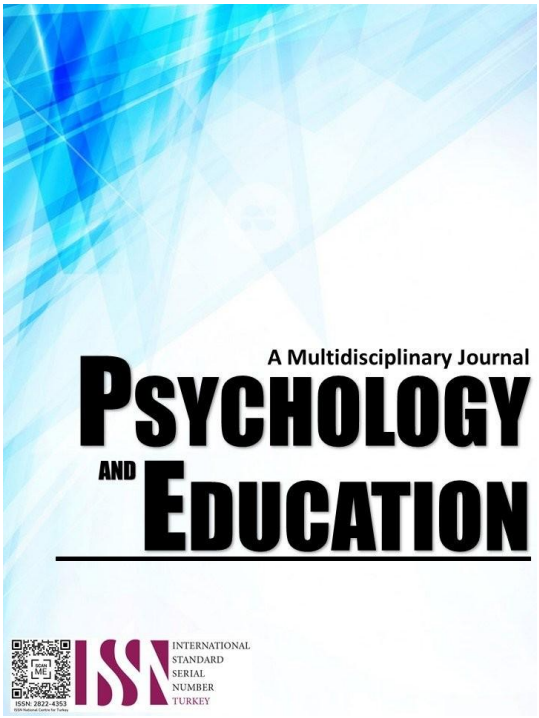
LEVEL OF READING SKILLS UTILIZING EGRA: BASIS FOR A PROPOSED BRIDGING LITERACY GAPS PROGRAM



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Research Article

Level of Reading Skills Utilizing EGRA: Basis for a Proposed Bridging Literacy Gaps Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the reading skills level of Grade 1 learners utilizing EGRA as a basis for an intervention program at Banisil Central Elementary School, Tambler District, Division of General Santos City, for the school year 2020–2021. This study employed a descriptive survey design, a type of quantitative research. The respondents were 391 Grade 1 learners assessed across eight EGRA components. Frequency count and percentage were used to interpret the results. Out of the result of the study, it is concluded that learners were proficient in foundational skills such as letter name and sound knowledge, and phonemic awareness. However, most learners were still developing or beginning in reading fluency, comprehension, and listening skills. These findings highlighted the need for targeted instruction. As a result, an intervention program was proposed to address these specific areas and improve learners' overall reading skills. The findings imply that early literacy instruction must be strategically focused on enhancing reading fluency, comprehension, and listening skills to ensure holistic reading development among Grade 1 learners.

Keywords: *educational management, reading skills, EGRA, intervention program, descriptive survey, Philippines*

Introduction

The quotation by Jim Rohn, "Reading is essential for those who seek to rise above the ordinary," highlights the importance of reading as a fundamental skill for personal and academic growth. In the context of the study on the level of reading skills utilizing EGRA as a basis for an intervention program, this quote is highly relevant because it emphasizes how strong reading abilities can help students achieve success. If students struggle with reading, they may face difficulties in other subjects, limiting their overall academic performance and future opportunities. This underscores the need for an intervention program to address reading challenges, ensuring that students develop the necessary skills to excel and reach their full potential.

Since 2019, international assessments have highlighted significant declines in reading proficiency among students worldwide. For instance, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2021 reported that two-thirds of participating countries experienced a decrease in average reading achievement between 2016 and 2021. This trend underscores a global learning crisis that threatens educational development and requires urgent intervention to improve literacy outcomes (Abacete, 2022; Babbie & Saitama, 2020; Debman, 2022).

About 19 million Filipinos are struggling to read properly, showing that the country is facing a serious literacy problem. Many learners, especially in the early grades, have difficulty recognizing letters, understanding words, and reading with meaning. This issue affects their ability to learn in all subjects and slows down their progress in school. Poor reading skills also lower students' confidence and interest in learning. The large number of struggling readers highlights the urgent need for programs that focus on improving basic reading and comprehension skills. A strong literacy foundation is important for students to succeed in school and in life, which is why a proposed Bridging Literacy Gaps Program is needed to help address this challenge and support learners in becoming confident and skilled readers (Babbie & Saitama, 2020).

Similarly, in the Philippines, national assessments have revealed concerning trends in students' reading abilities. The 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results indicated that Filipino students ranked lowest in reading among participating countries, with only 19% meeting the minimum proficiency level. This alarming statistic prompted the Department of Education to implement initiatives such as the "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa" program to address literacy gaps and enhance reading skills nationwide (Alber-Morgan, 2023; Bandala, 2024; Diana, 2023).

At the local level, particularly in the Division of General Santos City, reading proficiency among learners has been a significant concern. In response, the division implemented the Read-at-Home program in October 2020, aiming to strengthen students' reading abilities through parental involvement, regular reading activities, and active community engagement. This initiative reflects the local education sector's commitment to addressing reading difficulties and promoting literacy among all types of learners (Al-Otaiba & Fuchs, 2020; Bardack et al., 2023; Divinagracia, 2023).

Since 2019, the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) has been recognized as a crucial tool for evaluating young learners' reading abilities. By identifying specific areas where students struggle, EGRA enables educators to design targeted intervention programs that address these challenges effectively. This approach ensures that instructional strategies are tailored to meet the unique needs of each learner, thereby enhancing overall reading proficiency. Moreover, continuous assessment through tools like EGRA allows for the monitoring of student progress and the timely adjustment of teaching methods, which is essential for the success of intervention programs (Angrist et al., 2021; Bonacina et al., 2022; Drummond & Nakamura, 2021).

In Tambler district, there is an urgent need to assess students' reading skills due to growing concerns about declining literacy rates and academic performance. Recent studies have shown that many Filipino students struggle with reading comprehension, which can significantly hinder their overall academic success and future opportunities. By conducting this study, educators can identify specific areas where students need help and create targeted, effective programs to improve their reading abilities. This proactive, research-based approach aimed to ensure that all students in Banisil receive the support they need to become proficient and confident readers.

Furthermore, early reading proficiency plays a key role in a child's academic success, yet many young learners struggle with foundational literacy skills. Research indicates that gaps in letter recognition, phonemic awareness, and decoding hinder overall reading development, making early intervention essential. By implementing structured reading programs, educators can provide targeted support to struggling readers, helping them develop confidence and fluency. Through Bridging Literacy Gaps, students receive systematic instruction tailored to their specific needs, ensuring gradual progress in essential reading skills (Anjarningsih, 2024; Botelho da Silva, 2020; Dubeck et al., 2021).

Moreover, effective reading interventions must address both decoding and comprehension skills to foster well-rounded literacy development. Studies show that programs integrating phonics, fluency practice, and comprehension strategies lead to significant improvements in reading performance. "Bridging Literacy Gaps" aligns with these findings by incorporating evidence-based approaches that strengthen letter-sound relationships, oral reading fluency, and text understanding. This comprehensive method enables young learners to build strong reading foundations, ultimately improving their academic outcomes (Ardington et al., 2020; Bryman & Erick, 2021; Dwi, 2021).

Literature Review

Since 2019, the early grade reading assessment (EGRA) has been widely utilized as an essential tool for measuring young learners' reading abilities. By diagnosing specific difficulties faced by students, EGRA enables educators to create focused intervention strategies that directly address these issues. This ensures that teaching approaches are customized to meet the diverse needs of learners, thereby improving their reading skills. Furthermore, ongoing assessments through EGRA help track student progress and refine instructional techniques for better learning outcomes (Asfaw, 2023; Bukan & Alinda, 2023; Ezechinyere et al., 2020).

Moreover, EGRA's ability to adapt to different linguistic and cultural settings enhances its effectiveness in diverse educational contexts. By modifying the assessment to align with local languages and reading traditions, educators can obtain more precise insights into students' reading progress. This allows for the development of culturally relevant interventions that are more effective in addressing literacy challenges. As a result, EGRA plays a crucial role in fostering inclusive and equitable literacy programs (Asfaw, 2024; Calex & Josh, 2021; Fasih et al., 2020).

In addition, recent studies highlight the significance of early reading assessments in predicting students' future academic performance. Strong reading foundations in the early grades are closely linked to overall success in later schooling. Therefore, the use of EGRA can help identify struggling learners early, allowing for timely interventions that prevent long-term literacy difficulties. This proactive approach helps narrow the achievement gap before it becomes more pronounced (Ayem et al., 2023; Cartwright & Palian, 2024; Giri, 2021).

Additionally, the data collected from EGRA assessments can provide valuable insights for policymakers in shaping literacy initiatives. By analyzing assessment results, education leaders can allocate resources more efficiently and develop policies that address specific reading deficiencies. Basing educational decisions on concrete data ensures that interventions are more impactful and aligned with student needs. This data-driven approach supports continuous improvement in reading instruction (Ayem et al., 2024; Casupanan & Fastidio, 2024; Harahap, 2020).

Furthermore, continuous administration of EGRA enables schools to monitor and refine reading interventions over time. Conducting multiple assessments throughout the school year allows teachers to measure improvements and make necessary adjustments to instructional methods. This ensures that literacy programs remain dynamic and responsive to students' evolving needs. Regular evaluations contribute to long-term success in reading proficiency (Clements & Sarama, 2020; Hattan & Kendeou, 2024; Kim, 2022).

Likewise, EGRA aligns with research emphasizing the importance of early literacy development in shaping lifelong learning outcomes. Establishing a strong reading foundation in the early grades is crucial for future academic achievements. Consequently, assessments that focus on these critical skills help educators identify gaps and implement targeted instructional methods. Early intervention plays a vital role in preventing persistent reading challenges (Creswell & Xiaomi, 2020; Havemann et al., 2022; Kowalski et al., 2022).

