



# Difficulties Affecting Reading Comprehension

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess the level of reading comprehension skills among primary learners to identify their reading comprehension difficulties and propose a reading remediation program to help address the decline of the learners' reading performance. The study employed a descriptive-correlational method of research. Data were collected through individual interviews using researcher-made guide questions and the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) administered to primary learners. Based on the results, it was found that the primary learners' reading abilities vary. Reading difficulties can be attributed into two factors: internal and external factors. Internal factors relate to the physical condition of learners, such as health status, which can affect their reading comprehension skills. External factors refer to social environmental factors with parents playing a crucial role in fostering the love for reading at home. Thus, learners with higher reading comprehension skills are less likely to encounter reading difficulties. To address this issue, a gradual remedial reading program was developed by the School Learning Action Cell. This program aimed to help struggling readers and employed upscale teaching techniques and strategies to introduce beginning reading. The study underscored the importance of addressing the factors in promoting reading abilities among primary learners and achieve better academic outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Reading Comprehension, reading difficulties; factors of reading difficulties; beginning reading level*

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## Introduction

Education is a lifelong learning process; it evolves and moves in accordance with the transmission of learning from teacher itself to the pupils. The main aim of education is to preserve, transmit and advance the societal knowledge. In this regard, reading is a complex process as it involves “sensation, perception, comprehension, application and integration”. It is the process of making and getting meaning from printed words and symbols. Reading as a whole, is a means of communication and of information and ideas. Aracelo (1994 as cited by Panerio, 2008) reported that “85% of the things that people do involve reading”. Individuals read street signs, advertisements, menus in restaurants and recipes from cook books, dosage of medicine and others. Moreover, reading is the foundation of academic success and life learning. That is 80% of the Filipino students did not reach the minimum level of proficiency in reading. This being the case, the Department of Education has launched the Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiatives), in order to intensify the advocacy for reading and by pledging commitment to make every learner a reader at his/her grade level.

As a primary teacher, the researcher observed that reading in elementary grades is a crucial problem that hinders the quality of education. Learners with slow reading skills and poor reading comprehension have difficulty to catch up with the lessons. As a result, difficulties in other subjects were affected.

The aim of this study is to assess the level of reading comprehension skills among primary learners, identify the reading comprehension difficulties they encounter, explore the significant relationship between these variables, and propose a reading remediation program to help address the decline in the learners' reading performance caused by the pandemic crisis.

## Methodology

The study is anchored to David P. Ausubel’s Schema Theory in which referred to a “data structure” by which general concepts that an individual absorb from everyday life is stored in the memory. According to Driscoll (2005), “schemata are packets of knowledge and schema theory is a theory of how these packets are represented and how the representation facilitates the use of the knowledge in particular way” (p. 129). A person would go through life receiving different pieces of information. While some pieces get stored in the memory, others do not. The schema

theory reflected a cognitivist approach wherein, learning involves the associations that were created through contiguity and reproduction or repetitive measures (Mergel, 1998).

Also, this study anchored to the Subsumption Learning Theory of David Ausubel in 1963. The theory focuses on how individuals acquire and learn large chunks of information through visual means or text materials. According to him, a learner absorbs new information by tying it to existing concepts and ideas that they have already acquired. The acquisition of knowledge is based on the actual processes that occur during learning. The key process that takes place in the learner's brain is subsumption, wherein new content is related to relative ideas that are already present in the existing cognitive structure on a non-verbatim basis. Cognitive structures are what's left in the human brain from all the learning experiences, after forgetting inevitably occurs. So, when some details, facts or situations lose their individual nature, they are then integrated into a general notion. Likewise, fostering healthy home interactions and engaging children at early age love for reading can boost children's ability to read is neglected. Through this, they need an intervention to give ample time in reading to enhance their reading skills and to increase their reading readiness in school especially those who are in primary years.

The study used a descriptive-correlation method of research using the descriptive method to describe the profile of the primary learners, the level of reading comprehension skills, the level of reading comprehension difficulties, and the relationship of the reading comprehension skills and reading comprehension difficulties of the primary learners.

The study was conducted in a far-flung area, second farthest barangay in the Municipality of Ibajay. This study included 32 out of 34 primary learners, from Grades 1 to Grade 3, School Year 2022-2023. The subject of the study was composed of thirty-two (32) primary learners whom eighteen (18) were boys and fourteen (14) were girls, wherein eight (8) from Grade 1, fourteen (14) from Grade 2, and ten (10) from Grade 3.

Data were collected through individual interviews using researcher-made guide questions and the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) administered to primary learners. To ensure the validity of the instrument used in the study, a panel of experts was selected to conduct content validation. The suggestions, recommendations, and comments provided by the experts were taken into account in the revision of the instrument.

In the conduct of this study, the researcher made sure that necessary letters of consent were secured and proper coordination with people who have direct involvement in this study was

properly conducted. The researcher ensured the anonymity of all the information disclosed by the participants was treated with utmost confidentiality by strictly adhering to the provisions of National Ethical Data for Health Guidelines for the significance of the study shall be clearly described in a separate section of the protocol with an accurate and updated description of the status of the social or health problem, and how the study will help arrive at a solution.

The quantitative data were analyzed based on the answers of the respondents in the survey questionnaire and the CRLA. The researcher will utilize the descriptive evaluative statistics which included weighted mean and average. These data may also be generated into tables or graphs as desired and mean and percentages of the data will also be readily available.

## **Findings**

Based on the study, it was found that primary learners' reading abilities vary. Reading difficulties can be attributed to two factors: internal and external. Internal factors relate to the physical condition of learners, such as their health status, which can affect their reading comprehension skills. External factors refer to social environmental factors, with parents playing a crucial role in fostering the love for reading at home. The result for health status was found to be significant and the availability of reading materials at home was found to be with highly significant towards their level of reading difficulties. Thus, the results of the CRLA for reading comprehension skills were found that primary learners belonged to moderate refresher which means that they can read but with miscue and can benefit from instruction.

## **Conclusion**

This study concluded that the over-all level of reading difficulty of the primary learners were moderately difficult based on the categories given in the reading comprehension result in which through instructions and elaboration they can understand what they have read. Still, the internal and external factors affect and found highly significant in improving the reading difficulties the primary learners' encountered. With the implementation of effective remedial programs, learners can improve their reading skills and achieve better academic outcomes. The higher the level of reading comprehension skill, the lower the result of reading difficulties. Thus, addressing the importance of internal and external factors in promoting reading abilities among primary learners.

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