

ENHANCING ENGLISH READING LITERACY THROUGH GUIDED READING STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the effectiveness of the Guided Reading Strategy as an intervention program aimed at enhancing English reading literacy among Grade 4 learners. The primary objectives included improving reading comprehension, fluency, and word recognition through engaging reading activities. Using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design, data was gathered to evaluate the impact of Guided Reading Strategy on the target student population. The results showed significant improvements in reading skills among the experimental group compared to the control group. The results showed the efficacy of the Guided Reading Strategy in addressing diverse learning needs and fostering literacy skills through structured, supportive, and interactive reading sessions. The study highlights the value of evidence-based strategies, offering valuable insights for educators in adapting instructional practices to cater to diverse learners. The results also suggest a promising trend towards addressing reading proficiency issues among Grade 4 students in Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School. Based on these encouraging findings, it is strongly recommended to continue and further develop Guided Reading Strategy as it has the potential to significantly contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at improving reading literacy skills in this group. This study contributes important insights for designing and optimizing reading intervention programs, supporting academic success for young learners.

Keyword: reading, guided reading, teaching strategy, comprehension, reading remediation, quasi-experimental research design

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is fundamental for understanding the world and ourselves, knowledge acquisition, and navigating life's challenges. Proficient reading skills are essential for students' future success, fostering critical thinking and communication abilities (Department of Education, 2013) [1]. Consistent reading practice strengthens cognitive processing and strategic thinking abilities. However, such advantages are of no use if the reading literacy skills of students are not effectively developed and refined. Without comprehension, reading becomes passive and ineffective, especially in education where it is crucial to excel in every field of study.

More than 100 million young individuals worldwide struggle with reading literacy, since they lack the fundamental abilities necessary to write and to read (Howie et al., 2017) [2]. The 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) revealed weaknesses in South Africa's reading culture. South Africa ranked at the bottom among 50 countries in a worldwide assessment of reading proficiency among 9- to 10-year-olds, with around 80% of Grade 4 students struggling to understand what they read (Davis, 2017) [3].

In the Philippines, reading difficulties in public schools significantly affect students' academic performance. A 2019 SEA-PLM study revealed that fifth-grade students showed below-proficiency levels in arithmetic and literacy (Bernardo et al., 2022) [4]. Many learners in Grades 1 to 7 in Aurora's school districts were frustrated reader, suggesting room for targeted intervention (Tomas et al., 2021) [5]. Contributing factors include the insufficient

mastery of core reading components, the prevalence of at-risk learners, and a weak culture of reading. Addressing these diverse needs is essential for effective instructional planning (Kosanovich et al., 2006) [6].

Moreover, the increase in the number of struggling or non-readers at Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School due to blended learning has raised concerns about literacy development. Students' interest and enjoyment in reading have diminished, and the school needs to address this by developing and implementing strategies to engage students in active reading activities. According to the PHIL-IRI post-assessment outcome in school year 2023-2024, there has been a high percentage of struggling readers, especially at Grade 4 level reported. Particularly, 0.9% are classified as non-readers, and 8% are frustrated readers.

Nevertheless, with effective guided reading strategy and proper support, these obstacles can be overcome, leading to improved reading abilities. Creating a supportive learning environment and encouraging regular practice are also essential for enhancing reading proficiency. The students' low reading literacy scores in the school's Phil-IRI Pretest have motivated the researcher to explore ways to address this issue.

1.1 Research Questions

1. What is the competence level of the learners' pretest scores in reading comprehension in the experimental and control group?
2. What is the competence level of the learners' posttest scores in reading comprehension in the experimental and control group?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the control group?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores of the experimental group?
5. Is there a significant difference between mean posttest scores of the students in control group and experimental group?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control-group. Both groups received pretests at the start of each designated observation period and posttests at the end of the study, which used a two-group quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. The data gathered were obtained from the pretest and posttest results of the Phil-IRI Individualized Assessment Tool.

2.2 Research Participants

The subjects of the study involved Grade 4 elementary students from Magugpo Pilot Central Elementary School for the academic year 2024-2025, comprising a total of 14 sections. The study focused on the 22 grade 4 students who are classified under the frustration level in reading as indicated by the Phil-IRI assessment carried out at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year.

Table 1: Distribution of the Subjects of the Study

Group	Frustration
Control Group	11
Experimental Group	11
Total	22

2.3 Research Procedure

The study focused on 22 identified struggling readers at the Grade 4 level. The guided reading strategy was implemented following the approval of the research proposal. This intervention was conducted over 24 days, scheduled three times a week for eight weeks. After completing the program, the posttest was administered immediately to assess the outcomes.

The researcher composed a letter seeking permission from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Tagum City to conduct the study. Upon receiving approval, the researcher presented the approved letter and permission document to the school principal. Additionally, the researcher informed the selected participants about their involvement in the quasi-experimental study. Throughout the process, the researcher adhered to ethical standards, ensuring confidentiality by protecting participants' identities and handling sensitive information with discretion.

