



THE FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN READING OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF PARACALE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the foundational skills in reading of the Junior High School students of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it sought to answer the following; 1) What is the literacy level of Junior High School students of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023?; 2) What is the status of the foundational skills in reading of the students under Frustration Level in terms of; a. phonemic awareness; b. phonics; c. fluency; d. vocabulary and e. comprehension?; 3) What are the difficulties/challenges experienced by the students under Frustration Level? and 4) What plan/interventions/actions may be proposed as revealed by the study?

The findings of this action research on literacy level of the Junior High School of Paracale National High School revealed that 306 or 12.15 percent in independent level while 2033 or 80.71 percent in instructional level while 180 or 7.15 percent belong to Frustration level. Further revealed that Grade 7 has the highest number of students in frustration level with a total of 74 or 11.30 percent. It was followed by Grade 8 with a total of 59 students or 9.18 percent; Grade 9 with 27 or 4.49 percent and Grade 10 has 20 or 3.22 percent students under frustration level. Furthermore, among 180 students at frustration level, 20 students have the ability to recognize the sounds of speech and are aware of the rhyme, sounds, and syllables; 71 students have the ability to recognize phonics; 67 students have the ability to read with proper speed, accuracy, and expression; and 16 students have the skill in vocabulary; and six (6) students have comprehension.

Then, the intervention entitled, Readers in Colors was developed and implemented to improve the foundational skills in reading of students belong to Frustration level. After three (3) months of implementation of the project, results show that 36 students moved to level 3; 27 students moved to level 2; and 63 students moved from level 1 to level 2 or 3. Hence, this study recommends that the utilization of the project Readers in Color should be sustained and implemented until July 2023 and the school year onwards. Likewise, be implemented to reduce the number of students under frustration level. Also, recommended that when there are students who cannot improve to level 3 in foundational skills in reading shall be subjected to assessment by an expert to diagnose their learning disability.

Keywords: Foundational skills, frustration level, junior high school

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CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

It has been more than two years now that the country still facing the threat of COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, education shall continue amid challenges through the implementation of distance learning modalities. On August 22, 2022, all public schools resumed classes in face-to-face learning modality by virtue of the DepEd Order No. 034, s. 2022, (Implementing Guidelines on the School Calendar and Activities for the School Year 2022-2023).

To ensure the effective implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum, the Department of Education has released the Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) 2030. This plan covers post-COVID-19 recovery and transition, addressing the remaining gaps and focusing on quality and system-wide capacity development. Thus, Learning Recovery and Continuity Plan (LRCP) was crafted which was focused on learning remediation and intervention. The key outcome of the Department's recovery planning and success is ensuring that learning gaps are identified and addressed among all learners, especially the most vulnerable ones.

Subsequently, Brigada Eskwela 2022 launches the Brigada Pagbasa which is an after-school reading program in response to Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3B's initiatives). This initiative encourages all public schools to conduct reading activities. Reading is an important basic skill to be mastered by the person. Reading is the act of processing text to produce meaning. It is also a process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them. But to be able to read, it requires the person to acquire the skills in reading. Thus, reading

is a way of getting information and transmitting it. The reader will interact, conduct a dialogue, and actively engages with the text to decode, assign meaning, and interpret. Then after reading, there is a message to be conveyed or constructed so that the readers can communicate well and organize information to become more proficient and effective communicators.

According to Zimmerman et al. (2013), reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. It relies on two, interconnected abilities: word reading (being able to decode the symbols on the page) and language comprehension (being able to understand the meaning of the words and sentences). Further, in making sense of a text, however, it does not remember the exact words and phrases which read. Rather, it forms a mental model of what the text describes by integrating the sense of the words and sentences into a meaningful whole, like a film that plays in the head.

To be able to read, there are foundational skills that need to be mastered by a person. According to National Reading Panel (NRP), there are 5 major components of effective reading instruction such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These components are need to be mastered by the children to become reader with comprehension.

However, De Vera (2021) reported the World Bank observation that children who could not read by age 10-or at the latest, by the end of primary school usually failed to master reading later in their schooling career. Sadly, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that less than 15 percent of schoolchildren in the Philippines, or about three in every 20, can read simple texts in large part due

to the longest schools' closure of more than 70 weeks of the middle of February caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, the study of Nurmalasari et al. (2021) about students' difficulties in learning reading shows the reason for their confusion while reading in English. Some aspects influence their motivation to learn hard in reading, the lack of the students' knowledge in English vocabulary give effect they are difficulty to arrange the word meaning for their understanding. Thus, the teacher can be aware to quest the appropriate media to increase their motivation in reading English

Similarly, the results of the study by Cabardo (2020) about the reading proficiency level of students in Hagonoy National High School revealed that the majority of the students belonged to frustration level of reading proficiency in silent reading while in instructional level for the oral reading in which majority of the males are less proficient in reading compared to females in both silent and oral reading.

However, in the case study of Akyol (2019) about reading difficulty and its remediation found that the reading problems and develop reading skills in a fourth-grade primary school student with sound, syllable, and word recognition exercises found that the student's desire to read increased, he began to read out loud, he began to identify sounds that he previously did not recognize or confused, and improvements in his reading skill were observed.

