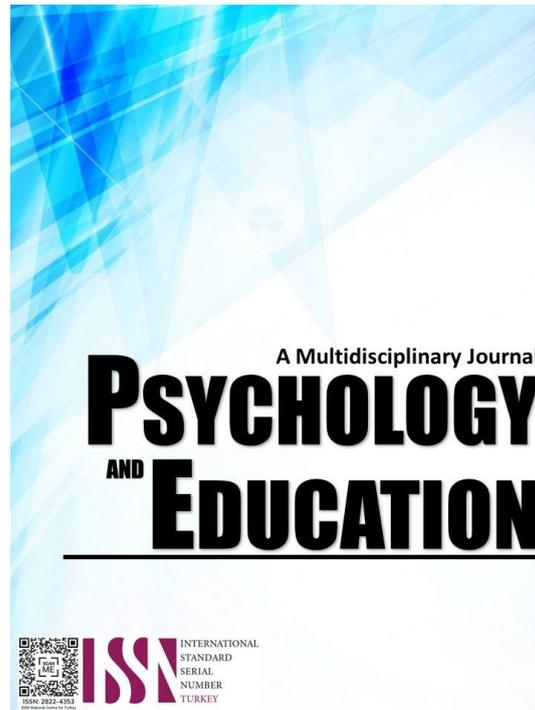


**CONTEXTUALIZED BASED-LEARNING
MATERIALS: AN EVALUATION TO ENHANCE THE
READING COMPREHENSION OF THE GRADE 7
STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



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Contextualized Based-Learning Materials: an Evaluation to Enhance the Reading Comprehension of the Grade 7 Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The reading problem of the students is with word recognition and comprehension, in which the learners have difficulties with pronunciation, omission, or any other way of identifying the challenges of the non-readers and readers. This study aimed to determine and assess the level of reading comprehension of the involved participants through contextualized based-learning materials. Furthermore, this study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design using the contextualized learning materials. The sampling population of the study were consisted of 415 Grade 7 students in all the sections of San Luis National High School and used the complete enumeration sampling based on the standard criteria along with the study. Based on the results, the students' pretest scores in the materials indicated average mastery, with a mean score of 42.41%. Whereas, the posttest means scores showed a large difference from the pretest mean scores, which were 77.35%, with a corresponding remark about moving towards mastery. This demonstrated that there was an improvement and a gain in score as a result of the process and assistance of FLAT. From the pretest, it has 42.41% and the posttest, 77.35%; therefore, the gain percentage is 34.94%. The mean performance score in English reflected the knowledge of the students before and after the assessment or the conduct of the study using the contextualized learning materials. In this case, the low results of the reading frustration level could be a sign or indication of the effectiveness of the learning materials when using the reading modules. The researcher recommends that the use of contextualized learning materials be institutionalized in the school to address the reading problems of the students.

Keywords: *Phil-IRI, contextualized, reading materials, FLAT, reading comprehension, english*

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the face-to-face learning process in the class was changed to learning from home. On May 8, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that since the coronavirus is rapidly spread from person to person, it is extremely risky to gather a large number of individuals in one space. The risk of the virus spreading in the classroom's learning streams is highest because teacher-student and student-student contact occurs frequently. The length of time spent in class learning can also increase the risk of virus transmission. The guarantee of coronavirus prevention at home, in their environment, and even on the route to school is not accessible to the students who arrive from different places (Setiawati & Budiasih, 2021; Saro et al., 2022).

The teaching and learning environment can change and take into account the students' learning resources. Due to the need for some learning platforms to be placed on electronic devices like computers, tablets, and mobile phones, the facilities also incorporate the use of technology for education. Teachers and students alike should be aware of the shifts in teaching methods, from face-to-face instruction to online learning and even to modular education (Anjulo, 2017).