The required tools, such as reading passages and pretest-posttest rating sheets/forms, were created for the experiment after receiving approval from the office heads. Since these tools were taken from the 2018 Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual and carefully examined by the researcher's advisor and validators, they were subjected to DepEd's quality assurance procedure. The study started after these preparations were finished.

Successively, the pretest and posttest outcomes of the categorized reader under the frustration level were collected and subjected to statistical analysis. The results were then examined and interpreted to evaluate the effectiveness of guided reading strategy on reading literacy skills of the learners.

2.3 Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tests were used in conjunction with SPSS to accurately analyze and interpret the data that was gathered:

1. Mean and Class Proficiency: These were used to assess the competency levels of the two groups based on their pretest and posttest results.
2. T-test: This was a statistical method employed to compare the means of two groups. It is commonly used in hypothesis testing to determine whether a process or treatment has an effect on the target population or if two groups show significant differences.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Competency Level of Control and Experimental Group Pretest Results

Table 2 presents the pretest results of Control and Experimental Groups, each with 11 pupils. The Experimental Group had a mean score of 6.45, while the Control Group scored 6.09, showing a minimal mean difference of 0.36, suggesting no significant gap in performance. Proficiency levels were comparable, with class proficiency at 32.25% for the Experimental Group and 30.45% for the Control Group, indicating both groups started at a similar reading level.

The pretest results showed that the students' literacy competencies were below expectations based on the Phil-IRI standards, indicating that Grade 4 students had difficulty reading and comprehending the texts they were given. These difficulties, which were frequently caused by a lack of exposure to good literacy techniques, made it difficult for them to interact with and understand written content completely.

According to Adducul (2000) [7], early school challenges are frequently the root cause of a child's reluctance to read. In order to overcome these obstacles, maintaining and fostering the child's interest in reading, parents and teachers had to work together. This suggested that in order to enrich experiences and improve literacy skills, teacher used well-structured, sustainable reading materials and emphasized important ideas before starting students on reading activities. Early interventions were essential in giving students the skills they needed to increase their reading comprehension, fluency, and general literacy, which in turn promoted increased confidence and academic success. This emphasized how crucial it is to use focused techniques, like the Guided Reading Strategy, to improve English reading literacy.

Table 2: Mean Comparison of the Experimental and Control Groups' Pretest Results

Pretest	No. of Students	Mean	Class Proficiency	Competency Level
Control Group	11	6.09	30.45%	Frustration
Experimental Group	11	6.45	32.25%	Frustration

3.2 Competency Level of Control and Experimental Group Posttest Results

Table 3 shows the mean comparison of the two groups posttest scores. The posttest results for both groups showed that the Experimental Group had a higher mean score of 15.64 than the Control Group, which had a mean score of 9.91 in terms of class proficiency. The following formula was used to determine each group's class proficiency: $\text{Class Proficiency} = (\text{Mean}/\text{HPS}) \times 100\%$, where HPS (Highest Possible Score) was 20. Class proficiency was 49.55% for the Control Group and 78.2% for the Experimental Group.

The Experimental Group performed better than the Control Group on the posttest, indicating that the guided reading strategy was successful in raising students' reading literacy. These findings suggest that this method serves as a strong short-term intervention to enhance the reading skills of struggling learners, demonstrating its potential to address critical literacy challenges effectively. Although, the competency level of both groups is still on their frustration level, the result implies increase of class proficiency in the experimental group. While the control group, increases very slightly on the class proficiency. Additionally, the experimental group's results indicate that using a guided reading strategy significantly improves students' reading literacy.

Students who remained at the frustration level in reading often faced cognitive, environmental, and emotional challenges. Difficulties with decoding, comprehension, and fluency often resulted from limited vocabulary, weak phonemic awareness, or learning disabilities such as dyslexia. External factors such as lack of parental support, limited access to reading materials, and technological distractions further hindered progress. Developing reading skills required time, as it was a gradual and complex process.

However, Reading and literacy instruction have long been a priority in Philippine education to address persistent challenges. The success of remedial reading programs relied on instructor feedback, which improved word accuracy, comprehension, and fluency during oral reading (Crowe, 2005) [8]. Studies indicated that interventions like remedial reading strengthened vocabulary, enhanced language skills, and built general knowledge, providing a foundation for essential life skills (McCardle et al., 2001) [9].

Table 3: Mean Comparison of Posttest Scores of Control and Experimental Group

Posttest	No. of Students	Mean	Class Proficiency	Competency level
Control Group	11	9.91	49.55%	Frustration
Experimental Group	11	15.64	78.2%	Frustration

3.3 Comparison of the Control Group Students' Performance

Table 4 shows comparison of the control group students' performance. Based on the findings, the mean score on the pretest was 6.09, but it rose to 9.91 on the posttest. The posttest mean was higher than the pretest mean, as indicated by the calculated t-value of -7.120. Strong evidence against the null hypothesis was provided by the p-value of 0.000, which is below the significance level of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis was disproved, demonstrating that students' reading literacy skills changed statistically significant as a result of regular reading instruction. This indicates a significant difference in student achievement in the control group when the traditional read-aloud strategy was used to develop reading comprehension.