At present School Year 2022-2023, the Paracale National High School conducted the reading assessment to all Junior High School students and revealed

that there are 130 students who fall under Frustration Level. At this level, students read at less than a 90% accuracy (i.e no more than one error per 10 words). Frustration level text is difficult for the reader. The results of the assessment will be used as the basis for devising reading activities and interventions. The data is vital for the teachers to determine who among of their students who could not be able to read and comprehend. In this way, teachers will be more contextualized in their lesson preparation and delivery.

Analyzing the foundational skills in reading plays a vital role in developing proper approaches and strategies for teaching students how to read and comprehend. From these premises, the proponent as the school head of the school, wishes to identify what are the lacking foundational skills in reading at the Junior High School of Paracale National High School to be able to craft proper interventions and reading programs to address these gaps and to reduce the number of slow readers.

Moreover, in support to the DepEd Learning Recovery Program, the proponent wishes to contribute in addressing the gaps in the reading literacy of the students particularly in Paracale National High School this action research. The number of students who are under frustration level in secondary level is alarming and needed immediate action. Thus, this action research was realized.

INNOVATION, INTERVENTION, AND STRATEGIES

As revealed in the reading assessments that there are 180 Junior High School students of Paracale National High School under Frustration Level which

is alarming and need to make necessary interventions, considering that all students in the Key Stage 3 in K to 12 Curriculum were expected independent readers. In this case, the intervention in this study is called ***Readers in Colors***, in this project the students who are under frustration level were coded according to their reading skills. The researcher assigned a color to each student. These colors associate with the student's skills in reading e.g. Level 1-yellow (phonemic awareness and phonics); Level 2-red (vocabulary); Level 3- green (fluency and comprehension). These colors were tagged to the profile of the students and only teachers have access to them. In addition, the students under level 1 are those who will start phonics and CVC pattern. For level 2, the students can only read basic sight words and simple sentences. Then in level 3, students were able to read paragraphs but need to develop reading comprehension skills. The color coding helped the teachers to identify their students who are under the frustration level and their ability in reading then, the teachers provided them with necessary learning activities which complement their ability in reading. Thus, the color serves as the basis for determining the reading activities and selecting appropriate reading materials which are given to the students under frustration level.

Accordingly, the color-coded students were communicated to their advisers, English teacher, and subject teachers so that they were informed on the reading capabilities of the students. All subject teachers were oriented and capacitated on how to provide instructions and assessments to these students based on their color code. In this innovation, once they are coded, varied strategies in reading remediation such as guided reading, partner reading, tutorial, and IRI

(Individualized Reading Instruction) were applied by the volunteer tutors and teachers depending on the reading level of the learner. In this project, there are several approaches were considered such as Marungko Approach, Fuller Approach, The Sight Word Approach, the Linguistic Approach, The Language – Experience Approach, The Multisensory Approach, The Phonics Approach, and others. Aside from that, engaging activities like Think-Pair-Share, Secret Answer, Quick Count, Stand up/Sit Down, One-word Splash, Thumbs up/Thumbs Down, etc, were applied. The frustration readers were given follow-up activities through Project ARTS and SHAWL every Saturday, and assignments as well as inspirational messages/ advice from the reading coordinator and assigned teachers after each session.

The reading sessions were done in the school learning resource center through the assistance of the facilitators of each session who are the proponent, teachers in English, Filipino, Mathematics, and AP who volunteered during their vacant period. Volunteer student leaders and writers from Sea Breeze and English Club also participated during their free time. The retired teachers, reading advocates, community leaders, SGC, SPTA, and other organizations were encouraged to become tutors of these students.

Further, there are reading activities conducted outside the school, through Brigada Pagbasa program, these students proceeded to the learning center in their respective barangay to read and perform some prepared reading activities by the volunteer tutors in the barangay on Saturday. At present the school has executed a memorandum of agreement to the nine (9) barangays of these identified

students. The barangays have pledged support like the use of their learning center, computer and some were provided snacks for students and tutors.

Furthermore, the students were assessed periodically to determine whether their foundational skills in reading were improved. When the students show improvement in their level of reading comprehension, then they received recognition. Then, other reading activities were provided for them to further improve their reading comprehension until such time that they will become independent readers and graduate from the reading program. A certificate of recognition was awarded to the students who successfully passed the reading program at the school.

Accordingly, after succeeding sessions of reading interventions, level 1 and level 2 readers had a chance also to level up according to their reading performance until they reached level 3. Meanwhile, level 3 readers were assessed using Phil IRI Post Oral Reading test and Reading Comprehension Post Test. Hence, as revealed in the post-test conducted on April 2023, it shows that 15 out of 180 students undergoing the reading program have already completed and passed the post-test, this means that these 15 students were independent readers. The results also show that number of students in comprehension is 48 from 5 during the pre-test. This means 89.5% increase in the number of students in comprehension level as the impact of the project Readers in Color. Evidently, level 1 which includes phonemic awareness and phonics have decreased to 58 from 92. This also means students belong to level 1 skills in reading have improved to 58.6% to levels 2 and 3.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This action research study aims to determine the foundational skills in reading of the Junior High School students of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following;

1. What is the literacy level of Junior High School students of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023?
2. What is the status of the foundational skills in reading of the students under Frustration Level in terms of;
 - a. phonemic awareness;
 - b. phonics;
 - c. fluency;
 - d. vocabulary and
 - e. comprehension?
3. What are the difficulties/challenges experienced by the students under Frustration Level?
4. What interventions may be developed to improve the foundational skills of the students under Frustration level?