The teaching method must be effective since students who are excellent at learning languages can absorb English lessons from students who are less intelligent. Anjulo (2017) has studied reading comprehension teaching methods and put particular emphasis on the application of an extensive reading strategy. As a result, students frequently employ an intensive reading strategy, yet comprehensive reading strategies have a significant positive impact on students' reading comprehension and retention of the words and phrases they have read. Additionally, by utilizing metacognitive reading strategies, students will have several opportunities to read independently and their reading comprehension will be improved. The study's central emphasis is on reading comprehension instruction during the COVID-19 epidemic (Kung & Aziz, 2020).

Additionally, there has been an increase in reading difficulty as a result of both the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum and our spiral curriculum, which is challenging for reading teachers. A child's performance in other areas will likely suffer if they have reading difficulties, which will ultimately limit their capacity to learn (Dacalos et al., 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to support students' reading skills while also proving that these measures are effective. Since professionals are sometimes asked to assist with administrative responsibilities rather than



provide counseling programs to improve student achievement, establishing evidence-based programs would encourage them to keep up these efforts. Additionally, as revenue for education decreases, it is crucial for school counselors to be able to back up their programs with data from program evaluations that show how their initiatives have improved student performance (Saro et al., 2022).

Reading is, therefore, the ability that is most essential for success in all educational contexts (Brown, 2004; Acita, Egtob, Cabus, Luceñara, Luceñara, & Saro, 2022). Knowing, understanding, and feeling the text's substance are all steps in the reading process. When people read, they have the opportunity to learn a great deal about the subject matter. Reading is a process that involves word recognition and comprehension. Word recognition in this context refers to the process of identifying symbols in written text that correspond to spoken language (Yang, 2020). According to Smith (2004), reading is an activity that has four characteristics: it is intentional, selective, anticipatory, and comprehension-based. According to Nunan (2003), in order to generate meaning when reading, readers must fluently blend a significant amount of information from the reading text with prior knowledge. Reading is done for understanding. In a nutshell, reading is the process of learning, comprehending, and experiencing a text's content.

Almutairi (2018) stated that one approach for students to meet the objectives and standards of education is for them to become proficient readers who can effectively manage the class independently. According to McNamara's definition from 2007, comprehension is the capacity to understand concepts included inside a paragraph and to understand how those concepts relate to one another. Understanding a word, a sentence, or a connected text is referred to as comprehension. According to McKee (2012), comprehension is the capacity to learn and understand a text, recognize implicit and explicit information within a text, and make connections between the reader's understanding of what the author is saying and their own. For instance, when pupils can comprehend textual information, locate data associated with the text, and recognize significant data that was presented in the text.

Reading comprehension, according to Snow (2002), is a process where meanings are investigated and produced while interacting with written language. According to Woolley (2011), one of the most crucial reading skills that must be learned is reading comprehension. Students must be able to build a solid

knowledge of the meaning of the text they read in order to complete each activity. Reading comprehension, according to Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman (2007), is a complex process that involves readers' interests in reading the text, their thoughts about the text, the knowledge they gain from reading other texts, and their understanding of the type of text. In addition, reading comprehension can also be defined as the student's capacity to comprehend the entirety of the text, including understanding implicit and implied meanings, different types of reading texts, the knowledge or information contained in the text, the purposes of reading, and the student's capacity to use strategies for reading comprehension.

According to Oakhill, Chain, and Elbro (2015), reading comprehension is a challenging activity that incorporates a variety of cognitive abilities and skills including word recognition, decoding, and text-specific language expertise. The reader must crack the author's codes, which are typically used in texts by the author through the use of idioms, synonyms, and antonyms. It means that readers must grasp the language in order to understand the reading and be able to recognize words and decode the text.

The reading problems of the students are in word recognition and comprehension, in which they have difficulties with pronunciation, omission, and punctuation. They mostly are syllabic readers. The students have difficulty in answering interpretive, applicative, valuing and evaluating their level of comprehension or the higher-order thinking questions as found out during the conduct of Brigada sa Pagbasa with the project title "Mobile Reading on Read to Raid COVID 19 Pandemic 2.0. Herein, the possible causes based on the following observations and the initial study are: no face-to-face classes; inadequate reading materials and supplementary reading materials; no reading habits; lack of interest in reading; lack of concrete conceptualization of reading lessons; no constant and follow-up reading activities; and no rigid reading lessons.