In recent years, researchers have emphasized the necessity of culturally responsive reading assessments. EGRA's flexibility allows it to be tailored to various linguistic and educational contexts, making it an effective tool worldwide. Ensuring that assessments reflect students' cultural backgrounds enhances both accuracy and effectiveness. By integrating local language considerations, EGRA promotes inclusive literacy development (Crouch & Slade, 2022; Hogan et al., 2020; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2020).

Moreover, EGRA's cost-effectiveness and simplicity make it a practical assessment tool, particularly for under-resourced schools. Its straightforward administration and scoring system allow teachers to efficiently collect and analyze student performance data. This

accessibility is especially beneficial in rural and low-income areas where reading challenges are more pronounced. By providing an affordable solution, EGRA helps bridge educational gaps (Cubillas, 2023; Hubag et al., 2021; Lebdai et al., 2023).

Additionally, EGRA's emphasis on oral reading fluency provides deeper insights into students' reading development beyond basic word recognition. Fluency serves as a key indicator of reading proficiency by linking decoding skills with comprehension. Identifying fluency-related issues allows teachers to create specialized interventions that enhance both speed and understanding. This targeted approach strengthens overall literacy development (Daeli & Dewi, 2024; Islamy & Kaniadewi, 2022; Logan & Meyer, 2022).

Ultimately, implementing EGRA fosters a culture of data-driven decision-making in schools and educational institutions. By using assessment data to guide reading instruction, educators can develop evidence-based interventions that effectively address literacy challenges. This shift towards data-informed teaching enhances accountability and improves learning outcomes. Ultimately, a systematic approach to reading assessment leads to long-term improvements in student achievement (Jessy & Clements, 2021; Lonigan et al., 2020; Obukoadata et al., 2024).

Since 2019, the early grade reading assessment (EGRA) has been recognized as an essential tool for assessing young learners' reading abilities. By pinpointing specific areas where students struggle, EGRA allows educators to design targeted interventions that improve reading skills. This method ensures that teaching strategies align with the needs of learners, enhancing their reading development. Additionally, continuous use of EGRA enables teachers to monitor student progress and make necessary instructional adjustments (Johnson & Parker, 2022; Meiklejohn et al., 2021; Ochoa & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2023).

Furthermore, EGRA is adaptable to different languages and educational systems, making it a valuable assessment worldwide. By modifying the test to fit local contexts, educators can gather more accurate data on students' reading abilities. This flexibility ensures that reading interventions are more relevant and effective. As a result, EGRA helps bridge literacy gaps in diverse educational environments (Kim & Sabates, 2023; Miranda-Gamboa et al., 2024; Ome & Menendez, 2022).

In addition, early reading assessments like EGRA play a critical role in predicting students' future academic success. Research has shown that children who develop strong reading foundations in the early grades are more likely to excel in later school years. Implementing EGRA helps teachers identify struggling learners early and provide necessary support. This proactive approach reduces long-term literacy difficulties and enhances overall student performance (Kim et al., 2019; Misquitta et al., 2023; Pahamzah, 2020).

Moreover, EGRA provides policymakers with valuable data that guide the creation of effective literacy programs. By analyzing assessment results, education officials can allocate resources strategically and design policies that target specific reading deficiencies. Evidence-based planning ensures that literacy programs are well-structured and aligned with student needs. This approach strengthens the effectiveness of reading interventions in schools (Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Mitchell & Harper, 2020; Paredes et al., 2023).

Additionally, the use of EGRA enables educators to monitor the impact of reading interventions over time. Conducting multiple assessments throughout the academic year allows teachers to measure progress and adjust instructional strategies. This continuous monitoring ensures that reading programs remain effective and responsive to students' needs. Regular evaluations contribute to sustainable improvements in literacy skills (Morris & Slavin, 2021; Parker & Simmons, 2020; Repaso & Macalisang, 2024).

Likewise, EGRA aligns with studies highlighting the importance of early literacy in shaping lifelong learning outcomes. Strong reading foundations in the early years significantly influence academic trajectories and long-term educational success. Consequently, assessments like EGRA help educators detect reading gaps early and apply necessary teaching interventions. Early identification of challenges reduces the likelihood of persistent literacy struggles (Moussa & Koester, 2022; Patel & Green, 2023; Rezeki & Sagala, 2021).

In recent years, researchers have emphasized the need for culturally relevant reading assessments. EGRA's adaptability allows it to be customized for different linguistic and educational contexts, making it a highly effective tool. Tailoring assessments to local languages and cultural backgrounds provides more accurate insights into students' reading performance. This approach ensures that reading interventions are respectful of and responsive to students' diverse backgrounds (Nation & Snowling, 2021; Pilu et al., 2020; Roble, 2024).

Moreover, EGRA's simplicity and cost-effectiveness make it particularly valuable for underprivileged schools. Its easy administration and scoring process allow teachers to collect and analyze student performance data efficiently. This accessibility is crucial for rural and low-income communities where literacy challenges are more pronounced. By offering an affordable assessment solution, EGRA helps bridge educational inequalities (Ndijuye & Beatus, 2024; Piper et al., 2020; Ronoh & Tanui, 2024).

Additionally, EGRA's focus on oral reading fluency provides deeper insights into students' reading development. Fluency is a key indicator of reading competence, as it connects word recognition with comprehension. Assessing fluency helps teachers identify students who may read accurately but struggle with reading speed or expression. This information allows educators to implement targeted interventions that enhance both fluency and comprehension (Nurmahanani et al., 2021; Pisani et al., 2022; Schaefer, 2022).

Ultimately, EGRA promotes a data-driven approach to education by encouraging evidence-based decision-making. Using assessment data to inform instruction enables educators to create effective interventions that address literacy challenges. This structured and

systematic assessment process fosters accountability and continuous improvement in reading instruction. Ultimately, data-informed strategies contribute to better learning outcomes for students (Purcia et al., 2023; Silungwe & Kaani, 2024; Vaughn & Swanson, 2023).

Letter Name Knowledge is an essential foundation for early literacy development. Recognizing and naming letters allow children to establish connections between written symbols and spoken language. Research indicates that children who quickly identify letters tend to develop stronger reading skills later in their academic journey. Therefore, early exposure to letter recognition activities significantly enhances reading readiness (Ritonga, 2021; Spaull et al., 2020; Wagner et al., 2024).

In addition, studies have shown that Letter Name Knowledge is strongly linked to phonemic awareness. When children can name letters effortlessly, they are more likely to understand their corresponding sounds. This connection helps them develop decoding skills, which are necessary for reading unfamiliar words. Consequently, early mastery of letter names can improve overall literacy achievement. Strengthening letter name knowledge at an early age lays the groundwork for more advanced reading and writing skills later on (Rasinski & Padak, 2020; Tahang, 2020).

Moreover, researchers have emphasized the critical role of Letter Name Knowledge in predicting reading success. Children who enter school with strong letter recognition skills often perform significantly better in literacy tasks compared to their peers with limited knowledge. Letter naming fluency serves as an early and reliable indicator of a child's ability to acquire reading skills effectively. As a result, literacy instruction should consistently incorporate fun and engaging activities that strengthen letter recognition (Thuo et al., 2024; Wawire & Zuilkowski, 2021; Wilson & Mattingly, 2020).

Furthermore, early exposure to letters through songs, books, and interactive activities helps children retain letter names more effectively. Engaging learning experiences allow children to form meaningful associations between letters and sounds. Research suggests that multisensory approaches, such as tracing letters while saying their names, significantly enhance letter recognition. Thus, incorporating interactive methods in early education promotes stronger literacy foundations (Tiu et al., 2023; Wicks, 2022; Yusuf, 2023).

Likewise, a child's home environment plays an essential role in developing Letter Name Knowledge. Parents who frequently read with their children and expose them to alphabet-related materials contribute to stronger letter recognition skills. Studies indicate that children with rich literacy experiences at home demonstrate greater ease in learning letter names. Hence, parental involvement in early literacy activities positively influences reading development (Kim, 2022; Yuliawati & Nuriyanti, 2021; Zualkernan & Shapsough, 2024). On another note, the effectiveness of Letter Name Knowledge instruction depends on the teaching strategies used in the classroom. Research highlights that direct instruction, combined with playful learning, yields better results than rote memorization alone. Teachers who integrate storytelling, games, and hands-on activities help children retain letter names more efficiently. Accordingly, instructional methods should be designed to engage young learners in meaningful literacy experiences (Abacete, 2022; Babbie & Saitama, 2020; Debman, 2022).

At the same time, studies indicate that Letter Name Knowledge is a stepping stone for learning sight words. Children who can quickly recognize letters find it easier to identify common high-frequency words in texts. This ability reduces the cognitive load when reading, allowing for smoother and more fluent reading development. Consequently, letter recognition serves as an important bridge to word reading fluency (Alber-Morgan, 2023; Bandala, 2024; Diana, 2023).

Similarly, research findings suggest that early difficulties in Letter Name Knowledge can lead to reading challenges later on. Children who struggle with letter recognition may find it harder to grasp phonics and word decoding strategies. Early interventions, such as structured letter-learning activities, can help prevent future literacy difficulties. Therefore, timely support in developing Letter Name Knowledge is necessary for students at risk of reading delays (Al-Otaiba & Fuchs, 2020; Bardack et al., 2023; Divinagracia, 2023).

