496 who have enrolled, 157 students scored below 14, which means that their reading level is at the Frustration level, disregarding those 339 students who have scored 14 and above (Table 1).

Nineteen (19) teachers out of all class advisers in the elementary schools, ten (10) and nine (9) from Districts 2 and 14, respectively, were chosen purposively as reading specialists who taught reading to the low-performing learners in a face-to-face arrangement. After implementing this reading project, these reading specialists were gathered for feedback through individual interviews held in Purok Reading Centers, where the respondents reside in observance and compliance of the Health and Safety Protocols as prescribed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF).

**Table 2: Participating Schools and Corresponding Reading Specialists and School Reading Profile**

| Name of School | Reading Specialist    | School Reading Profile |          |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|
|                |                       | 14 and above           | Below 14 |
| School 1       | Reading Specialist 1  | 0                      | 5        |
| School 2       | Reading Specialist 2  | 26                     | 7        |
|                | Reading Specialist 3  | 22                     | 10       |
| School 3       | Reading Specialist 4  | 4                      | 13       |
| School 4       | Reading Specialist 5  | 3                      | 20       |
| School 5       | Reading Specialist 6  | 6                      | 12       |
| School 6       | Reading Specialist 7  | 9                      | 7        |
| School 7       | Reading Specialist 8  | 12                     | 11       |
| School 8       | Reading Specialist 9  | 12                     | 9        |
| School 9       | Reading Specialist 10 | 26                     | 3        |



|              |                       |            |            |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|
|              | Reading Specialist 11 | 24         | 4          |
|              | Reading Specialist 12 | 21         | 3          |
| School 10    | Reading Specialist 13 | 26         | 11         |
|              | Reading Specialist 14 | 29         | 7          |
|              | Reading Specialist 15 | 31         | 8          |
|              | Reading Specialist 16 | 31         | 6          |
|              | Reading Specialist 17 | 25         | 11         |
| School 11    | Reading Specialist 18 | 32         | 10         |
|              | Reading Specialist 19 | 23         | 13         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |                       | <b>339</b> | <b>157</b> |

### **Research Instruments**

The research instrument used in the study is the PHIL-IRI testing kit used to evaluate the students and the reading materials developed during the training.

The PHIL-IRI testing kit was used to assess the students' performance through a pretest. With this, students eligible for Project SARS were subjected to the reading intervention using the developed reading materials during the training of the reading specialists. A posttest was given to measure the effectiveness of the reading intervention on the students. A five-item interview guide was given to the reading specialists to determine their perceptions of improving the students' reading abilities.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher asked permission from the Office of the School Principal for consent to allow the researcher to conduct the study with their students. The researcher sought consent from their class advisers, who were the research specialists of the study.

A capacity building training was conducted to ensure that teachers were equipped with the technical know-how of the innovation. This training included a discussion on PHIL-IRI and its testing kit, General and Specific Directions for the Administration of the PHIL-IRI Graded Passages, and Literacy Curriculum and Domains Literacy. Workshops were then facilitated to the teachers to assess whether lectures were absorbed.

An orientation on the purpose and significance of the study, discussion of risks and benefits, involved commitment, and protection of confidentiality, especially the privacy of their answers and scores, was conducted with the participants in observance of the Health and Safety Protocols as prescribed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). It has been made sure that the findings of the study were used for academic purposes only. Informed consent and assent were secured. It was explained thoroughly that the study was voluntary and that none of them was forced to participate against their will.

The researcher gathered data based on the PHIL-IRI pretest and posttest. The PHIL-IRI pretest and posttest focusing on the assessment of the comprehension level were validated by experts in the field, specifically the Quality Assurance team of the Division Office. A follow-up interview with the reading specialists was scheduled to gather feedback on the implementation of the project in observance of the Health and Safety Protocols as prescribed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). Qualitative data was also gathered to triangulate the data source from the results of the tests.

### **Data Analysis**

This study employed a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analysis to study the impact of designating a reading specialist to non-readers. The observation and measurement of their reading ability were obtained over the course of implementing the

reading project. The collected data were processed and analyzed by applying descriptive and inferential statistical measures. Statistical tools such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation were utilized to establish the status and the measure of the dispersion of the achievement level of the learners. Microsoft Excel was used to tabulate the data and compute descriptive statistics.

To determine the level of learners' achievement, students were classified into Independent, Instructional, and Frustration Levels. Independent Level is a grade level that a child can read on his/her own without any assistance; Instructional Level is a grade level that a child can read with the support of a teacher, while Frustration Level is a grade level that a child can no longer read and understand on his own.