ACTION RESEARCH METHODS

This action research utilized a quantitative-qualitative mixed method. The quantitative research method was used to identify the level of reading

comprehension of the Junior High School students. The qualitative method was employed in this study to describe the number of students and their foundational skills based on the assessment. Observation and interview were conducted to determine the difficulties and challenges of the students under the Frustration Level.

a. Participants and/or other sources of data

As shown in Table 1, the participants of this study are the 180 Junior High School students who are under Frustration Level of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023. Purposive sampling was utilized in selecting the participants in this study. This method was used because, this study focuses on the same group of students with the same characteristics that this study needs. The participants are the identified students who fall under the Frustration Level in reading comprehension.

Table 1
Respondents (n=130)

Grade Level	Male	Female	Total
Grade 7	48	26	74
Grade 8	33	26	59
Grade 9	18	9	27
Grade 10	8	12	20
Total	107	73	180

Moreover, the main source of data are the documents are the results of the reading assessment using the PHIL-IRI pre-test and post-test. Responses from interviews and observation reports are also the sources of data. On the other hand, the parent's consent was secured to ensure that all parents are informed about the participation of their children in the research.

b. Data Gathering Methods

This action research utilized three (3) methods in data gathering. First is a document analysis of the results of the reading assessment of all junior high school students using the PHIL-IRI assessment tool conducted on September 2022. The data gathering started on January 2022 by analyzing the foundational skills of the students who are under the Frustration Level based on the existing results of the reading assessment. A document analysis method was also used in data gathering to identify the foundational reading skills in reading of the participants of this study which focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These are the enumerated elements in reading as provided in the 3Bs initiatives that need to be mastered by the learners. The second method is the development of the intervention, innovation, and strategy on how to address the gaps in the foundational skills in reading of the learners under frustration level.

Afterwards, the developed intervention, innovation, and strategy called “Readers in Colors” was implemented. After that, the proponent with the help of English teachers conducted daily reading activities for the respondents for their improvement in reading. The third method is the interview and observation using an interview guide to determine the challenges of learners in reading under frustration level. Further, the information gathered from the students’ participants was treated as confidential and used for educational purposes only.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTION

This section presents the discussion and results of the data gathered and reflection according to the statement of the problems. There were four (4) research problems stated in this action research; 1) What is the literacy level of Junior High School students of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023?; 2) What is the current status of the foundational skills in reading of the students under Frustration Level in terms of; a. phonemic awareness; b. phonics; c. fluency; d. vocabulary and e. comprehension?; 3) What are the difficulties/challenges experienced by the students under Frustration Level and; 4) What plan/interventions/actions may be developed as revealed by the study?

Literacy Level of Junior High School Students of Paracale National High School for School Year 2022-2023

Literacy is one of the most fundamental skills a child can learn and reading is the foundation of all academic learning. Using the Phil-IRI reading test these students were tested on their ability to read through word reading and comprehension. Table 2 shows the number of students and their literacy level per grade level of the Junior High School students of Paracale National High School for the School Year 2022-2023. It can be gleaned from the table that there are 306 students or 12.15% of Junior High School students are independent readers; 2033 out of 2519 or 80.71% of students belong to instructional level; and 180 out of 2519 students or it covers 7.15% belong to the Frustration level.

Table 2
Literacy Level of Junior High School of Paracale National High School
for SY 2022-2023 (n=2519)

Grade Level	Frustration Level			Instructional Level			Independent Level			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Grade 7	49	25	74	262	260	522	19	40	59	655
Grade 8	33	26	59	264	278	542	20	22	42	643
Grade 9	18	9	27	258	256	514	21	39	60	601
Grade 10	8	12	20	208	247	455	56	89	145	620
Total	108	72	180	992	1041	2033	116	190	306	2519
%			7.15%			80.71%			12.15%	

The finding suggests that only few or 12% of the Junior High School are independent readers where the results of their reading assessment using the Phil-IRI tool scored 97-100% in word reading and comprehension scores are 80-100%. In this level, these students were considered as readers function on their own with almost perfect oral reading and excellent comprehension (Flipppo, 2014). Accordingly, majority of the students or 80% of the total population of the junior high school are instructional readers. The scores of these students in the reading assessment was 90-96% in word reading and in comprehension is 59-79% he level. These students are readers who can profit the most from teacher directed instruction in reading (Flipppo, 2014).