In the same way, the relationship between Letter Name Knowledge and reading comprehension has been widely discussed. While letter recognition alone does not guarantee comprehension, it lays the foundation for word recognition, which is essential for understanding texts. Research indicates that children who master letter names early are more confident when engaging with written material. Thus, strengthening Letter Name Knowledge is a step toward achieving overall reading proficiency (Angrist et al., 2021; Bonacina et al., 2022; Drummond & Nakamura, 2021).

Ultimately, consistent assessment of Letter Name Knowledge is necessary to track students' progress in early literacy development. Educators who regularly evaluate children's letter recognition skills can identify those who need additional support. Data from such assessments help in designing appropriate reading interventions that address specific learning gaps. Ultimately, ongoing monitoring ensures that all learners build a strong foundation in literacy by fostering confidence, engagement, and meaningful connections with printed language (Anjarningsih, 2024; Botelho da Silva, 2020; Dubeck et al., 2021).

Primarily, Letter Sound Knowledge is an essential component of early literacy development. It enables children to connect letters with their corresponding sounds, which is necessary for decoding words. Studies suggest that young learners who grasp letter-sound relationships early find it easier to transition to fluent reading. Therefore, explicit instruction in letter sounds supports overall reading proficiency (Ardington et al., 2020; Bryman & Erick, 2021; Dwi, 2021).

In addition, phonics instruction that focuses on Letter Sound Knowledge significantly improves word recognition skills. When children

learn to associate letters with their sounds, they develop the ability to decode unfamiliar words independently. Research shows that systematic phonics instruction enhances reading accuracy and fluency among early readers. Consequently, integrating structured phonics programs in early education fosters better literacy outcomes (Asfaw, 2023; Bukan & Alinda, 2023; Ezechinyere et al., 2020). Moreover, letter sound knowledge serves as a bridge between phonemic awareness and reading comprehension. Children who master letter sounds can blend and segment words more effectively, allowing them to understand written texts. Studies indicate that phonemic awareness combined with letter-sound recognition results in stronger reading abilities. Thus, developing this skill early on lays the groundwork for successful reading comprehension (Asfaw, 2024; Calex & Josh, 2021; Fasih et al., 2020).

Furthermore, early exposure to Letter Sound Knowledge enhances spelling skills among young learners. Understanding letter-sound relationships helps children spell words phonetically, which supports their written language development. Research suggests that children who receive explicit instruction in letter sounds demonstrate greater spelling accuracy. As a result, phonics-based instruction benefits both reading and writing skills (Ayem et al., 2023; Cartwright & Palian, 2024; Giri, 2021).

Likewise, interactive teaching strategies improve the acquisition of Letter Sound Knowledge. Engaging activities such as singing phonics songs, playing letter-sound matching games, and using tactile materials enhance learning retention. Studies highlight that multisensory approaches reinforce letter-sound associations more effectively than traditional rote memorization. Hence, incorporating interactive methods in instruction leads to better literacy development (Ayem et al., 2024; Casupanan & Fastidio, 2024; Harahap, 2020).

At the same time, research indicates that Letter Sound Knowledge is a predictor of early reading success. Children who struggle with letter-sound associations often experience difficulties in decoding words and fluency. Early intervention programs focusing on phonics instruction help struggling readers catch up with their peers. Therefore, assessing and strengthening Letter Sound Knowledge at an early stage prevents future reading difficulties (Clements & Sarama, 2020; Hattan & Kendeou, 2024; Kim, 2022).

Similarly, studies suggest that Letter Sound Knowledge is essential for learning sight words. When children can quickly associate letters with sounds, they are more likely to recognize high-frequency words effortlessly. This automatic recognition reduces cognitive load and allows readers to focus on comprehension. Consequently, strong letter-sound connections contribute to smoother reading experiences (Creswell & Xiaomi, 2020; Havemann et al., 2022; Kowalski et al., 2022).

In the same way, home literacy environments play a significant role in developing Letter Sound Knowledge. Children who are exposed to alphabet books, phonics games, and letter-sound activities at home show better reading readiness. Research emphasizes that parental involvement in literacy-rich activities supports early phonics development. Thus, engaging children in letter-sound exercises outside the classroom enhances their reading skills (Crouch & Slade, 2022; Hogan et al., 2020; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2020).

Additionally, early difficulties in Letter Sound Knowledge may indicate the need for additional literacy support. Struggling learners benefit from targeted phonics instruction, guided reading sessions, and repeated practice with letter-sound correspondence. Studies confirm that consistent exposure to phonics-based interventions significantly improves decoding skills. Therefore, early identification of difficulties allows for timely and effective literacy interventions (Cubillas, 2023; Hubag et al., 2021; Lebdai et al., 2023).

To sum up, regular assessment of Letter Sound Knowledge helps educators tailor instruction to students' needs. Monitoring progress through phonics assessments allows teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in letter-sound recognition. Research supports the use of formative assessments to guide instructional decisions in early literacy programs. Ultimately, ongoing evaluation ensures that all learners develop strong letter-sound associations essential for reading success (Daeli & Dewi, 2024; Islamy & Kaniadewi, 2022; Logan & Meyer, 2022).

Primary, Phonemic awareness is a fundamental skill that supports early reading development. It enables children to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in words, which is essential for decoding. Studies have shown that children with strong phonemic awareness tend to develop better reading fluency and comprehension. Therefore, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness helps build a solid foundation for literacy (Jessy & Clements, 2021; Lonigan et al., 2020; Obukoadata et al., 2024).

In addition, research suggests that phonemic awareness is a strong predictor of reading success. Children who struggle with phoneme recognition often face difficulties in blending and segmenting words, which affects their reading ability. Systematic phonemic awareness instruction has been found to improve reading outcomes significantly. Consequently, early intervention in this area reduces the risk of reading difficulties (Johnson & Parker, 2022; Meiklejohn et al., 2021; Ochoa & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2023).

Moreover, phonemic awareness instruction should be engaging and interactive to enhance learning. Activities such as rhyming games, syllable segmentation, and sound manipulation exercises strengthen phonemic skills. Studies indicate that playful, multisensory approaches help children grasp phoneme distinctions more effectively. Thus, integrating fun and hands-on strategies into instruction makes learning more effective (Kim & Sabates, 2023; Miranda-Gamboa et al., 2024; Ome & Menendez, 2022).

Furthermore, phonemic awareness lays the groundwork for phonics instruction. Before children can connect letters to sounds, they must first be able to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken words. Research has demonstrated that strong phonemic awareness skills accelerate the development of phonics knowledge. As a result, building phonemic awareness early leads to smoother reading progression (Kim et al., 2019; Misquitta et al., 2023; Pahamzah, 2020).

At the same time, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness benefits both struggling and advanced readers. Struggling readers who receive targeted phonemic training show significant improvements in word recognition and spelling. Meanwhile, advanced readers strengthen their decoding and fluency skills through continued phonemic practice. Therefore, phonemic awareness instruction should be an essential part of early literacy programs (Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Mitchell & Harper, 2020; Paredes et al., 2023).

Similarly, phonemic awareness instruction has long-term effects on reading comprehension. When children develop the ability to manipulate sounds, they can decode words more efficiently, reducing cognitive load while reading. Studies indicate that strong phonemic awareness leads to better word recognition, allowing students to focus on understanding the text. Consequently, phonemic awareness instruction enhances overall literacy development (Morris & Slavin, 2021; Parker & Simmons, 2020; Repaso & Macalisang, 2024).

Likewise, phonemic awareness is particularly beneficial for English language learners (ELLs). Many ELLs struggle with distinguishing sounds that are not present in their native language, making phonemic awareness instruction essential. Research highlights that structured phonemic activities help ELLs acquire reading skills more effectively. Thus, providing additional phonemic awareness support for ELLs improves their literacy development (Moussa & Koester, 2022; Patel & Green, 2023; Rezeki & Sagala, 2021).

Additionally, parental involvement in phonemic awareness activities reinforces learning outside the classroom. Simple activities such as reading aloud, playing sound-matching games, and practicing rhymes at home enhance phonemic awareness skills. Studies confirm that children who engage in phonemic activities with their parents show stronger early literacy skills. Therefore, encouraging families to participate in literacy activities supports reading development (Nation & Snowling, 2021; Pilu et al., 2020; Roble, 2024).

Moreover, assessment of phonemic awareness helps educators identify students who need additional support. Regular evaluations allow teachers to adjust instruction and provide targeted interventions for struggling learners. Research supports the use of phonemic awareness assessments to guide instruction in early literacy programs. As a result, ongoing assessment ensures that all students develop essential phonemic skills (Ndijuye & Beatus, 2024; Piper et al., 2020; Ronoh & Tanui, 2024).

As a final point, phonemic awareness instruction must be continuous and progressive. Introducing simple phonemic tasks before advancing to complex sound manipulation ensures effective skill development. Studies emphasize that consistent practice with phonemic awareness activities leads to better reading success. Ultimately, a strong foundation in phonemic awareness supports lifelong literacy achievement (Nurmahanani et al., 2021; Pisani et al., 2022; Schaefer, 2022).

In addition, Familiar Word Reading is a fundamental skill that enables children to recognize and read common words effortlessly. As students develop this ability, their reading fluency and comprehension improve significantly. Research suggests that frequent exposure to high-frequency words strengthens automaticity in reading. For this reason, systematic instruction in familiar words plays a key role in early literacy development (Purcia et al., 2023; Silungwe & Kaani, 2024; Vaughn & Swanson, 2023).

