

# Reading Skills of Grade-7 of La Paz National High School: Basis for Workbook Development

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to develop a workbook to enhance the reading proficiency level on five identified basic reading skills such as: 1.) noting details, 2.) getting the main idea, 3.) getting the meaning through context clues, 4.) making inferences and 5.) interpreting figurative language of the Grade-7 students of La Paz National High School.

The study which used descriptive evaluative research was utilized to assess the reading proficiency level of the 202 Grade-7 students enrolled for the school year 2016-2017. Descriptive correlational method was used to determine the significant relationship between the reading proficiency level of the Grade-7 students and their academic performance in the three major content subjects such as English, Math and Science. The significant value was also used to determine the significance of the Pearson - r correlation coefficient. Documentary data of the respondents' academic performance in content area subjects from the previous school year (2015-2016) was gathered to correlate with their reading proficiency.

The findings revealed the reading proficiency of Grade 7 students is in developing level while their level of academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science was described as Satisfactory. It can be deduced that there is significant relationship between reading proficiency level of Grade 7 students and their academic performance in English, Science & Math.

It is recommended that students shall utilize the workbook which will give them enough practice and exposure to reading in order to develop their basic skills. Localize and contextualize reading materials will be very useful because students can connect in the real setting. Content area teachers shall intensify the teaching of reading skills by allotting certain periods where concepts and principles in reading are given emphasis. The enhancement of students' reading ability shall be given more emphasis through task-based instructional material for more learning opportunities.

**Keywords:** Reading Proficiency, Reading Skills, Workbook, Task-based Instructional Materials.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum or the K-12, is to produce holistically developed Filipino citizen with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which involves: Information, Media, and Technology Skills, Learning and Innovation Skills, Communication Skills and Life and Career Skills.

Being a 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher who deals with 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, it is very alarming to encounter students who reached Grade-7 but can be classified as non-readers. As experienced by the researcher, it is the reality. It is therefore hard to envision achieving these goals if a learner lacks a basic skill as requisite to become successful and holistically developed Filipino citizen.

“Literacy” is most often described as the skills and knowledge that are necessary to learn to read, including phonological awareness/beginning reading, listening, speaking, and writing. “Reading” is described as a set of interrelated skills needed to learn from reading in order to comprehend meaning from varied texts (Tadros, 2014).

In a recent report on November 2015 of Child Trends Data Bank, it stresses the importance of Reading Proficiency which states that the ability to read proficiently is a fundamental skill that affects the learning experiences and school performance of children and adolescents. It also states that, students who are competent readers, as measured by their performance on reading tests, are more likely to perform well in other subjects, such as math and science. On the other hand, children who struggle with reading and reading comprehension also often have deficits in spoken language. Therefore, students with reading difficulties are much less likely to be academically engaged. Reading achievement predicts the possibility of graduating from high school and attending college.

It also added that reading skills also influence students' well-being as adults. Adults with poor literacy skills find it difficult to function in society, because many basic decision-making skills require reading proficiency. It explains that people who are not able to fill out an application because of limited reading or writing skills are likely to have difficulty finding a job or accessing social services. Hence, strong reading skills protect against unemployment in early adulthood. Research has confirmed that performance on adult literacy tests helps explain differences in wages. It concludes that adults with limited reading abilities are likely to have children with limited reading abilities.

Furthermore the report emphasized that enjoyment of reading is associated with reading success. In an international study involving 15-year-old from 14 developed countries, students reported that they read daily for pleasure achieved reading scores higher, by the equivalent of one-and-a-half years of schooling, than their peers who did not.

Reading is one of the foundational skills which is critical to a child's success in school and in life. However, learning to read is not enough to deal with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 2011) asserts that being able to read is not an adequate measure to be literate in reading. Rather, one must understand or comprehend what he reads; applies, integrates, and synthesizes (Cachero & Salem, 2013). Despite the dramatic shift from traditional teaching to the use of technology with everything at their fingertips, 21<sup>st</sup> century learners need more than just being able to read. These learners need to comprehend everything that they read in order to fight the challenge that this technological age brings to them.

The Department of Education (DepEd) as well as every educator dreamt of producing learners who are effective readers. This is why in 2002, DepEd Order No. 45, s.2002 enforce the policy "Every Child A Reader Program" (ECARP) to ensure that every child is a successful reader at the end of Grade III. This is a reading literacy program in the elementary schools which states that no pupil will be promoted to the higher grade unless he/she manifests mastery of the basic literacy skills in a particular grade level. Furthermore, all possible means of assistance and encouragement shall be extended to enable the child to read. It also states that all school should enjoined to develop a School-Based Reading Program that includes the conduct of an inventory of the children's reading ability, a diagnosis of those who need further reading instruction and appropriate measures to improve reading comprehension.