However, data revealed that there are students who belong to Frustration Level where these students have scored 89% and below in word reading and 58% and below in comprehension. Furthermore, the finding also implies that Grade 7 has the highest number of students in frustration level with a total of 74 or 11.30%. It was followed by the Grade 8 with a total of 59 students or 9.18%. Then Grade 9 with 27 or 4.49% students and Grade 10 has 20 Or 3.22% students under

frustration level. Moreover, it can be noted that the male has a bigger number of students under frustration level more than female for Grade 7.

Given the total of 7.15% of Junior High School students belong to frustration level indicates that these students can be considered as struggling readers. In other words, there are high school students who find reading materials so difficult to read so that they cannot successfully respond to them (Flippo, 2014). It is apparent that number of learners under frustration level were existed in Paracale National High School as revealed from the data wherein in secondary level, all students are expected readers.

This study's findings affirmed the report of the United Nations Children's Fund (2021) that the poor reading skills of Filipino students was the impact of the school shutdowns due to pandemic. The report shows that less than 15 percent of the schoolchildren in the Philippines or about 3 in every 20 can read simple texts in large part due to the longest schools' closure of more than 70 weeks as of the middle of February caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Likewise, the results of the PISA 2018 shows that 15-year-old students in Grades 9 and 10 who repeated a grade at least once at the elementary level scored at least 52 points less in reading than non-repeaters, while those who repeated a grade at least once in the junior high school level scored at least 71 points less in reading than non-repeaters. This illustrates that reading fundamentals must not have been learned in the early grades even before the pandemic. Hence, the results of the data suggest that some of the Junior High School students of

Paracale National High School do not acquire the foundational skills in reading in the early grades and need conduct intervention so that poor readers who are at frustration level would be eliminated.

Current Status of the Foundational Skills in Reading of the Students under Frustration Level

As revealed from Table 2 on the number of students fall under Frustration level, hereunder discussed the foundational skills in reading of the students in this category. This action research determined how many students demonstrating the basic elements in reading and why these students were considered frustration readers. Table 3 presents the distribution of the 180 students in the specific elements in reading such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Table 3
Distribution of Frustration Level as to
Foundational Skills in Reading
n=180

Foundational Skills in Reading	Male	Grade 7 Female	Total	Male	Grade 8 Female	Total	Male	Grade 9 Female	Total	Male	Grade 10 Female	Total	Grand Total
Phonemic Awareness	5	2	7	4	2	6	4	1	5	0	2	2	20
Phonics	22	12	33	15	10	25	6	4	10	1	2	3	71
Fluency	20	8	28	12	11	23	5	1	6	4	6	10	67
Vocabulary	2	1	3	3	1	4	3	2	5	2	2	4	16
Comprehension	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	6
Total	50	24	74	35	24	59	19	8	27	8	12	20	180

One of the fundamental skills in reading is the phonemic awareness which refers to the ability to focus on sounds of speech. It encompasses an awareness of rhythm, rhyme, sounds, and syllables. It can be inferred from the results that there are 20 junior high school students; seven (7) of them from Grade 7; eight (8) from Grade 8; five (5) from Grade 9 and two (2) from Grade 10 students have the

ability to recognize the sounds of speech and aware about the rhyme, sounds and syllables. In this particular skill the students have the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Manipulating the sounds in words includes blending, stretching, or otherwise changing words.

According to (Yopp, 1992) the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds. In the case of Paracale National High School there are only 20 students under frustration level can perform the cited abilities, thus, the conduct of reading activities to these students should focus on the improvement of phonemic awareness of those students who belong to frustration level.

For Phonics, it can be gleaned from the Table 3 that 71 students who belong to frustration level have the ability to recognize phonics. Accordingly, it can be noted that, there are 33 students from Grade 7; 25 from Grade 8; 10 from Grade 9 and three (3) from Grade 10. In this particular skill these students can be able to break each word up into its individual sounds before blending those sounds back together to make word. Since phonics is the basic skill in reading, children who never learn phonics basically cannot read.

According to Connelly (2018) who investigated whether two groups of 6-year-old beginning readers taught to read by a phonics and by a “book experience” non-phonics approach would differ in reading comprehension as well as the processes of word recognition. The two groups were matched for word recognition

but despite this, the phonics taught children had higher reading comprehension. Results show that children with phonics produced more contextually appropriate errors, and in both single word and text reading made more spoken attempts at reading unknown words. The non-phonics taught children had much faster reading reaction times to familiar words but they scored less in phoneme segmentation and nonword reading tasks. Compared with the non-phonics group, the phonics group spent more time in attempts at identifying unknown words and this included using contextual information, which apparently resulted in more rehearsal of the meaning of the story text and hence better reading comprehension performance.

On the other hand, reading specialist Villani (2020) posited that many children who experience problems with phonics and decoding did not receive explicit instruction in the letter-sound correspondences of English. For many children, problems with phonics and decoding can be prevented with strong core instruction, that includes a pre-determined scope and sequence for teaching letters and spelling patterns, ample practice with each new spelling pattern, and opportunities to read newly learned patterns in decodable text. Thus, in the case of Paracale National High School, during two (2) School Years from 2020-2021 to SY 2021-2022, the delivery of instruction was conducted through modular approach which precisely cannot do the explicit instruction in reading particularly on their elementary grade level.