To elaborate, familiar word reading minimizes the effort required for decoding, allowing students to focus more on meaning. When children can recognize familiar words instantly, their reading becomes smoother and more efficient. Studies indicate that strong word recognition skills lead to better reading accuracy and speed. Consequently, reinforcing familiar word knowledge contributes to overall reading success (Ritonga, 2021; Spaull et al., 2020; Wagner et al., 2024).

In the same way, direct instruction in familiar words benefits early readers by enhancing word retention. Using strategies such as word walls, flashcards, and repeated exposure improves recognition. Researchers have found that interactive and multisensory approaches help children recall words more effectively. As a result, engaging teaching methods promote stronger familiar word reading skills (Rasinski & Padak, 2020; Tahang, 2020; Wahya & Citrawati, 2022). Notably, familiar word reading is directly linked to reading fluency. When children can recognize words quickly, they read with greater ease and confidence. Studies confirm that fluent readers possess a large sight word vocabulary, allowing them to concentrate on comprehension rather than decoding. Therefore, developing Familiar Word Reading positively influences overall literacy performance (Thuo et al., 2024; Wawire & Zuilkowski, 2021; Wilson & Mattingly, 2020).

On another note, improving Familiar Word Reading is especially beneficial for struggling readers. Some students experience difficulty in decoding, but recognizing common words provides them with a sense of accomplishment. Research highlights that targeted interventions focusing on familiar words enhance reading proficiency among struggling learners. Given this, emphasizing familiar word instruction can provide essential reading support (Tiu et al., 2023; Wicks, 2022; Yusuf, 2023).

In relation to this, familiar word reading plays a significant role in the literacy development of English language learners (ELLs). Since ELLs may have limited exposure to English vocabulary, recognizing high-frequency words allows them to read with more confidence. Studies suggest that explicit familiar word instruction accelerates the reading development of ELLs. Thus, incorporating familiar words into language instruction fosters improved literacy outcomes (Kim, 2022; Yuliawati & Nuriyanti, 2021; Zualkernan & Shapsough, 2024).

Similarly, familiar word reading contributes to spelling and writing skills. When students can identify familiar words quickly, they are more likely to spell them correctly and use them appropriately in writing. Research has shown that automatic word recognition reduces spelling mistakes and improves written language fluency. Therefore, strengthening Familiar Word Reading enhances broader literacy

abilities (Abacete, 2022; Babbie & Saitama, 2020; Debman, 2022).

Equally important, repeated reading activities help develop Familiar Word Reading skills. Engaging children in strategies such as shared reading, paired reading, and guided reading promotes word retention. Researchers emphasize that repeated exposure to familiar words across different contexts strengthens recognition and recall. Because of this, consistent practice leads to greater fluency in word recognition (Alber-Morgan, 2023; Bandala, 2024; Diana, 2023).

At the same time, technology-based learning tools provide additional support for familiar word reading. Digital platforms, including educational apps and interactive reading games, offer engaging opportunities for word practice. Studies indicate that technology-driven literacy instruction enhances familiar word recognition by making learning more enjoyable. Accordingly, incorporating digital tools into early reading programs strengthens word familiarity (Al-Otaiba & Fuchs, 2020; Bardack et al., 2023; Divinagracia, 2023).

Ultimately, assessing familiar word reading helps teachers track student progress and adjust instruction as needed. Regular assessments identify strengths and areas requiring improvement, ensuring effective literacy support. Research underscores the importance of using sight word assessments to inform teaching practices. Ultimately, continuous evaluation ensures that students build a solid foundation in Familiar Word Reading (Angrist et al., 2021; Bonacina et al., 2022; Drummond & Nakamura, 2021).

Nonword reading is an essential skill that evaluates a child's ability to decode unfamiliar words based on phonetic principles. Unlike familiar word reading, this skill requires learners to rely entirely on letter-sound relationships rather than memorization. Research suggests that strong nonword reading abilities indicate well-developed phonics knowledge, which supports overall reading proficiency. Therefore, teaching children to decode nonwords helps them become more independent readers (Anjarningsih, 2024; Botelho da Silva, 2020; Dubeck et al., 2021).

In the same way, nonword reading strengthens a child's phonemic awareness by encouraging sound blending. When children decode unfamiliar words, they must break down each sound and combine them correctly, reinforcing their understanding of phonics rules. Studies indicate that students who perform well in nonword reading are more likely to develop strong literacy skills. As a result, phonics instruction should include regular nonword reading exercises (Ardington et al., 2020; Bryman & Erick, 2021; Dwi, 2021).

Similarly, nonword reading plays an important role in assessing reading development among early learners. Unlike sight word recognition, which depends on memorization, decoding nonwords demonstrates a child's ability to apply phonetic knowledge. Researchers have found that early readers who struggle with nonword reading may face challenges in reading unfamiliar real words as well. For this reason, educators use nonword reading assessments to identify students needing additional phonics support (Asfaw, 2023; Bukan & Alinda, 2023; Ezechinyere et al., 2020). At the same time, strong nonword reading skills contribute to reading fluency and comprehension. When children can decode unfamiliar words effortlessly, they read more smoothly and focus better on understanding the text. Studies confirm that students with high nonword reading proficiency are more likely to become fluent readers. Thus, decoding practice is necessary for improving overall reading performance (Asfaw, 2024; Calex & Josh, 2021; Fasih et al., 2020).

Moreover, nonword reading is particularly useful in identifying reading difficulties such as dyslexia. Many struggling readers find it hard to decode nonwords because they rely heavily on memorization rather than phonics skills. Research highlights that students with dyslexia often exhibit weaknesses in nonword reading, making it a valuable screening tool. Because of this, early identification through nonword reading assessments can lead to more effective interventions (Ayem et al., 2023; Cartwright & Palian, 2024; Giri, 2021).

In relation to this, nonword reading is an effective strategy for teaching English as a second language (ESL) learners. Since ESL students may not recognize many English words, focusing on phonetic decoding helps them read unfamiliar vocabulary more accurately. Studies suggest that structured phonics instruction with nonword practice enhances word recognition skills among ESL learners. Thus, incorporating nonword reading into language learning supports literacy development (Ayem et al., 2024; Casupanan & Fastidio, 2024; Harahap, 2020).

Likewise, nonword reading exercises help students build confidence in their reading abilities. When children successfully decode unfamiliar words, they feel more capable of tackling new and challenging texts with greater motivation and focus. Research has shown that frequent exposure to nonwords improves decoding speed, phonemic awareness, and overall reading accuracy. Consequently, reinforcing nonword reading skills consistently leads to greater reading self-efficacy and long-term literacy development (Clements & Sarama, 2020; Hattan & Kendeou, 2024; Kim, 2022).

Notably, repeated exposure to nonword reading activities enhances students' ability to recognize spelling patterns. When children decode unfamiliar words regularly, they develop a deeper understanding of phonics rules and letter combinations. Studies emphasize that this pattern recognition supports spelling accuracy and word formation. For this reason, integrating nonword reading into phonics instruction strengthens both reading and writing skills (Creswell & Xiaomi, 2020; Havemann et al., 2022; Kowalski et al., 2022).

Additionally, technology-based tools can improve nonword reading skills by offering interactive phonics practice. Digital applications and online reading games provide engaging ways for children to practice decoding unfamiliar words and improve their overall reading fluency. Researchers suggest that technology-driven literacy programs help reinforce phonics skills in a fun and effective manner. Accordingly, using digital resources for nonword reading can enhance early literacy instruction, making learning both enjoyable and more accessible for diverse learners (Crouch & Slade, 2022; Hogan et al., 2020; Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2020).

Ultimately, assessing nonword reading provides valuable insights into a child's reading progress. Regular evaluations allow teachers to identify students who need additional support in phonics, decoding, and fluency. Research underscores the importance of using nonword reading assessments to guide targeted interventions. Ultimately, monitoring this skill ensures that all learners receive the necessary instruction and support to build strong reading foundations and overcome potential barriers to reading success (Cubillas, 2023; Hubag et al., 2021; Lebdai et al., 2023).

Oral reading fluency is a key indicator of a child's overall reading development, as it measures the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. When children read fluently, they can focus more on understanding the text rather than decoding individual words. Research suggests that fluency is directly linked to reading comprehension because fluent readers can process information more efficiently. Therefore, fluency instruction should be a major focus in early literacy programs (Daeli & Dewi, 2024; Islamy & Kaniadewi, 2022; Logan & Meyer, 2022).

In addition, oral reading fluency serves as a bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension. When students struggle with fluency, they often have difficulty understanding the meaning of the text because they are too focused on decoding individual words. Studies indicate that fluency interventions, such as repeated reading, guided oral practice, and timely feedback, can significantly improve overall reading skills. As a result, incorporating fluency-building activities into daily lessons consistently enhances both decoding and comprehension abilities across various reading levels (Jessy & Clements, 2021; Lonigan et al., 2020; Obukoadata et al., 2024).

Likewise, the development of oral reading fluency depends on consistent practice and exposure to texts of varying difficulty levels. Fluent readers tend to engage more in independent reading, which further strengthens their literacy skills. Research highlights that students who read frequently develop stronger fluency skills over time. Consequently, encouraging children to read aloud regularly fosters continuous improvement in their reading abilities (Johnson & Parker, 2022; Meiklejohn et al., 2021; Ochoa & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2023).