Paired samples t-test was employed to test the significant difference between the pupils' performance with and without the reading specialist. Microsoft Excel was utilized in analyzing the data.

The study also utilized thematic analysis, guided by the procedure and principles of a qualitative study, to evaluate the implementation of the reading program. This ensured proper feedback from the participants on implementing the Designation of a Reading Specialist to Non-Readers. The gathered data were examined, categorized, and analyzed inductively to find patterns, determined meanings, and constructed conclusions. The identified patterns and revealing themes were presented and supported with a two-day training workshop on the selected class advisers for implementing Project SARS.

## Results and Discussion

***Level of Learners' Reading Abilities prior to Project SARS Implementation.*** Before the research was carried out, the researchers had given a pretest on all the students of the participating schools in the study to evaluate the level of their reading abilities and to determine the subjects of the study, which are those with reading at the frustration level. Out of 496 enrolled students in the school, 157 have scored below 14 in reference to the PHIL-IRI assessment. Students who scored above 14 during the pretest were excluded from the study. This is in line with the study of Pouzevara et al. (2019), wherein the research found that there is a low score in the average English Reading fluency among Filipinos. A few reasons cited were inconsistency in the implementation of policies, the mismatch between the language of instruction and mother tongue, lack of teaching and learning materials, and low quality of reading instruction.

**Table 3: Level of Learners' Reading Abilities prior to Project SARS Implementation**

| <b>Level</b>  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Frustration   | 157              | 100.00%           |
| Instructional | 0                | -                 |
| Independent   | 0                | -                 |

***Level of Learners' Reading Abilities after Project SARS Implementation.*** After the intervention, a posttest was given to the students to assess whether the intervention had an effect on their reading abilities. It has been found that 5.73% of the students have improved from a frustration level to an independent level which is remarkable given the time constraint. 60.51% of them have improved to an instructional

level which still signifies the enhancement with the intervention. However, a significant 33.76% has retained their reading ability at the frustration level, this result implies that although the intervention has been effective for the majority of the participants, there is a little more than a third of them have the intervention ineffective to them.

**Table 4: Level of Learners' Reading Abilities after Project SARS Implementation**

| Level         | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Frustration   | 53        | 33.76%     |
| Instructional | 95        | 60.51%     |
| Independent   | 9         | 5.73%      |

**Learners' Reading Abilities before and after Project SARS Implementation.** This study shows that the intervention has increased the level of reading abilities of the students, as evidenced by the improvement in the figures in Tables 3 and 4. It has also been found that at an alpha value of 0.05, a p-value is  $1.13 \times 10^{-34}$ . Since the p-value is less than the alpha value ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ), the null hypothesis is rejected, implying a statistically significant difference between the learners' reading abilities before and after the implementation of Project SARS. It can then be deduced that the intervention has been proven effective for the study subjects.

Several studies emphasized the benefits of assigning reading specialists to improve the reading skills and overall literacy of the learners (Mason and Ippolito 2009, 314; Margolis, Denny, and Hollander 1995, 185-206). The International Reading Association (2000) highlighted the contribution of reading specialists in three (3) specific areas, such as (1) instruction, (2) assessment, and (3) school leadership. They provide the necessary support to extend classroom teaching. The association also underscored the importance of their proficient knowledge and understanding of assessment that is necessary in developing, implementing, and evaluating the literacy program. And more importantly, the reading specialist may provide leadership and guidance as a resource person to other educators and stakeholders.

**Perceptions of Reading Specialists.** All assigned reading specialists have found the reading materials helpful in teaching reading to the students. One of them has indicated that the reading materials will only work if the implementors, in this context, the reading specialists, will seriously do their share of the work. The most common challenges the reading specialists have faced during the implementation are time management, restrictions from the parents, and accessibility of students. Since the reading specialists have other functions in school apart from the intervention, such as teaching, module preparation, and administrative functions, among others, it is a challenge for the teachers to manage their time and how encourage parents to allow students to come despite the threat of the pandemic. Another challenge is the accessibility of students in terms of their location and time. Since they are only 4<sup>th</sup> graders and considering that we are still in a pandemic, they have to be assisted by their parents, who also had other responsibilities. Fortunately, the reading specialists were able to cope with these challenges with their unique strategies, such as having a positive mindset, recalibrating focus, submitting themselves to God, and others who have asked for assistance from their co-teachers.