The reading deficiency of the Grade 7 students needs an immediate intervention which directly answers the identified problems in reading through the use of contextualized learning materials with the use of the simplified reading modules with the differentiated activities of the students indicated in the reading lesson. In the teaching of reading, the teacher may explore the desired skills of the students to be developed, being organized based on the sequence of the focus skills. The reading lesson provides interest and willingness of the students to participate in the



activities because this stimulates understanding and love for reading. Most of the reading activities in the modules are drawn from real-life experiences and can be answered independently. The activities can be done individually, in pairs, or in groups. It also allows students to discover and formulate ideas on their own. The teacher guides and challenges students' thinking and learning activities. The goal of this study is to evaluate and assess Grade 7 students' reading comprehension and recognition of basic words during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Objectives

The Grade 7 students in all the sections of San Luis National High School in the Division of Agusan del Sur were evaluated and assessed on the level of reading comprehension and recognition of words that they have read, particularly the pronunciation of each word. The researcher sought to answer the following objectives of the study:

1. To remediate and correct identified reading problems in all sections of San Luis National High School's Grade 7 students;
2. To improve their self-confidence in word recognition and comprehension;
3. To effectively use contextualized based learning materials to improve the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students; and
4. To have zero (%) frustration level of Grade 7 students.

Methodology

The goal of this study was to determine and evaluate the level of reading comprehension and word recognition among the students and to check the pronunciation of each word. The Phil-IRI contextualized based-learning materials were used in this study, which used a quantitative research approach with a descriptive design to measure the level of reading comprehension of the students involved. It is descriptive because it describes the readers' preferences, reasons, the extent of their utilization of the module, and the effectiveness of their preferred reading materials in enhancing their reading comprehension. A descriptive design is a style of

quantitative study that explains potential links between variables and the strength of a relationship between two or more quantitative variables involved (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Creswell, 2008). The tool contains various activities to address the needs of each learner. Nonetheless, the quantitative methods of research are widely utilized as suited and capable of producing reliable and valid data (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

In relation to the previous studies reviewed, this mentioned design is greatly used to collect and explore the data for the assessment conducted by the authors, and it is one of the most frequent tools that many researchers could possibly use as their research design. The collection of the data was explicitly managed by the researchers during the procedure's scheduled time and has followed specified guidelines and criteria.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the Grade 7 students in all the sections of San Luis National High School, San Luis District I, Division of Agusan del Sur, Philippines, who are enrolled in the academic year 2021–2021. This was duly recognized by the school registrar and the principal of the said institution. The study participants were a sample size of the population with a total of four hundred and fifteen (415) Grade 7 students from 7 sections: 222 males and 193 females. This study will utilize a complete enumeration sampling design since all Grade 7 students at San Luis National High School were tested as the study's respondents. Furthermore, in order to analyze and understand the actual sampling of the present study, table 1 presents the proper measurement of the respondents in each section by using the frequency and percentage, where in fact the researchers utilized Microsoft Excel to attain the exact result. The participants were greatly and almost evenly divided based on their respective sections: Grade 7: Sampaguita (13.25%), Chrysanthemum (14.46%), Everlasting (14.22), Daisy (14.93), Camia (14.46), Rose (13.98), and Hyacinth (14.70).



Table 1. *Measurements and Distribution of Participants in Each Section of the Grade 7 Students at San Luis National High School*

Participants (Sections - Grade 7)	Gender	Frequency (n)	Weighted Total	Percentage (%)
Sampaguita	Male	20	55	13.25
	Female	35		
Chrysanthemum	Male	30	60	14.46
	Female	30		
Everlasting	Male	37	59	14.22
	Female	22		
Daisy	Male	28	62	14.93
	Female	34		
Camia	Male	34	60	14.46
	Female	26		
Rose	Male	36	58	13.98
	Female	22		
Hyacinth	Male	37	61	14.70
	Female	24		
Total		415	415	100