For fluency, it can be viewed from the data that there are 67 students belong to this skill. There are 28 from Grade 7, 23 from Grade 8, 6 from Grade 9 and 10

from Grade 10. These students have the ability to read with proper speed, accuracy, and expression. They were able to read fluently and understand what they're reading. This applies to both silent reading and reading out loud. Moreover, the data also shows that there are 16 students have the skill in vocabulary, 3 from Grade 7, 4 from Grade 8, 5 from Grade 9 and 4 from Grade 10. The findings suggest that most of the students under frustration level do not have the skill in vocabulary. This also means that 164 of the students do not have the ability to use the word in a sentence. Furthermore, the results in comprehension has a lowest number of students with a total of six (6) where two (2) of them were Grade 7, two (2) from Grade 8, one (1) from Grade 9 and 10. This means that majority of the students belong to frustration level has no comprehension.

Based from the article published by the Department of Education of Victoria State Government (2017) give emphasis on fluency was dependent to the ability to decode the text including awareness, phonics and vocabulary abilities, and fluent readers work with meaningful units such as phrases and clauses as they read. The readers will become more fluent when they can quickly and accurately decode the text with ease. Thus, Armstrong et al. (2016) Have found that there is a high correlation between fluency and reading comprehension in which when a student reads fluently student is likely to comprehend what he or she is reading. Hence, poor readers can be associated with lacking of skills in fluency.

Challenges/Difficulties Experienced Students Under Frustration Level

The students who belong to frustration level have seen difficulties in reading. Matrix 1 shows the responses of the respondents during the interview about their challenges/experienced as well as problems why they cannot able to read. The findings show that the first rank in challenges of the respondents is that “no person at their home who can assist or teach team in reading”. It was followed by the indicator of “no available books or reading materials at home” as second top among the challenges. The third rank of the challenges is that the respondents agreed that the “reading is not their habit”. Some of the challenges that were noted are; reading is stressful for the students; they feel that reading was intimidating; they experienced difficulty in recognizing sounds and letters; they were struggle with their own identity as reader; they have limited sight word vocabulary; they have too much else to do at home; some preferred auditory learning; and have poor eyesight.

The findings imply that the common challenge/difficulty experienced by the students under the frustration level is that there is no person who can teach them to read at home. According to the respondents, during the modular distance learning, they learn the modules on their own capacity because their parents did not able to teach them. One of the respondents said that “*Busy po sila sa trabaho*” (they are busy with their work). Another respondent said that “*Ayaw akong turuan dahil hindi naman nila alam pano basahin*” (they don’t want to teach me to read, because they don’t know how to read). These are some of the reasons why parents

were not able to assist their children in reading or in doing the learning activities at home.

Matrix 1
Challenges/Difficulties Experienced by Students
Under Frustration Level

Challenges/Difficulties	Rank
No person at home who can assist or teach reading or lack of support	1
They find reading was intimidating	5
They have too much else to do at home	9
It is not their habit to read	3
They have limited sight word vocabulary	8
They struggle with their own identity as reader	7
No available books or reading materials at home	2
Preferred auditory learning	10
Reading is stressful	4
Difficult to recognize letters and sounds	6
Poor eyesight	11

However, according to study of Lowe (2020) believed that parents who read aloud with children in a secure, safe and comfortable context motivate their children to read. Parents' perceptions, values, attitudes, and expectations play an important role in influencing their children's attitudes toward reading, and subsequent literacy development. When children share a book with someone who makes them feel special, the attitude that reading is pleasurable is transferred to other reading encounters. Moreover, students who read with their parents are better prepared for school.

Likewise, findings of Borja & Cruz (2021) revealed that parents described having difficulties with balancing responsibilities, learner motivation, accessibility, and learning outcomes. Further concluded that parents' lack of skills and expertise regarding how to teach their children is one of the most challenging aspects. The

findings of the mentioned studies affirmed that one of the reasons why these students were under frustration level in reading because of the fact that they are not being reinforced to read at home with their parents particularly during the pandemic where teachers cannot perform the explicit instruction in reading because of modular approach implemented in the school.

Another challenge that have experienced by the respondents was the unavailability of books or reading materials to be used in reading while at home particularly during the school lockdown. One students said, “*Wala naman kami ginagamit na book sa pagbabasa*” (we do not have books to be used in reading). This suggests that they need reading materials to practice reading and don’t have them at their home.

The article of Pacific Standard (2018) mentioned that new research confirms that people who grow up with books at home tend to have higher reading comprehension and better mathematical and digital communication skills. Similarly, researcher Sikora of Australian National University revealed that a person who had around 80 books at home tended to have average scores for literacy—defined as “the ability to read effectively to participate in society and achieve personal goals”—while owning fewer than 80 books was associated with below-average literacy. Literacy continued to improve as the number of books increased to about 350, at which point the literacy rates remained steady. This means that books or reading materials should be available at home so that children will be motivated to practice reading which are important for the improvement of reading comprehension.