However, the control group made less progress because each student's individual learning gaps were not adequately addressed by the traditional approaches. Opportunities for active participation and individualized support are limited in traditional reading instruction, which frequently consists of teacher-led, whole-class sessions with the same text for every student. In contrast, guided reading strategies significantly improve students' reading skills and comprehension strategies (Fisher and Frey, 2010) [10].

Table 4: Pretest and Posttest of the Control Group

	Mean	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Pretest	6.09	-7.120	0.005	significant
Posttest	9.91			

3.4 Comparison of the Experimental Group Students' Performance

Table 5 shows the comparison of the experimental group students' performance. A paired t-test was conducted to determine whether a significant difference existed between the pretest and posttest scores of the Experimental Group. The results indicated that the pretest mean score was 6.45, while the posttest mean score increased to 15.64. The statistical analysis revealed a significant difference, with a t-value of -18.318, suggesting a substantial improvement in reading literacy skills. The p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 significance threshold, confirmed the statistical significance of the results.

The null hypothesis was disapproved by the performance analysis of the experimental group, indicating a noteworthy distinction between pretest and posttest results after the Guided Reading Strategy was put into practice. By the time of the posttest, the pretest scores had significantly improved, indicating noteworthy progress. The significant mean difference suggested significant gains beyond students' initial performance, even though they did not entirely move from the frustration level to the instructional level. In a comparatively short amount of time, the 24-session intervention produced significant improvements in reading literacy.

	Mean	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Pretest	6.45	-18.318	0.000	significant
Posttest	15.64			

Research has shown that elementary school pupils' processing and comprehension abilities significantly improves when they were explicitly taught reading strategies through guided reading (Smith, 2003) [11]. In contrast to conventional methods, guided reading promoted in-depth text exploration and offered individualized support. Teachers must adapt their lessons to each student's needs and use carefully chosen texts that correspond to their skill levels in order to provide effective reading instruction (Allington, 2002) [12]. Instead of using a uniform, one-size-fits-all methods of teaching reading literacy, guided reading helped students by assigning them with customized texts.

Guided Reading Strategy further strengthened engagement. Teacher-directed instruction proved more effective in small groups, allowing targeted skill development in reading. Working with students at similar reading levels enhanced individualized support and comprehension.

Table 5: Pretest and Posttest of Experimental Group

3.5 Significant difference between posttest scores of students in control and experimental group.

An independent t-test was used to ascertain whether the posttest results of the Control and Experimental Group differed significantly. According to the results, the Experimental Group's mean posttest score was higher at 15.64 than the Control Group's, which had a mean score of 9.91. The statistical significance of the difference between the two groups was confirmed by the t-value of -8.216 and the p-value of 0.000, both of which are below the 0.05 significance threshold.

The null hypothesis was rejected after a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' posttest mean scores was found. This suggested that the experimental group's guided reading approach outperformed the control group's conventional techniques. The findings demonstrated its beneficial effects on reading literacy and students' performance. Guided reading turned out to be a more successful teaching strategy because it met each

student's unique learning needs and encouraged active participation.

Higher academic achievement was attained by the experimental group that used the guided reading strategy as an intervention. With an emphasis on comprehension, fluency, and word recognition, Domong-as and Doctor (2019) [13] highlighted the value of guided reading in helping students progress from frustration to instructional levels and eventually to independence. Teachers are essential in helping students understand their reading levels, strengths and weaknesses according to Trazo and Abocejo (2019) [14]. When students had a clear understanding of their reading progress, instruction was much more effective.

Table 6: Posttest of Control and Experimental Group

Post-test	Mean	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Control	9.91	-8.216	0.000	Significant
Experimental	15.64			

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the indicated findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The data presented in the analysis provides information on the scores of two groups. The use of guided reading strategy as intervention in enhancing English reading literacy in the experimental group was effective. Also, the group which relies on traditional reading instruction shows a very small yet significant progress.

Learners who do not engage with reading materials at home or school tend to struggle with reading comprehension skills. Exposure to reading materials significantly influences learners' reading habits and interests, fostering a stronger foundation for literacy development.

Learners engaged with books at their reading level, fostering confidence and enthusiasm. They participated in sustained silent reading, selecting books independently, and showed interest in listening to teachers read aloud. Guided reading groups further strengthened engagement. Teacher-directed instruction proved more effective in small groups, allowing targeted skill development in reading. Working with students at similar reading levels enhanced individualized support and comprehension.

Early identification of struggling readers allows for timely intervention, enhancing academic performance and increasing opportunities for higher education. This, in turn, can reduce dropout rates in school and improve reading profiles of learners. By equipping learners with essential literacy skills, Guided Reading Strategy fosters independence and empowers future leaders.

Although the guided reading strategy produced a higher mean than the other, the data generally indicates that both approaches were successful in teaching reading. The guided reading strategy outperformed the conventional approach.

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