Legend: Male, 222; Female, 193; Sample Size Population (SSP), 415

Research Instrument and Statistical Treatment

The researcher used the Phil-Iri (The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, Manual 2018) pretest and posttest to evaluate the level of reading comprehension of the Grade 7 students and their analysis or understanding of English content, particularly on the recognition of words. The researchers tabulated, analyzed, and presented the data in textual and tabular form. Also, the frequency and percentages were primarily utilized to present the data on the reading comprehension level of Grade 7 students categorized as independent, instructional, and frustrated. The results of the assessment on reading comprehension were the basis for crafting new intervention programs and materials. Alongside, the average weighted mean value was utilized to calculate answers to questions having a scaled response. The comments and suggestions of the reading coordinators and reading experts on the assessments were integrated.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) is an initiative of the Bureau of Learning Delivery, Department of Education that directly and explicitly addresses its thrust to make every Filipino child a reader competent. It is anchored on the flagship program of the Department, the "Every Child A Reader Program," which aims to make every Filipino child a reader and a writer at his or her grade level. The Phil-IRI is an informal reading inventory composed of graded passages designed to determine the individual student's performance in oral reading, silent reading, and listening comprehension (DepEd-BLR, 2018). These three types of assessments aim to find the student's independent, instructional, and frustration levels. The data from these measures could be used to design or adjust classroom, small group, or individualized instruction to fit the students' needs and abilities. The Phil-IRI is not the sole assessment tool that provides the holistic reading performance of the

students; it only provides an approximation of the students' abilities and could be used in combination with other reliable tools of assessment. The data must also be used to plan, design, or redesign reading programs or activities in the school in order to improve overall school reading performance (Department of Education - Bureau of Learning Resources, 2018).

After they had concluded and obtained the accurate study results that matched the primary aim and objectives of the current investigation, the researchers also removed the data they had collected from their end of the process.

Results and Discussion

This section of the study was very important because it ensures that the learning activities always follow a design. It can be observed that the whole table and formulated graphs contain all the possible data that was covered by the undertakings, which are also parallel to the research objectives. The gathered data directly answers the objectives and is treated carefully to find out the precise findings. In relation, the former Department of Education Secretary, Bro. Armin A. Luistro (2016), he stressed and indicated that in assessing and evaluating the reading capability and comprehension of the students is the basic foundation of all the academic learning activities. Therein, if the learners fail to master the reading skills at the outset, then it will be a constant struggle and challenging part of their lives through other disciplines in reading.

The findings of the study have been tabulated based on the needed analysis of the main objectives. The current study assessed the level of reading comprehension and word recognition in all sections of San Luis National High School in the Division of Agusan del Sur, with a focus on word pronunciation. Hence, this study would like to achieve the following: (2) To remediate and correct identified reading problems in all sections of San Luis National High School's Grade 7 students; (2) To improve their self-confidence in word recognition and comprehension; (3) To effectively use contextualized-based learning materials to improve the reading comprehension of Grade 7 students; and (4) To have a zero percent (%) frustration level among Grade 7 students.



Table 2. *The Evaluation of the Reading Coordinators and English Teachers on the Contextualized Based-Learning Materials on Reading*

Items	Statements	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1	The content of the contextualized based-learning materials used by English teachers and reading coordinators was extremely beneficial to the students' level of development and in improving their reading comprehension and word recognition.	3.85	Very Satisfied	1
2	The material contributes to the achievement and performance of the students by obtaining the necessary and specific goals and objectives of the subject area, which is reading. This would focus on the level of reading of the involved respondents.	3.74	Very Satisfied	2
3	Because students, particularly those in the seventh grade, retain the words they read, the based-learning materials would promote the development of higher cognitive skills.	3.12	Satisfied	5
4	The contextualized materials for reading are dimensionally free of ideological, cultural, religious, racial, and gender biases and prejudices. Because the material used was initiated by the Department of Education for the benefit of the students.	3.65	Very Satisfied	3
5	The material enhances the development of the desired values and traits, particularly in reading. It has the potential to pique the target reader's interest.	3.16	Satisfied	4
Overall		3.50	Very Satisfied	