In spite of this mandate, recent studies proved that achievement of children in public schools is found to be weak to withstand the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (NAEP, 1988 as cited by Cabardo, 2008). This is clearly shown in the low rating received by the students both in elementary and high school in the National Achievement Test (NAT) which were administered by the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC). Moreover, the results showed that they were weak in the reading comprehension part in English. This denotes that learners had low reading proficiency (Cabardo, 2015).

In connection to this, DepEd continues to strengthen its reading programs by launching DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2015 which is the "Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program" last April 10, 2015.

Despite the different programs that the Department of Education launched, it is still not enough to augment the reading proficiency level of the students. Teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century therefore should be creative and be wise unto what strategies and instructional materials to be used in teaching.

Workbook as an instructional material is proven in many studies to be an effective tool for increasing students' engagement during classes since it can be customized and created by the teacher based form the students' needs.

Workbook is a printed material accompanying a course textbook or learners' manual that contains exercises, problems, and practice material to clarify and reinforce the lessons presented in the textbook or learners' manual.

This study aimed to assess the reading proficiency level of the Grade-7 students of La Paz National High School for the S.Y. 2016-2017 as a basis to construct a workbook to enhance their reading ability.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How is the level of Grade 7 students' reading proficiency in terms of the following reading skills:
  - a. noting details
  - b. getting the main idea
  - c. getting the meaning through context clues
  - d. making inferences
  - e. interpreting figurative language
2. What is the level of the academic achievement of the Grade-7 students in the three major content subject areas such as English, Math and Science in the previous school year?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the reading proficiency level of the Grade-7 students and their academic performance in the three major content subject areas such as English, Math & Science?
4. What possible instructional material be devised to enhance the reading skills of Grade-7 students?
5. How may the proposed workbook be evaluated in terms of the following:
  - a. Usefulness
  - b. Level of difficulty
  - c. Comprehensiveness

It is proven in a study that unless a child is equipped with the basic reading skills, he would not be able to study independently and effectively most especially in the content subjects (Capili, et al. 1989). Reading teachers should aim to develop in their students the basic reading skills namely: a.) noting details, b.) getting the main idea of a selection, c.) making inferences, d.) getting the meaning through context clues and e.) interpreting figurative language.

Cachero & Salem (2013) state that the success of the school nowadays is judged by the learners' proficiency in reading. Thus, it is very significant to investigate the reading proficiency level of the students as a basis for constructing a workbook that would enhance their reading ability.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the descriptive evaluative method of research. According to Calmorin (2007), this method seeks the real facts in relation to a current situation. Furthermore, this also involves describing, comparing, contrasting and interpreting conditions that exist.

The descriptive analysis method was utilized to analyze the reading proficiency level of the respondents as a basis to devise a workbook to enhance the reading ability of the Grade-7 students of La Paz National High School for the School year 2016-2017.

Descriptive correlational method was used to determine the significant relationship between the reading proficiency level of the Grade-7 students and their academic performance in the three major content areas of English, Math & Science.

Documentary analysis was also used to gather the respondents' academic performance in content area subjects such as English, Math and Science from the previous school year (2015-2016).

The respondents of the study were the Grade -7 students of La Paz National High School (LPNHS) for the School Year 2016-2017 and the 6 Content Area teachers of the school who evaluated the devised workbook. To get the sample size of the Grade - 7 students for this school year, the Slovin's formula was used.

The researcher applied stratified sampling. Stratified sampling is used when the population is divided into strata and someone wants to include the stratum when taking the sample. It is a type of purposive sampling technique that involves

examining the entire population for example the total population that has a particular set of characteristics. The respondents were selected through random sampling.

The research was conducted at La Paz National High School, San Narciso, Zambales. San Narciso is located in the central part of the province of Zambales. It is 169 kilometers away from San Fernando, Pampanga, the regional capital and 42 kilometers from provincial capital, Iba. It is bounded on the north of the municipality of San Felipe, on the south by the municipality of San Antonio. La Paz is one of the 17 Barangays in San Narciso.

The respondents' level of reading proficiency was determined using the validated researcher-made 50-item reading ability test modeled from National Achievement Test (NAT), Teaching English Skills and Technique to Students (TEST) and Division Unified exams for Grade-7. The raw scores were tabulated and were grouped into 5 interpretive values: Highly-Proficient: 41-50; Proficient: 31-40; Approaching Proficiency: 21-30; Developing; 11-20; and Beginning: 0-10. Description of scores was adopted from Achacoso (2013) model with some modifications to suit the situation of the respondents of the study. The 10-item test for each reading skill: a.) noting details, b.) getting the main idea, c.) getting the meaning through context clues, d.) making inferences and e.) interpreting figurative language were tabulated and grouped into interpretive values: Highly-Proficient: 9-10; Proficient: 7-8; Approaching Proficiency: 5-6; Developing; 3-4; and Beginning: 0-2.