These coping mechanisms expressed by the reading specialists in confronting the challenges are crucial in attaining the goals and objectives of Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP) under DepEd Order No. 70, s. 2011. The Project SARS proved to be effective in enhancing the reading skills of the learners. However, the challenges

encountered by the teachers should also be considered by the school administrators and other education stakeholders so that the reading specialists also receive appropriate support.

***Development, Validation, and Utilization of Reading Materials.***

During the training, the researchers diagnosed the areas in which the students' reading abilities need more attention. With this, 157 reading materials were developed. The pretest results have provided the general design of how the lessons that the students need are to be presented and delivered. The reading materials were expected to enhance students' learning process to become more active in learning.

After the design, the reading materials were submitted to the Quality Assurance team of the Division Office to ensure the standardization of the reading materials. This validation process seeks to uphold the standards of the Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) of the Department of Education.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study shows that schools in Districts 2 and 14, approximately 33.76% of their students have a school reading profile below 14. The remaining students were excluded from the study. This means that the students are at a frustration level prior to intervention. It has also been found that the intervention program has increased the students' reading abilities. In light of the data obtained from the study, it has been found that the reading specialists' reading materials are effective for the students, as evidenced by the changes before and after the implementation. With this, it can clearly be observed that the strategy contributed to students' reading abilities.

In the interview with the Reading Specialists, it was found that the common challenges among them were time management, lack of motivation, and inaccessibility of students. They have encountered the struggle with time since Project SARS is not only their task, but they also have administrative tasks and school preparations, which also take up a lot of time, which paves the way for work and life imbalance. Another is the lack of motivation and inaccessibility of students. The pandemic has a grievous effect on all sectors, especially on students, all the more on those in the far-flung areas, which often is the reason that they lack motivation. To combat these challenges, the specialists have asked for technical assistance from their co-teachers, who have readily helped them along the way. Another is that they strengthened their relationships with God. All specialists were grateful for the opportunity since they were able to know on a personal level what was really happening on the ground. With the intervention, they were able to monitor and see the situations of their students, keeping in mind the safety protocols prescribed by IATF.

The lack of variation in the reading process is one of the primary causes of low reading abilities among students. It is, therefore, necessary that interest is maintained in learning for students to improve their reading abilities. Assigning a reading specialist to assist these low-performing students will give them more room for improvement, considering that the teacher needs to focus to only a few.

The study's findings are important since they reveal information on the standing of fourth graders and methods used by the researchers, which were proven to be effective. This can be replicated in other classroom settings to generate more comprehensive data on the reading abilities of students in their respective institutions.

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**Financial Report**

| <b>ITEM</b>   | <b>QUANTITY</b> | <b>UNIT</b> | <b>UNIT PRICE</b> | <b>COST</b>  |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Bond Paper    | 8               | Ream        | 250.00            | 2,000.00     |
| Printer Ink   | 4               | Bottle      | 300.00            | 1,200.00     |
| Special Paper | 5               | 20's Pack   | 50.00             | 300.00       |
| Marker        | 10              | Piece       | 30.00             | 300.00       |
| Snacks        | -               | -           | -                 | 1,200.00     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | -               | -           | -                 | <b>5,000</b> |

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Form

Title of the Study:

**Project SARS (Special Assignment as Reading Specialist): Improving Reading of Fourth Graders in Pagadian City Division**

Principal Investigators:

**Perez, Jocelyn T., EdD and Cantila, Juanito N. Jr., EdD**

I agree to participate in this study, I understand that the focus of the study is to document and analyze the effect of SSS as an aide in modular distance learning for students from families with low educational attainment.

**1. Confidentiality:** I understand that the information provided by this study may be used for research purposes, including publications in a research journal. All personal information, however, will be coded, and at no time will my personal identity be revealed.

**2. Voluntary participation:** The nature and purpose of the study has been explained to me. I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or victimization. I may terminate my participation at any time I choose, without penalty. I understand that I may withdraw from participation at any time I choose, without penalty. I understand that I may withdraw from participation at any point in the study with no penalty whatsoever.

**3. Termination of Participation:** My participation in this research may be terminated without my consent if the investigator believes that any part of the study may put me at undue risk. My participation may also be terminated if I do not adhere to the study protocol.

**4. Persons to contact with questions:** I understand that the principal investigator in this study is: \_\_\_\_\_. I also take note of the contact persons as indicated in the information leaflet that accompanied this letter which I will file for safekeeping and later reference.

**5. Consent to participation:** I certify that I have read all of the above and received satisfactory answers to any questions that I may have had. I, therefore, willingly give my consent to participate in the study. (I will be provided with a copy of this signed informed consent)

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Participant's Signature

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Date