Legend: Scale and Adjectival Rating; 1.00 - 1.79, Very Dissatisfied; 1.80 - 2.59, Dissatisfied; 2.60 - 3.39, Satisfied; 3.40 - 4.00, Very Satisfied

Table 2 shows how reading coordinators and English teachers rated the contextualized based-learning materials for reading. On the findings, it was very detailed that out of 5 items in the indicators from the content that corresponded to the main goal, it was rated as "Very Satisfactory." Items 1, 2, and 4 received "VS" results, with item 1 having a weighted mean value of 3.85, item 2 having a mean of 3.74, and item 3 having a mean of 3.65. This finding would greatly suggest that, as to the content that has been utilized on the contextualized based-learning materials, it has indicated that these materials provide the avenue for the learners to develop and further enhance their level of reading, critical thinking, creativity, and any other problem-solving inquiry that would be relevant to the subject area.

Table 3. *Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Grade 7 Students Using the Contextualized Based-Learning Materials for Reading*

Construct Guide	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Mean Score	Remarks	Mean Score	Remarks
Contextualized Based-Learning Materials	42.41%	Average Mastery	77.35%	Moving Towards Mastery

As shown in Table 3, the pretest and posttest mean scores of the Grade 7 students using the contextualized based-learning materials for reading. The students'

pretest scores in the materials indicated average mastery, with a mean score of 42.41%. Whereas, the posttest means scores showed a large difference from the pretest mean scores, which were 77.35%, with a corresponding comment about moving towards mastery. This indicates that there were differences in the reading levels of the students based on the materials they used before and after the pretest and posttest. Additionally, the pretest and posttest performance results are consistent with Valencia's (2020) study, which showed that the students were still unfamiliar with the subject. The students have not come across such competency in any discussion or reference material either, to add to that.

Table 4. *The English Oral Reading Pre-Test of the Grade 7 Students Based on the Assessment Levels of Reading*

Reading Level	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Level
Frustration	121	29.16	2nd
Instructional	176	42.41	1st
Independent	118	28.43	3rd
Non-Reader	0	0	0
Total	415	100	

Based on the results of the English oral reading pre-test of the Grade 7 students and the assessment levels of reading. It has been indicated that the students had more needs for reading, wherein the instructional level assessment indicated that 176 students out of 415 obtained a score of 42.41% with a ranking level of 1. This means that students primarily need some assistance when it comes to reading, particularly in the comprehension and recognition of words, for them to be confident in their retention of the materials that they are using. Furthermore, the second highest rank level is "frustration." It had appeared on the table that there are 121 students who had frustration with reading and got a 29.16%. Lastly, at the independent level, out of 415 students, there are 118 students or participants who are independent on reading. These students have the skill and ability to completely read the learning materials and assess their own performance by just adhering to, recognizing, and comprehending the words that they have read. This independent level had 28.13%.



Table 5. *The English Oral Reading Post-Test of the Grade 7 Students Based on the Assessment Levels of Reading*

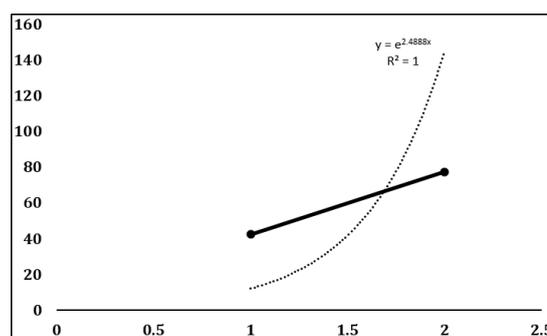
Reading Level	Frequency	Percentage	Rank Level
Frustration	6	1.45	3rd
Instructional	88	21.20	2nd
Independent	321	77.35	1st
Non-Reader	0	0	0
Total	415	100	