Oral reading fluency plays an important role in achievement. Students who read fluently perform better in other subjects because they can quickly understand written instructions and academic content. Studies confirm that fluency is a strong predictor of future success in reading and writing. Thus, improving fluency at an early stage benefits learners across multiple disciplines (Kim & Sabates, 2023; Miranda-Gamboa et al., 2024; Ome & Menendez, 2022).

Moreover, assessing oral reading fluency provides educators with valuable insights into a child's reading progress. Teachers can identify struggling readers early by evaluating their reading speed, accuracy, and expression. Research indicates that fluency assessments help in designing targeted interventions that address specific reading difficulties. Because of this, regular fluency assessments should be integrated into literacy instruction (Kim et al., 2019; Misquitta et al., 2023; Pahamzah, 2020).

Similarly, fluency-building strategies, such as repeated reading and partner reading, have been proven to enhance oral reading fluency. Engaging students in repeated exposure to familiar texts increases their reading speed and confidence. Studies suggest that guided oral reading with teacher feedback is one of the most effective methods for improving fluency. Hence, structured fluency practice should be a priority in early reading programs (Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Mitchell & Harper, 2020; Paredes et al., 2023).

Additionally, technology-based fluency interventions have gained popularity in modern literacy instruction. Digital reading programs and fluency apps provide interactive, engaging ways for students to practice oral reading with instant, personalized feedback. Researchers highlight that integrating technology into fluency instruction significantly increases student engagement, confidence, and motivation to read. Accordingly, digital tools can be an effective and accessible supplement to traditional fluency-building activities in diverse classroom settings (Morris & Slavin, 2021; Parker & Simmons, 2020; Repaso & Macalisang, 2024).

Notably, fluency instruction benefits both struggling and advanced readers by strengthening their ability to read smoothly and expressively. Even proficient readers continue to develop fluency skills as they encounter more complex texts. Studies emphasize that teaching prosody, or the expressive elements of reading, enhances comprehension and overall reading enjoyment. Therefore, fluency instruction should focus not only on speed but also on expression and phrasing (Moussa & Koester, 2022; Patel & Green, 2023; Rezeki & Sagala, 2021).

Furthermore, oral reading fluency is closely linked to vocabulary development. When children read fluently, they encounter new words in context, helping them expand their vocabulary naturally. Research suggests that fluent readers are better at recognizing word meanings and using them in different contexts. For this reason, fluency instruction should be integrated with vocabulary-building activities (Nation & Snowling, 2021; Pilu et al., 2020; Roble, 2024).

To sum up, sustained improvement in oral reading fluency requires a comprehensive approach that includes phonics instruction, vocabulary enrichment, and reading practice. Fluency does not develop overnight; rather, it improves through continuous reading exposure and guided practice. Studies confirm that a well-balanced literacy program with a strong fluency component leads to better reading outcomes. Ultimately, focusing on fluency development creates confident and skilled readers (Ndijuye & Beatus, 2024; Piper et al., 2020; Ronoh & Tanui, 2024).

Furthermore, reading comprehension is a key factor in determining a student's overall literacy development. It refers to the ability to

understand, interpret, and analyze written texts, which is necessary for academic success. Research indicates that strong comprehension skills enable students to engage more deeply with texts and retain information effectively. Thus, fostering comprehension skills from an early age is essential in building proficient readers (Nurmahanani et al., 2021; Pisani et al., 2022; Schaefer, 2022).

In addition, reading comprehension is influenced by a student's background knowledge, vocabulary, and cognitive abilities. Students who struggle with comprehension often have difficulties connecting new information with prior knowledge. Studies emphasize that strategies like questioning, summarizing, and predicting can significantly enhance comprehension skills. As a result, explicit instruction in comprehension strategies is beneficial in improving reading outcomes (Purcia et al., 2023; Silungwe & Kaani, 2024; Vaughn & Swanson, 2023).

Similarly, reading comprehension difficulties can impact performance in other subjects, as students need to understand written materials in all areas of learning. Poor comprehension skills may lead to frustration and disengagement, which affects overall academic achievement. Research highlights that interventions focusing on active reading and critical thinking improve students' ability to process information. Consequently, integrating comprehension-focused instruction across subjects enhances learning experiences (Ritonga, 2021; Spaull et al., 2020; Wagner et al., 2024).

At the same time, developing Reading Comprehension requires consistent practice and exposure to different types of texts. Students who regularly engage in reading activities demonstrate higher levels of comprehension compared to those who read less frequently. Studies show that independent reading, combined with guided instruction, fosters a deeper understanding of texts. Therefore, encouraging students to read diverse materials strengthens their comprehension abilities (Rasinski & Padak, 2020; Tahang, 2020; Wahya & Citrawati, 2022).

Moreover, assessing Reading Comprehension helps educators identify struggling readers and implement appropriate interventions. Teachers can use tools such as comprehension quizzes, oral discussions, and written summaries to gauge a student's understanding of a text. Research suggests that formative assessments provide valuable insights into students' comprehension progress. Because of this, regular assessment is necessary to monitor and improve reading skills (Thuo et al., 2024; Wawire & Zuilkowski, 2021; Wilson & Mattingly, 2020).

Likewise, comprehension-focused instruction should include interactive and engaging activities to make learning more effective. Strategies like collaborative reading, discussion groups, and storytelling have been found to enhance students' ability to analyze and interpret texts. Studies emphasize that social interaction in reading activities helps learners develop deeper comprehension. Hence, promoting discussions and interactive reading sessions is beneficial in improving comprehension skills (Tiu et al., 2023; Wicks, 2022; Yusuf, 2023).

Additionally, the integration of technology has introduced new ways to enhance Reading Comprehension. Digital reading tools, interactive e-books, and educational apps provide multimedia features that support comprehension development. Researchers highlight that using technology in reading instruction increases student engagement and motivation. Accordingly, incorporating digital resources in literacy instruction can support comprehension growth (Kim, 2022; Yuliawati & Nuriyanti, 2021; Zualkernan & Shapsough, 2024).

Notably, comprehension is not only about understanding words but also about making inferences and evaluating information critically. Effective readers analyze the meaning behind the text and relate it to real-life situations. Research indicates that teaching students to ask questions while reading improves their comprehension and critical thinking skills. Therefore, promoting inferential and analytical thinking enhances overall reading comprehension (Abacete, 2022; Babbie & Saitama, 2020; Debman, 2022).

Furthermore, vocabulary development plays a significant role in Reading comprehension. When students have a rich vocabulary, they can easily grasp the meaning of complex texts. Studies suggest that explicit vocabulary instruction, combined with reading practice, leads to stronger comprehension skills. For this reason, integrating vocabulary-building activities into reading instruction is essential (Alber-Morgan, 2023; Bandala, 2024; Diana, 2023).

As a final point, improving reading comprehension requires a well-balanced approach that includes phonics, fluency, and critical thinking strategies. Research confirms that students benefit from structured comprehension instruction that involves guided reading, questioning techniques, and discussion-based learning. A comprehensive literacy program ensures that students develop strong comprehension abilities over time. Ultimately, equipping students with effective comprehension strategies leads to better academic performance (Al-Otaiba & Fuchs, 2020; Bardack et al., 2023; Divinagracia, 2023).

Listening comprehension is an essential skill that supports overall language development and literacy. It allows students to process spoken language, understand meaning, and respond appropriately in conversations and academic settings. Research indicates that strong listening skills contribute to better reading comprehension and verbal communication. Therefore, teaching listening strategies at an early age enhances a child's ability to engage effectively in learning (Angrist et al., 2021; Bonacina et al., 2022; Drummond & Nakamura, 2021).

In addition, listening comprehension plays a major role in acquiring new vocabulary and concepts. When students actively listen, they expand their understanding of words, sentence structures, and ideas. Studies highlight that children exposed to rich oral language environments develop stronger comprehension skills. As a result, incorporating storytelling, discussions, and audio resources can

improve students' listening abilities (Anjarningsih, 2024; Botelho da Silva, 2020; Dubeck et al., 2021). Similarly, listening comprehension affects students' ability to follow instructions and participate in classroom activities. Students who struggle with listening may have difficulties understanding lessons, completing tasks, and engaging in discussions. Research emphasizes that direct instruction in listening strategies, such as summarizing and questioning, can enhance comprehension. Thus, providing explicit guidance on active listening benefits students' academic performance (Ardington et al., 2020; Bryman & Erick, 2021; Dwi, 2021).

At the same time, listening comprehension is closely linked to reading development. Strong listeners often become strong readers because they can decode, interpret, and analyze spoken and written texts effectively. Studies show that listening to audiobooks and participating in oral discussions improve both listening and reading comprehension. Consequently, integrating listening activities into reading instruction can strengthen literacy skills (Asfaw, 2023; Bukan & Alinda, 2023; Ezechinyere et al., 2020).

Moreover, assessing listening comprehension helps educators identify students who need additional support. Teachers can use oral response tasks, retelling exercises, and comprehension checks to measure students' listening abilities. Research suggests that frequent listening assessments provide insight into students' progress and areas for improvement. Because of this, regular evaluation of listening skills is necessary to enhance learning outcomes (Asfaw, 2024a; Calex & Josh, 2021; Fasih et al., 2020).

Likewise, interactive listening activities can significantly improve students' comprehension and communication abilities. Engaging learners in discussions, role-playing, and cooperative learning tasks fosters active listening, collaboration, and critical thinking. Studies indicate that interactive approaches encourage students to listen attentively and process information more effectively through meaningful engagement. Hence, incorporating group-based listening exercises regularly enhances comprehension skills and promotes deeper language understanding (Ayem et al., 2023; Cartwright & Palian, 2024; Giri, 2021).