Other challenges as revealed from the data the respondents said that, they do not habit to read, this also means that most of the students under frustration level do not love reading. According to the respondents, “*tinatamad po akong magbasa*” (feel lazy in reading). Another respondent said that, “*minsan hindi ko naintindihan ang binabasa ko*” (sometimes I did not understand what I am reading). Habit in reading is important because it allows children to develop important skills in reading. Frequent reading helps children to learn new information, improve their vocabulary and think critically which conforms on the paper of Akubailo et al. (2018) recommended that parents should provide books and stimulating reading environments for their children and helps them cultivate the habit of using their leisure to read for pleasure. Moreover, Marphatia et al. (2010) mentioned the research evidences how the literacy of children improves when their parents are involved in school, regardless of the parents’ level of educational attainment. Likewise, Axford et al. (2019) cited that evidence suggests that with support disadvantaged parents can become more engaged with their children’s learning and that in turn, this can lead to better outcomes.

Intervention Developed to Improve the Foundational Skills in Reading of the Students Under Frustration Level

Based from the results of the PHIL-IRI pre-test, there were noted 180 Junior High School students of Paracale National High School fall under the Frustration Level in literacy. These students were identified poor reader which means do not master the basic skills in reading such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Hence, the proponent developed intervention

entitled, Readers in Colors which aims to improve the foundational skills in reading of the Junior High School students particularly the students belong to Frustration level. This project used color code to tag the learners according to their ability in reading which pertains to the fundamental in reading. These colors associate on the student's skills in reading e.g Level 1-yellow (phonemic awareness and phonics); Level 2-red (vocabulary); Level 3- green (fluency and comprehension). These colors were tagged to the profile of the students where only teachers have the access on it. In addition, the students under level 1 are those will start phonics and CVC pattern. For level 2, the students can only read basic sight words and simple sentences. Then in level 3, students were able to read paragraphs but need to develop reading comprehension skills. The color coding helped the teachers to identify their students who are under the frustration level and their ability in reading then, the teachers provided them with necessary learning activities which complement on their ability in reading. Thus, the color serves as the basis for determining the reading activities and selecting appropriate reading materials which are given to the students under frustration level. Accordingly, this study found out that there are 20 students who have the ability to recognize sounds; 71 have the ability to recognize phonics; 67 have the ability for fluency; 16 can recognize vocabulary and only six (6) have comprehension which are under the literal level.

Thus, the color-coded students were communicated to their advisers, English teacher and subject teachers so that they were informed on the reading capabilities of the students. All subject teachers were oriented and capacitated on

how to provide instructions and assessments to these students based from their color code. In this innovation, once they are coded, varied strategies in reading remediation such as guided reading, partner reading, tutorial, and IRI (Individualized Reading Instruction) were applied by the volunteer tutors and teachers depending on the reading level of the learner. In this project, there are several approaches were considered such as Marungko Approach, Fuller Approach, The Sight Word Approach, the Linguistic Approach, The Language – Experience Approach, The Multisensory Approach, The Phonics Approach, and others. Aside from that, engaging activities like Think-Pair-Share, Secret Answer, Quick Count, Stand up/Sit Down, One-word Splash, Thumbs up/Thumbs Down, etc, were applied. The frustration readers were given follow-up activities through the Project ARTS and SHAWL every Saturday, and assignments as well as inspirational messages/ advice from the reading coordinator and assigned teachers after each session.

The reading sessions were done in the school learning resource center through the assistance of the facilitators of each session who are the proponent, teachers in English, Filipino, Mathematics, and AP who volunteered during their vacant period. Volunteer student leaders and writers from Sea Breeze and English Club were also participated during their free time. The retired teachers, reading advocates, community leaders, SGC, SPTA, and other organizations were encouraged to become tutors of these students.

Further, there are reading activities conducted outside the school, through Brigada Pagbasa program, these students proceeded to the learning center in their

respective barangay to read and perform some prepared reading activities by the volunteer tutors in the barangay during Saturday. At present the school has executed memorandum of agreement to the nine (9) barangays of these identified students. The barangays have pledged for the support like the use of their learning center, computer and some were provided snacks for students and tutors.

Furthermore, the students were assessed periodically to determine whether their foundational skills in reading were improved. As revealed in the post-test conducted on it shows that 52 or 28.8 percent of students belong to level 3 where students can able to read paragraphs and with a literal reading comprehension skill. The data imply that 36 students were able to improve their foundation skills in reading after three (3) months of implementation of the project.

Table 4
Results of Post-Test

LEVELS OF READING	COLOR CODING	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF STRUGGLING READERS (Before the program)	%	NO. OF STRUGGLING READERS (after 3 mos. Implementation of the Program)	%
3	GREEN	Able to read paragraphs and with a literal level of reading comprehension skills	16	8.8%	52	28.8%
2	RED	Can read basic sight words and simple sentences	72	40%	99	55%
1	YELLOW	Starts with Marungko Approach, Phonics, and CVC pattern	92	51.1%	29	16.11%
TOTAL			180		180	

The results also show that number of students in level 2 increase to 99 or 55 percent from 72 or 40 percent. This means 15 percent or 27 students moved to level 2 where students can read basic sight words and simple sentences.