The results of the English oral reading posttest of the Grade 7 students based on the assessment levels of reading are shown in Table 5. Based on the findings, out of 415 Grade 7 students' respondents, there are 321 of them who had independently read the learning materials, which had a percentage of 77.35% with a rank level of 1. This means that after the posttest on the oral reading procedure, there are higher changes in the result compared to the pretest. In this manner, the Grade 7 students could comprehend the materials by reading and recognizing the words. Also, it has been found out that the students are mostly good at giving proper pronunciation to the words they have read. The frustration and instructional level had low scores of 1.45 and 21.20; there is an impact difference compared to the pretest result. The findings of the study were parallel to the study of Schijns et al. (2010), which found that there was a highly significant difference between the results from the pretest and posttest by utilizing the contextualized learning materials. Also, the reading ability of the students was based on the guidance and the interest of the students in reading the learning materials (Eshet-Alkalai, 2013; Saro et al., 2022).

Figure 1 shows the graphical comparison between the results of the Phil-IRI pretest and posttest of the Grade 7 students in San Luis National High School. It has been indicated on the findings that from the pretest result of 42.41 there was a large difference in the posttest result of 77.35, which means it was attained that the students have more competence in reading after they have encountered the FLAT, which is the "Functional Literacy Assessment Tool." This had been used by the researchers to enhance the level of reading of the students, particularly on comprehension, recognition, and pronunciation. The purpose of the FLAT is to assess the learners' highest level of reading by following the guided criteria. Nonetheless, this assessment tool focuses more frequently on the needs of the students. The reading level is well considered

and specified as "functional" if the learners or the students can read through a story or any local learning materials and answer at least two or more fact-finding questions about the learning materials (Catapang, 2021).

Figure 1. *Graphical Comparison Between the Results of the Phil-IRI Pre-Test and Post-Test*



The table below shows the improvement in reading score performance of Grade 7 students using contextualized based-learning materials and the guided tool, the functional literacy assessment (FLAT). This demonstrated that there was an improvement and a gain in score as a result of the process and assistance of FLAT. From the pretest, it has 42.41% and the posttest, 77.35%; therefore, the gain percentage is 34.94% (Table 6). According to the findings of Nindy and Kustijono (2017), the use of contextualized learning materials has the potential to change students' interest and performance in the learning process by allowing them to read and consume interactively while also making them more comfortable.

Table 6. *The Improvement Gain Score Performance of the Grade 7 Students on the Levels of Reading through Contextualized Based-Learning Materials with the Guided tool the Functional Literacy Assessment (FLAT)*

Construct	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Improvement Gain Score
Levels of Reading Comprehension through Contextualized Based-Learning Materials	42.41%	77.35%	34.94%

Conclusion

Based on the results above, the very high result of

frustration level in the pretest, which was the pre-oral reading test conducted, was indicative of an alarming zone problem in reading. This means that the low scores in the pretest were indicative of the low comprehension and recognition skills of the students and would affect their basic word pronunciation. Nonetheless, the improvement in the reading performance of the Grade 7 students, who are the respondents to the study, could be clearly accounted for through the utilization of contextualized based-learning materials such as reading materials in the strategy used for teaching and facilitating reading. As a result, the high posttest independent level in the oral reading test of all Grade 7 students across sections at San Luis National High School could be attributed to the effective use of contextualized based-learning materials, which had a very low frustration level of 1.45%. The mean performance score in English reflected the knowledge of the students before and after the assessment or the conduct of the study using the contextualized learning materials. In this case, the low results of the reading frustration level could be a sign or indication of the effectiveness of the learning materials when using the reading modules. Because reading is one way for students to comprehend and learn, mastery of all reading concepts indicated high performance in all subject areas.

As reflected in the results of the study, it is highly recommended that the plan of actions stipulated in this study be used by all English teachers to improve the reading performance of all junior high school students. The researcher recommends that the use of contextualized learning materials be institutionalized in the school to address the reading problems of the students. Also, it was pertinent that the contextualized learning materials be used in teaching English to help improve the students' performance in reading comprehension amidst the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the authors advise all teachers to use either oral or silent instruction to constantly expose students to reading, as doing so will increase students' frustration with reading and even the school's NAT result. Furthermore, additional research is required to validate the current study's findings and effectiveness.

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