Additionally, technology has provided new opportunities for improving listening comprehension. Digital tools such as podcasts, interactive listening apps, and video-based lessons allow students to practice listening in diverse contexts. Researchers highlight that multimedia resources enhance engagement and comprehension by providing varied listening experiences. Accordingly, integrating technology into listening instruction can support skill development (Ayem et al., 2024a; Casupanan & Fastidio, 2024; Harahap, 2020).

Notably, background knowledge influences listening comprehension by helping students make connections to what they hear. When students are familiar with a topic, they can process spoken information more easily. Research suggests that pre-listening activities, such as discussing key vocabulary and concepts, improve comprehension. Therefore, activating prior knowledge before listening exercises enhances understanding (Clements & Sarama, 2020; Hattan & Kendeou, 2024; Kim, 2022).

Hence, listening skills are important for social and emotional development. Effective listening allows students to engage in meaningful conversations, understand others' perspectives, and respond appropriately. Studies show that children who develop strong listening abilities tend to have better social interactions and relationships. For this reason, promoting active listening in classrooms supports both academic and social growth (Creswell & Xiaomi, 2020; Havemann et al., 2022; Kowalski et al., 2022).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey, a type of quantitative research that focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis to understand patterns, relationships, and trends. It relies on measurable variables, structured tools such as surveys and experiments, and statistical techniques to ensure objectivity and accuracy. This approach allows researchers to make generalizations based on a representative sample of the population. By using numerical evidence, quantitative research ensures the reliability and validity of the findings (Creswell & Xiaomi, 2020).

Furthermore, a key strength of quantitative research is its ability to provide precise, replicable results through standardized tools like questionnaires and structured surveys. As a result, researchers are able to ensure consistency in data collection and measurement across different groups. In addition, statistical analysis, including inferential statistics, allows for the generalization of findings, making the results valuable for informed, evidence-based decision-making in various fields. This structured approach minimizes biases, enhances objectivity, and strengthens the overall credibility of the results. Overall, these characteristics make quantitative research a reliable method for examining hypotheses and establishing clear cause-and-effect relationships (Bryman & Erick, 2021).

Building on these strengths, quantitative research often employs large sample sizes to improve the generalizability of results. Consequently, this allows researchers to uncover significant patterns and trends within diverse populations. For instance, nationwide surveys measuring consumer satisfaction or public opinion rely on extensive data collection to represent larger groups. Furthermore, the ability to identify correlations and statistical anomalies enhances the depth and quality of analysis. Thus, the use of large datasets contributes to the broader relevance and applicability of quantitative findings (Lonigan et al., 2020).

Respondents

The respondents of this study were Grade 1 learners at Banisil Central Elementary School, General Santos City, for the school year 2020-2021. Notably, 391 Grade 1 pupils participated in the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). Assessing their reading skills

was important in identifying areas for improvement, which needed to be addressed with immediate solutions. The respondents were key to this study as they provided essential data for the research.

To ensure the study's relevance and accuracy, specific inclusion criteria were established. Primarily, all Grade 1 pupils enrolled at Banisil Central Elementary School during the school year 2019-2020 were included in the study. The pupils had to have been present during the administration of the EGRA and had to have provided assent, with parental consent obtained. This criterion ensured that the study covered a representative sample of the Grade 1 population at the school.

Moreover, certain exclusion criteria were defined to maintain the integrity of the study. Learners who were not enrolled in Grade 1 at Banisil Central Elementary School during the specified school year were excluded. Additionally, any pupils who were absent during the administration of the EGRA or whose parents did not provide consent were not included in the study. Consequently, this ensured that the data collected was accurate and relevant to the research objectives.

In addition to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a clear withdrawal process was established. and their parents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Moreover, the data collected from Learners who chose to withdraw learners were excluded from the analysis to ensure the integrity of the research findings. This ethical consideration ensured that participation was voluntary and respected the rights of the respondents.

Instrument

The early grade reading assessment (EGRA) consists of eight key components that evaluated different aspects of a learner's reading ability. Letter name knowledge measures a child's ability to recognize and name letters of the alphabet, which is fundamental for early literacy development. This skill is essential as it served as the foundation for reading and writing, enabling learners to identify letters in words and sentences. Without strong letter recognition, children may struggle with more complex reading tasks as they progress in their education (Roble, 2024).

Similarly, letter sound knowledge assessed a child's ability to associate letters with their corresponding sounds, which is critical for phonics instruction. Understanding letter-sound relationships allows learners to decode words more effectively and supports their ability to blend sounds into meaningful words. This component plays a significant role in early reading because it helps students build the skills necessary for word recognition and spelling. Children who develop strong phonics skills tend to become more confident readers as they move from simple to more complex texts (Yusuf, 2023).

In addition, phonemic awareness examines a child's ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in words, which is an essential pre-reading skill. This component focuses on a child's ability to break words into sounds, blend them together, and manipulate phonemes to form new words. Research shows that students with strong phonemic awareness have an easier time learning to read because they understand how spoken language connects to written words. If this skill is not developed early, children may face challenges in reading fluency and comprehension (Calex & Josh, 2021).

Moreover, familiar word reading evaluates a student's ability to recognize and read common high-frequency words, which are often encountered in texts. These words, sometimes referred to as "sight words," are frequently used in sentences and do not always follow regular phonetic patterns. The ability to quickly recognize these words without needing to decode them improves reading fluency and comprehension. When students struggle with familiar word recognition, their reading speed may slow down, making it difficult for them to understand the overall meaning of a text (Giri, 2021).

Additionally, nonword reading assesses a child's decoding skills by requiring them to read made-up words that follow phonetic rules. This component is important because it helps determine a child's ability to apply phonics knowledge rather than relying on memorization. Strong decoding skills enable learners to read unfamiliar words independently, which enhances their ability to engage with new vocabulary and complex texts. Students who perform well in this area tend to develop stronger word recognition skills, making them more proficient readers (Lebdai et al., 2023).

Furthermore, oral reading fluency measures how quickly and accurately a child can read a passage, which reflects both word recognition and comprehension abilities. Fluent readers can read smoothly, with appropriate expression and minimal hesitation, allowing them to focus on understanding the text. When students struggle with fluency, they often read in a slow, choppy manner, which affects their ability to comprehend what they are reading. By improving oral reading fluency, educators can help students build confidence in their reading skills and enhance overall literacy development (Paredes et al., 2023).

Likewise, reading comprehension evaluates a student's ability to understand and interpret a passage by answering related questions. This component is essential because reading is not just about recognizing words but also about making sense of the text. Students who develop strong comprehension skills can analyze, infer, and draw conclusions from what they read. Without adequate comprehension, reading becomes a mechanical process rather than a meaningful one, limiting a child's ability to learn from texts (Hogan et al., 2020).

Moreover, listening comprehension measures a child's ability to understand spoken language and follow verbal instructions, which is an important skill for both academic and daily life. This component assesses whether students can process spoken words, recall details, and respond appropriately to questions. Listening comprehension is closely linked to reading comprehension because students who

understand spoken language well are more likely to grasp written texts. Strengthening this skill helps children engage more effectively in classroom discussions and develop better overall communication abilities (Vaughn & Swanson).

By assessing these eight components, EGRA provides a comprehensive overview of a child's reading skills and identifies areas that require targeted intervention. This structured approach allows educators to design instructional strategies that address specific weaknesses, ultimately improving literacy outcomes among young learners (Patel & Green, 2023).

Procedure

A systematic process was used to collect all of the pertinent information. Firstly, it sought the approval of the Evaluation Review Committee (ERC), a necessary step in ensuring that the research instruments met ethical and academic standards. After securing ERC approval, a formal letter was drafted and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for review and endorsement. Following this, a request letter was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent to obtain permission to conduct the research within the Division of Sarangani Province (Schmidt et al., 2020).

After receiving the necessary approvals, data collection began through coordination with school administrators and teachers. Meetings were held to explain the study's objectives and clarify stakeholder roles. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was then administered to selected learners by trained assessors. The data gathered was carefully recorded and analyzed to identify reading skill patterns, offering insights for an effective intervention program (Calex & Josh, 2021).

Data Analysis

To analyze the research questions concerning EGRA utilization, frequency count and percentage were employed as statistical tools, enabling meaningful interpretation of the data and assessment of response proportions.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher followed the study protocol assessments and the standardized criteria set by the Ethics Research Committee of the Ramon Magsaysay Memorial School of General Santos City to conduct the study ethically. This was especially important when it came to the management of the population and the data, which included the following but was not limited to the following:

Voluntary Participation. The study's objectives were detailed by the respondents, who were told that their participation was entirely optional. The respondents who took part in the survey were Grade 1 teachers in Banisil Central Elementary school, who willingly agreed to the informed consent. If respondents found the study contrary to their beliefs and perspectives, they could withdraw without facing consequences or penalties. Substitute teachers and teachers in high schools and outside the research area were barred and disqualified from participating in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality. Individual responses were kept private and were presented as part of the overall data. Respondents' personal information was observed with the utmost confidentiality. To safeguard their privacy, their identities were either revealed or made anonymous. Strict protocols were followed to ensure that no identifying details were linked to the responses. All collected data were securely stored and accessible only to the research team.

Informed Consent Process. The respondents were fully knowledgeable about what was anticipated from them, how the data would be utilized, and what, if any, consequences would result. Before beginning the study, the researcher obtained the subjects' clear, explicit, and signed consent. The informed consent was understandable to the respondents. The informed consent process operated as a contract between the researcher and the issues.