DepEd Order No. 8, series of 2015 which is the Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program was used to determine the level of academic achievement of the participants in the three major content subject areas such as English, Math and Science in the previous school year.

Personal and school-related data about the participants specifically their form-138 were gathered to identify the general average of the students in their English, Math and Science subject in the previous School Year.

The researcher with the help of the Grade-7 advisers and English Teachers distributed the instrument personally to assure its 100% retrieval. After retrieving the questionnaires, they were organized, tallied and tabulated using Average Weighted Mean (AWM), Pearson r, and t-Test. These statistical tools were essential towards the completion of the study.

### III. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the summary of reading proficiency level of Grade 7 students. The overall weighted mean of the reading proficiency of the participants is (3.80) described as developing.

**TABLE 1**  
**Summary of Reading Proficiency of Grade 7 Students**

Reading Proficiency	AWM	Descriptive Rating	Rank
Noting Details	5.50	Approaching Proficiency	5
Getting the Main Idea	2.93	Developing	1
Getting the Meaning through Context Clues	3.90	Developing	4
Making Inferences	3.11	Developing	2
Interpreting Figurative Language	3.55	Developing	3
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>Developing</b>	

The level of academic achievement of the Grade 7 students in English subject for the school year 2015-2016 with a computed mean grade of 82.88 is described as Satisfactory. Likewise, the level of academic achievement of the Grade 7 students in Math subject for the school year 2015-2016 with a computed mean grade of 82.30 is described as Satisfactory. In addition, the level of academic achievement of the Grade 7 students in Science subject for the previous school year with a computed mean grade of 82.46 is described as Satisfactory too.

There is significant relationship between the reading proficiency level of the Grade-7 students and their academic performance in the three major content areas of English, Math & Science.

The devised workbook for reading enhancement of Grade 7 was developed on the basis of the participants' low reading proficiency level, content validation and evaluation in terms of usefulness, level of difficulty and comprehensiveness. It is designed following the Material Design Model by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) aligned to the Grade 7 curriculum.

The content area teachers evaluated the workbook as very useful (VU) with an overall weighted mean of 4.77. They generally believed that it is very useful for enhancing the Grade 7 students' reading ability. Furthermore, they strongly agree (SA) with the level of difficulty of the reading tasks with an overall weighted mean of 4.77 as well. They also strongly agree (SA) in terms of the comprehensiveness of the workbook with an overall weighted mean of 4.87.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS

Four out of five skills such as getting the main idea, getting the meaning through context clues, making inferences, and interpreting figurative language made up the reading proficiency of Grade 7 in developing level. Thus became a basis for workbook development and task-based instructional material. Cabardo (2015) revealed in his study conducted in Hagonoy National High School – Aplaya Extension High School, Davao del Sur the reading proficiency level of Year 1 to Year 3 students belonged to frustration level 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 thus became a basis for reading intervention program for that school year. Cachero and Salem (2013) in their study with 4th grade pupils of Bayombong Central School/SPED Center in the three content areas revealed that the pupils are in the beginning level across the twelve reading comprehension skills and in general hence proposed reading program which is conscientiously designed based on the findings to address the necessity in advancing the basic reading comprehension skills of the pupils across the content areas.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Grade 7 students' reading proficiency is developing level and their level of academic performance in English, Mathematics and Science is Satisfactory. It shows that there is significant relationship between the reading proficiency level of the Grade-7 students and their academic performance in the three major content areas of English, Math & Science. It implies that the workbook developed by teachers based from students' reading ability and needs analysis is a tool for enhancing reading skills of the students. The evaluation of the workbook by the content area teachers is important to validate the comprehensiveness, level of difficulty and usefulness of the workbook and to serve as a guide in enhancing material development.

Based from the given conclusions, it is recommended that Grade 7 students need to have more exercises in terms of getting the main idea. Students may utilize the workbook and shall do variety of activities which will help them enhance their reading skills. Furthermore, English teachers shall coordinate with content area teachers in the development of appropriate instructional materials to address the students' needs especially in reading, which will match their learning styles. It is better if teachers will collaborate to help the students strengthen their basic reading skills and competencies. Thus, content area teachers shall intensify the teaching of reading by allotting certain periods where concepts and principles in reading are given emphasis. K to 12 curriculum focuses on contextualization and localization of classroom activities. Text and selection shall be localized whenever appropriate. Parents' participation is essential in monitoring the reading proficiency of the students. The enhancement of their reading ability will be very effective if the support will come from the people around them, not only in school, but most especially from their family.

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