Evidently, level 1 which includes phonemic awareness and phonics and students started with Marungko approach, phonics and CVC pattern decreased to 29 from 92. This also means students belong to level 1 skills in reading have improved by 34.99 percent or 63 students moved to next level.

Moreover, when the students show improvement on their level of reading comprehension, then they received recognition every time they move forward to next skill. Then, another reading activities were provided for them to further improve their reading comprehension that until such time that they will become independent readers and graduate in the reading program. A certificate of recognition was awarded to the students who successfully passed the reading program of the school. This project also includes the enrichment activities to achieve excellent readers from the reading program like reading camp, spelling contest, readathon, and oral reading contest. These activities aim to sustain the enthusiasm of the students under the reading program to develop love for reading.

Reflection

This action research, The Foundational Skills in Reading of the Junior High School of Paracale National High School was a motivation of the proponent to help the students who are struggling readers and those who left behind in reading. The main reason of the proponent of this undertaking is to dig out the root causes of the problems behind why these students do not have comprehension skill in reading where supposed to be at the level of junior high school, they are independent readers. However, given that schools were shutdown brought by the

pandemic, maybe, the foundational skills in reading were not developed because of the absence of teachers who are the expert in teaching reading. As the Department of Education urged the school heads to devise interventions for learning recovery program to address the learning loss due to pandemic, hence, the proponent took the courage to conduct the action research which hopes to answer the problems in literacy of our learners. As evident the report of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) that less than 15 percent of schoolchildren in the Philippines, or about three in every 20, can read simple texts in large part due to the longest schools' closure of more than 70 weeks as of the middle of February caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This interventions and innovative project are a collaborative effort of the proponent, English Head Teacher, Master Teacher, Teachers and volunteer tutors. The teachers who were trained in the administration of Phil-IRI helped the proponent to conduct the oral and silent reading to all junior high school students to gather the literacy level of each student. Then, the results of the reading assessment segmented to each foundational skill in reading which are necessary to identify so that proper reading activities be given to each learner who found at frustration level.

Given the number under the frustration level, the proponent developed project entitled "Readers in Colors", this project was the intervention to address the reading difficulties of the students. The project used the color coding to associate the skill of the student and communicated to the adviser and subject teachers so that proper learning activities and assessment be given to them. The

project includes the reading program of the school to the 180 students under frustration level. After determining their foundational skills in reading, appropriate reading materials were provided to them. The students under reading program were pulled out from their class to attend one-hour reading remediation. The proponent, teachers, and volunteers are the facilitators of reading. In addition, free snacks are offered to the students. The reading activity was conducted daily, assisted and monitored by the proponent and Department Head of English. Thus, the proponent realized that there is a need to work together to help the learners to learn to read.

The project Readers in Color, have provided meaningful outcome to the learners who belong to frustration level as their skills in reading improved to comprehension as revealed in the table 4 that majority of the students have shown improvement on their abilities in reading. The proponent, believed that if we cannot act on to eradicate the number of poor readers in school, then school is nothing for them. Reading is the basic skill that an individual need to acquire for them to survive. They will become productive when they know how to read, conversely, if they cannot read then they will be unproductive citizen of the country.

ADVOCACY, UTILIZATION, AND DISSEMINATION

To make this undertaking more comprehensive and ensure the validity of the outcomes of the innovation, intervention and strategy made by the proponent. The project Readers in Color is the output of this action research that provided solutions to the problems from the results of the data gathered of this study. This

project was in connection with the Brigada Pagbasa program of the DepEd. The main objective of this project is to contextualize the reading activities for the students under frustration level according to their foundational skills. Each student was color coded which associate to their reading skills.

Based from the results of this study, Paracale National High School has 180 students were diagnosed under frustration level in reading. These students are the Grade 7 to Grade 10 students of the school. Accordingly, this study determined the foundational skills of the struggling readers in terms of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and vocabulary. The proponent decided to assess the reading skills of the identified struggling readers so that proper reading activities/teaching should be intervened. Hence, Project Readers in Color was implemented in order to eradicate the number of students under frustration level. Thus, no students will be left behind and acquire the highest level in comprehension.

Hence, the proponent made an action plan consisted of the following parts;

- 1) Specific objectives to determine the target. The objectives refer to the focus of the activity to be conducted to achieve the main goal of the action plan.
- 2) Projects/Activities to be undertaken in sustaining the effective implementation Readers in Color. These are different undertakings to be accomplish in order to achieve the objectives;
- 3) Time frame for efficiently implementation project. This is the schedule or duration of the different activities;
- 4) Resources needed to help in the realization of the activities. These are the materials, equipment to be prepared in the conduct of activities;
- 5) Responsible persons who were carried out the

activities. These are the manpower involved in the implementation of projects; and

6) Expected outputs to view whether the target objectives were achieved.