Recruitment. The researcher obtained the sample size using a stratified random sampling procedure. The researcher gave the respondents a clear picture of the study's benefits as to its execution. As a result, no study questionnaires were distributed to respondents without prior approval from authorized command channels. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences. Clear consent procedures were followed to ensure ethical compliance throughout the recruitment process.

Risks. The respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were crucial in safeguarding them from damage. By answering the survey questionnaire, the participants may suffer high risks or discomfort related to the study regarding physical, psychological, or socio-economic concerns. Had this occurred, the respondents were free to stop participating for comfort, as the researcher's main concern was their willingness to engage.

Benefits. The respondents were awarded certificates of participation after completing the survey questionnaires and having these signed by the researcher and research adviser. Also, it fostered professional growth, collaboration, and enhanced motivation among respondents. By engaging in this research, teachers contributed to meaningful advancements in educational practices while also gaining personal and professional rewards.

Plagiarism. The researcher paraphrased the information or data acquired from other researchers and did not use any distortion of someone else's work as her own in this study. Every time the researcher mentioned a piece of work, the researcher included the author's complete name and year of publication.

Fabrication. The investigation findings were interpreted since these were not incorrectly derived from the respondents' responses. It did not distort ideas, beliefs, situations, or work to suit a model or theoretical expectations, and it did not claim or exaggerate the results' interpretation. Objective proof, such as images, a certificate of appearance, and completed survey questionnaires, were used to support the data collection.

Falsification. Furthermore, the researcher employed paraphrases in the material or data acquired from other researchers and did not use any misrepresentation of someone else's work as his own. Every time the researcher mentioned a piece of work; the researcher included the author's complete name and year of publication.

Conflict of Interest (COI). The primary investigator followed the ERC's Conflict of Interest in Research policy. Furthermore, the author certifies that no economic or commercial links occurred during the research that may be regarded as a possible instance of competing interests. All affiliations and sources of funding, if any, were transparently disclosed to avoid any perception of bias. The integrity and objectivity of the research were maintained throughout the study.

Deceit. Regarding deception, the researcher did not provide any misleading information during the informed consent process. After realizing this, the respondents felt free to participate based on their comprehension during the study. The study was conducted with full transparency, ensuring that respondents were aware of the research purpose, procedures, and their role. No form of coercion or manipulation was used at any stage of the research process.

Permission from Organizational/Location. For the study launch to the target respondents, the researcher furnished a formal request letter to the school heads of Banisil Central Elementary School, Tambler District. Before that, a letter of approval was obtained from the Department of Education, Division of South Cotabato. Then, a letter was sent to the District Principal-in-Charge of Banisil Central Elementary School authorizing the researcher to perform the study.

Technology Issues. The researcher used technology to disseminate the information. For respondents who were a challenge to be reached or located in remote areas, conducting research via an online survey was a significant way to gather their replies, assemble survey results into a single data set, and make these available for analysis.

Authorship. The researcher thanked everyone who helped the study get published, particularly the research adviser, statistician, school head and principal, and panelists who contributed significantly to the study's success.

In conclusion, adhering to ethical norms was essential to safeguarding the rights, dignity, and well-being of individuals who participated in the research. By thoroughly examining these factors, ethics committees work to ensure that the research aligns with established ethical guidelines and national or international standards. This oversight helps maintain the integrity of the research process and protects participants from unethical practices, thus ensuring that research contributes to knowledge in a responsible and socially acceptable manner.

Results and Discussion

Interpretation of Grade 1 Learners' Reading Assessment Results

A total of 391 Grade 1 learners were tested in various components of early reading skills. The results showed varying levels of proficiency across different areas. Below is a comprehensive discussion of each component.

Table 1. *Reading Skills of Grade 1 Learners Utilizing EGRA*

Components	*Frequency N=391*	*Percentage*	*Reading Level*
Letter Name Knowledge – Determines a child's ability to recognize and name letters of the alphabet.	307	78.51	Proficient (On Track)
Letter Sound Knowledge – Assesses a child's knowledge of phonetic sounds associated with letters.	308	78.77	Proficient (On Track)
Phonemic Awareness – Evaluates the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in words.	306	78.26	Proficient (On Track)
Familiar Word Reading – Measures how well a child can recognize and read common high-frequency words.	229	58.56	Developing (Emerging Reader)
Nonword Reading – Tests a child's decoding skills using made-up words to assess phonics knowledge.	219	56.01	Developing (Emerging Reader)
Oral Reading Fluency – Determines how quickly and accurately a child can read a passage aloud.	109	27.87	Beginning (Needs Support)
Reading Comprehension – Assesses whether a child understands what they read by answering related questions.	107	27.37	Beginning (Needs Support)
Listening Comprehension – Measures a child's ability to understand spoken language and follow verbal instructions.	105	26.85	Beginning (Needs Support)

Letter Name Knowledge. Is a fundamental skill that allows children to recognize and name letters of the alphabet, which is essential for early reading development. The results showed that 307 out of 391 learners (78.51%) were proficient in this area, indicating that

most students could confidently identify and name letters. This provided a strong foundation for literacy, as letter recognition was closely linked to reading and spelling abilities. However, about 21.49% of learners still struggled with this skill, suggesting the need for continued practice through alphabet exposure, letter-matching games, and interactive activities that reinforced letter identification.

Letter Sound Knowledge. Assesses a child's ability to associate letters with their corresponding sounds, a key skill for phonics instruction and decoding words. The findings indicated that 308 learners (78.77%) demonstrated proficiency in this skill, meaning they could successfully connect letters with their sounds. This high percentage suggested that many students were on the right track toward developing reading fluency. However, the remaining 21.23% of students would benefited from additional phonemic awareness exercises, sound-letter blending activities, and explicit phonics instruction to strengthen their decoding skills.

Phonemic Awareness. Is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in words, which is essential for developing strong reading skills. The data revealed that 306 students (78.26%) exhibited proficiency in phonemic awareness, demonstrating their ability to segment, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken words. This skill is important in supporting early reading and spelling development. Despite the strong performance, 21.74% of learners still needed support in strengthening their phonemic awareness through activities such as rhyming exercises, syllable segmentation, and phoneme manipulation games.

Familiar Word Reading. Evaluates learners' ability to read high-frequency words, revealing that 229 students (58.56%) were Developing (Emerging Readers), while 41.44% struggled with word recognition. To improve fluency, strategies like flashcard drills, repeated reading, and exposure to common words were implemented. These interventions aimed to enhance automaticity and support overall reading development.

Nonword Reading. Tests a child's phonics knowledge by asking them to decode made-up words. The results showed that 219 learners (56.01%) were able to decode unfamiliar words, suggesting they had a basic grasp of phonics but still needed improvement. This indicated that almost 44% of learners found it challenging to apply phonics rules when encountering unfamiliar words. To enhance decoding skills, targeted phonics instruction, letter-sound drills, and word-building exercises were incorporated into reading programs to help students transition from decoding to fluent reading.

Oral Reading Fluency. Measures how quickly and accurately a child can read a passage aloud. The results indicated that only 109 students (27.87%) demonstrated strong fluency, meaning the majority of learners struggled with reading speed and accuracy. This low percentage suggested that many students were still decoding words rather than reading smoothly. Fluency is essential for comprehension because slow, choppy reading hindered understanding. To address this issue, strategies such as repeated readings, choral reading, and guided oral reading practice were implemented to build students' confidence and automaticity in reading.

Reading Comprehension. Assesses a child's ability to understand and interpret texts. The data showed that only 107 learners (27.37%) exhibited proficiency in this area, meaning that most students struggled with understanding what they read. This result highlighted a significant gap in comprehension skills, likely due to weak vocabulary, limited background knowledge, and difficulties in making inferences. Since comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading, teachers focused on building students' vocabulary, encouraged discussions about texts, and used questioning techniques to develop higher-order thinking skills that enhanced understanding.

Listening Comprehension. Measures a child's ability to understand spoken language and follow verbal instructions. The results indicated that only 105 learners (26.85%) performed well in this area, making it the weakest component in the assessment. This suggested that almost 73% of students struggled to understand spoken language, which impacted their ability to follow classroom instructions and engage in discussions.

Overall Interpretation. The results of the reading assessment revealed a strong foundation in letter recognition, letter-sound correspondence, and phonemic awareness, as seen in the high percentages of proficiency in these areas. However, there were notable weaknesses in fluency, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension, indicating that many learners struggled with understanding and processing text efficiently.

Intervention Program

Bridging Literacy Gaps: A Comprehensive Reading Intervention Program for Early Learners, proposed by Analyn C. Hornido, is designed to address the literacy challenges faced by Grade 1 students. Through a structured and engaging approach, the program aims to enhance reading skills by employing research-based instructional strategies. Key components include phonics drills, interactive storytelling, guided reading sessions, and listening comprehension activities. Implemented collaboratively by teachers, parents, and school administrators, the initiative provides struggling readers with continuous and supportive learning experiences.

This program was developed in response to literacy assessments that revealed students' strengths in letter recognition and phonemic awareness but also highlighted difficulties in word reading, fluency, comprehension, and listening skills. These foundational elements are essential to fostering confident, independent readers. Research supports that early reading interventions greatly influence students' long-term academic success. Without timely support, learners risk falling further behind. Hence, this program was strategically crafted to deliver targeted literacy instruction and cultivate a nurturing and inclusive reading environment.

The primary objectives of the intervention are to improve decoding through sound-letter recognition, develop fluency by enhancing

accuracy and expression, strengthen comprehension through guided discussions, and boost listening skills via structured auditory exercises. Beyond the classroom, the program encourages a culture of reading by involving families in home-based literacy activities, reinforcing the connection between school and home in supporting student growth.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are integral to this program's success. Through regular assessments, educators gather valuable insights into student progress and pinpoint learning gaps. This feedback informs necessary adjustments to instruction, ensuring the approach remains responsive and effective. By continually refining the program, educators create an environment where every learner is empowered to overcome reading challenges, thrive academically, and embrace lifelong learning.

Table 2. *Program Plan*

Component	*Strategy/Activity*	*Target Participants*	*Schedule*	*Responsible Person(s)*
Letter Sound Knowledge	Phonics Drills, Sound Matching Games 1. Blending Ladder Drills Teacher shows consonant-vowel combinations using a ladder chart. Students blend the sounds aloud as the teacher points to each step. As students master blends, teacher adds consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. 2. Segment-and-Say Practice Teacher shows a picture and says the word. Students repeat and then break it down into individual sounds (e.g., /d/ /o/ /g/). Partner work: One says a word, the other segments. 3. Rapid Recognition Drill Students quickly identify sounds or read words from flashcards in 1-minute timed rounds. Teacher keeps a tally of correct responses per round. Include peer-led drills for reinforcement.	Grade 1 Learners	Twice a Week	Reading Teachers
Phonemic Awareness	Blending and Segmentation Activities 1. Sound Slide Teacher displays a segmented word card. Students say each sound slowly, then "slide" the sounds together to say the whole word. Use finger sliding on a desk or a physical slider for multisensory support. 2. Guess the Word Teacher says a word in segmented form (e.g., /d/ /o/ /g/). Students listen and guess the full word. Turn it into a game: If correct, students earn a point or sticker. 3. Blend and Build with Letter Tiles Students listen to a segmented word (e.g., /s/ /u/ /n/). They identify the sounds, then use tiles to build the corresponding word. Read the word aloud together.	Grade 1 Learners	Twice a Week	Classroom Teachers
Familiar Word Reading	Sight Word Recognition, Flashcard Drills 1. Sight Word Scavenger Hunt Hide sight word cards around the classroom. Give students a list or read sight words aloud one by one. Students search and collect the matching cards. 2. Sight Word Relay Divide class into teams. Place a stack of sight words at one end of the room. One student from each team runs, picks a card, reads it aloud, and runs back. 3. Timed Flashcard Fluency Drill Set a timer for 1 minute. Students read as many flashcards as possible in that time. Record the number of correct responses.	Grade 1 Learners	Three Times a Week	Reading Specialists
Nonword Reading	Decoding Exercises, Word Building Games 1. Decode and Draw Students pick a word card (e.g., "frog," "ship") and decode it by sounding it out. After reading the word aloud, they draw a simple picture to represent it. Then, they spell and write the word below the drawing. 2. Sound-It-Out Race Students race to decode and read as many words as possible within 1 minute. Use nonsense words (e.g., "zib," "trom") to test decoding, not memory. Peer correction allowed after each attempt.	Grade 1 Learners	Twice a Week	Literacy Coaches

	3. Word Ladder Challenge Begin with a base word (e.g., "cat"). Change one letter at a time to create new words (e.g., cat → cot → dot → dog). Students write or build each word as they go.			
Oral Reading Fluency	Repeated Reading, Choral Reading 1. Timed Repeated Readings Student reads the same passage 3–4 times. Time each reading and record words read correctly per minute (WCPM). Discuss improvement between readings and practice tough words. 2. Reader's Theater Rehearsals Assign parts and practice scripts over multiple sessions. Students reread their lines repeatedly to build fluency. Focus on reading with emotion, clarity, and correct pacing. 3. Whole-Class Choral Reading Display the text and read aloud as a class, following the teacher's lead. Practice 2–3 times, adjusting pace and expression. Highlight rhythm and punctuation cues.	Grade 1 Learners	Daily	Teachers, Parents
Reading Comprehension	Guided Reading, Story Mapping 1. Focused Word Work During Reading Before reading, introduce key vocabulary words and phonics patterns (e.g., long vowels, blends). Students read a short passage aloud, with teacher support to decode difficult words. Pause at challenging words to reinforce decoding strategies. 2. Retelling the Story in Small Groups After reading a story, students are divided into small groups to retell the story in their own words. Encourage students to use key phrases, details, and sequence of events. After retelling, ask each group to share their summary with the class. 3. Graphic Organizer for Story Elements Read a short story or passage together as a class. Fill in the story map with details about characters, setting, problem, events, and solution. Discuss each element of the story, ensuring students understand the relationships between them.	Grade 1 Learners	Three Times a Week	Teachers
Listening Comprehension	Interactive Read-Alouds, Listening Games 1. Think-Aloud with Prediction Prompts While reading aloud, pause at key points to model thinking: "I wonder why...," "I think this will happen next because…" Encourage students to share their predictions and justify them using text clues or illustrations. Revisit predictions after reading to confirm or revise them. 2. Text-to-Self Connections Discussion After reading, ask questions like: "Has something like this ever happened to you?" Encourage students to share their own experiences related to characters or events. Record responses on a chart under "Text-to-Self" connections. 3. Simon Says – Phonemic Awareness Edition Play "Simon Says" but with phonemic cues. Example: "Simon says, touch your nose if the word starts with /b/." Mix in real and nonsense words to increase focus.	Grade 1 Learners	Twice a Week	Teachers, Parents
Parental Involvement	Home Literacy Activities, Reading Logs 1. Bedtime Story Routine Parents read aloud a bedtime story with the child each night. After reading, the child is encouraged to retell the story or answer simple "who," "what," and "where" questions. Provide families with a question guide and tips for making read-alouds interactive. 2. Picture-Based Reading Log After reading at home or in school, students draw a picture of their favorite part of the book. Parents or teachers write the title and date. Share in class each Friday.	Parents of Learners	Monthly Workshops	Teachers, School Counselors

	3. Sticker Chart Reading Tracker Every time a student completes a book (independently or with a parent), they add a sticker to their chart. Set weekly goals (e.g., 5 books/week) with small rewards (e.g., praise, certificate). Discuss favorite books in class to build oral language.

Mechanics

Phonics drills and sound matching games strengthen students' letter-sound knowledge. Teachers present sounds with letters for practice, while students identify matching sounds in pictures or words, using tools like flashcards and games to make learning engaging.

Blending and segmentation activities help students decode and encode words by manipulating phonemes. Teachers model blending sounds to form words, and students practice with tools like letter tiles. Segmentation involves breaking words into sounds or syllables, often marked by clapping or tapping, building key reading and spelling skills.

Sight word recognition and flashcard drills aim to develop automatic recognition of high-frequency words that often don't follow regular phonics rules. The teacher introduces a set of sight words using flashcards and encourages students to read them aloud quickly and accurately. Flashcard drills are conducted at a fast pace to promote fluency. To maintain engagement, games like "Sight Word Bingo" or "Memory Match" are integrated, offering both repetition and fun.

Decoding exercises and word building games help students apply phonics knowledge to read and create words. In decoding tasks, students use known phonics patterns to sound out unfamiliar words, often within controlled, decodable texts. Word building games allow students to manipulate letters or syllables to form new words, such as changing "pan" to "pen." Activities like word ladders and digital phonics games make these exercises interactive and hands-on, reinforcing their understanding of word structure.

Repeated reading and choral reading are strategies that build reading fluency. Students read the same passage multiple times to increase speed, accuracy, and expression. The teacher may model fluent reading first, after which students read along in unison (choral reading) or echo the teacher's phrasing. These repeated exposures help students gain confidence and develop a smoother, more expressive reading style. Progress can be tracked with fluency charts or logs.

Guided reading and story mapping support small-group instruction and deeper comprehension. Guided reading groups students by reading level for targeted support, while story mapping uses graphic organizers to organize key story elements, promoting critical thinking and understanding of narratives.

Interactive read-aloud and listening games build listening comprehension and vocabulary. During interactive read-aloud, the teacher reads a book aloud, pausing to ask questions, clarify meaning, and prompt predictions. Students are encouraged to participate through discussion and shared observations. Listening games may involve following oral instructions, identifying key sounds or words, or answering questions after hearing a story. Props, puppets, and sound effects are often used to engage young listeners and maintain their attention.

Home literacy activities and reading logs extend learning beyond the classroom. Students are encouraged to read at home with the support of their parents or guardians. Teachers may provide reading materials and simple instructions for family members to ask questions and discuss stories. Students record their reading in logs, noting book titles, minutes read, and brief reflections. These logs are reviewed regularly by the teacher, who provides feedback and sometimes small rewards to motivate consistent home reading habits.

Budgetary Requirements are the funds needed to provide materials like books and worksheets, pay for training sessions, and support activities that help students improve their reading skills. Having a clear budget ensures the program runs smoothly without interruptions due to lack of resources. It helps the team plan ahead so that all necessary tools and support are available to effectively bridge the literacy gaps among learners.

Conclusions

Reading Skills of Grade 1 Learners Utilizing EGRA revealed that learners are at a proficient level in letter name knowledge, letter sound knowledge, and phonemic awareness. Familiar word reading and nonword reading are at a developing level. Oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension are at a beginning level. This suggests that while foundational reading skills are strong, there is a need for focused support in developing fluency and comprehension skills.

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