PROJECT READERS IN COLOR ACTION PLAN

Objectives	Activities/ Strategies	TIME FRAME	PERSONS INVOLVED	RESOURCES NEEDED	SUCCESS INDICATOR
To determine the literacy level of Junior High School students for SY 2022-2023	Conduct reading assessment using the PHIL-IRI to all students for SY 2022-2023	September 1-10, 2022	Researcher, Teachers, Volunteer Tutors	PHIL-IRI assessment tools	Number of students per literacy level
To identify the students under Frustration Level	Analysis of the data gathered from the assessment	September 15, 2022	Researcher, Teachers, Volunteer Tutors	Results of the PHIL-IRI assessment	List of students under frustration level
To determine the foundational skills of the students under Frustration Level	Conduct reading assessment of foundational skills in reading to the identified students under frustration level in terms of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension	January 3-15, 2023	Researcher, Teachers, Volunteer Tutors	Assessment tools in PHIL-IRI	Placement of students per foundational skills
To raise the teachers' awareness on the status of the literacy level of the students in the school	Conduct LAC session to present the status of the literacy level of the students in the school	January 16, 2023	Researcher, Teachers	Results of the assessment for foundational skills in reading	List of Suggestions and recommendations
To make parents informed about the status of the reading skills of their children	Conduct parents' orientation about the status of the children's literacy status	January 17, 2023	Researcher, Teachers, Parents	Session Guide of the LAC session	Attendance of Teachers
To determine the issues and challenges in reading of the students under frustration level	Conduct interview through survey questionnaire on the students' issues and challenges in reading	February 18, 2023	Researcher and respondents	Interview guide	List of issues and challenges
To provide intervention, innovation and strategy to help students to improve their reading skills	Prepare/finalize the proposal for intervention, innovation and strategy, called Readers in Color	February 22, 2023	Researcher, Teachers, Parents	Results of literacy level, foundational skills and list of issues and challenges	Draft of proposal of Readers in Color
To capacitate parents on how to assist their children in reading at home	Conduct lecture to parents of the identified students	February 23, 2023	Researcher, Teachers,	Orientation Outline	Attendance of Parents
To capacitate volunteer tutors in teaching reading to the struggling readers	Conduct lecture to all volunteer tutors	March 3, 2023	Researcher, Teachers	Session Guide	Attendance of Tutors
To encourage stakeholders' support to improve the literacy level of the struggling readers	Attend barangay sessions to seek support; and Forge memorandum of agreement on the support to the reading program.	March 6-10, 2023	Researcher, Teachers, Volunteer Tutors, Students	Letter of Request MOA	MOA signed
To improve the foundational skills in reading of the identified students under frustration level	Implementation of the project Readers in Color	March 13-May 15, 2023	Researcher, Teachers, Volunteer Tutors, Students	Reading materials, Session Guide	Number of students who have reached the comprehension level
To recognize and reward the students shown improvement on their foundational skills in reading	Conduct recognition and rewards culminating activities	May 20-July 2023	Researcher, Teachers, Volunteer Tutors, Students, Parents, Brgy Officials, SGC, SPTA and other stakeholders	Certificates, Snacks and Rewards	Photos attendance
To raise the awareness of the school heads in elementary schools that there are students who graduated in elementary level who are still diagnose under Frustration level	Disseminate the results of the study to Paracale District during PIRPA and to all PNHS teachers during LAC Session	June 15-20, 2023	Researcher, PSDS, School Heads and Teachers	Slide decks	Attendance of participants

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FINANCIAL REPORT

The table below shows the details of the expenses which, the research study incurred from pre-implementation phase up to the post-implementation phase.

Activity/ies	CASH OUT	BALANCE
Action Research Facility Research Fund (BERF)		15,000.00
1. Crafting and preparation of research paper proposal	200.00	14,800.00
2. Submission for checking of Action Research Proposal to the Division Office of Camarines Norte	80.00	14,720.00
3. Revision of action research proposal	200.00	14,520.00
4. Submission of revised and checked action research proposal to the Division Office	80.00	14,440.00
5. Notarized the MOA	200.00	14,240.00
6. Send the copy of MOA to RO-V	150.00	14,090.00
7. Printing of pre- Reading assessment material	500.00	13,590.00
8. Data Gathering of Respondents	200.00	13,390.00
9. Conduct orientation to teachers and volunteers	1000.00	12,390.00
10. Conduct orientation to parents about the reading program	1,000.00	11,390.00
11. Visited 9 barangays for forging MOA	1,000.00	10,390.00
12. Printing of reading materials	1,000.00	9,390.00
13. Implementation of Innovation/Interventions	100.00	9,290.00
14. Monitoring of the implementation	100.00	9,120.00
15. Data gathering	100.00	9,090.00
16. Prizes and Rewards	4,000.00	5,090.00
17. Crafting of completed report	100.00	4,990.00
18. Printing of copy of Completed Action Research (7 copies)	300.00	4,690.00
19. Submission of Final Report	80.00	4,610.00
20. Hard bound copies	1,750.00	2860.00
21. Dissemination of research findings	2860.00	0

Note: No any amount or kind was solicited from the participants.

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