TITLE: QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON PROJECT RIDER AS AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of Project RIDER as a program designed to improve reading skills in Grade 7 students. Project RIDER, short for Reading Intervention Develops Effective Reader, is a targeted intervention program designed to enhance students' reading skills. The program focused on providing personalized support to struggling readers through specialized instruction and engaging activities. By addressing specific reading challenges and fostering a love for reading, Project RIDER aimed to develop proficient and confident readers who are equipped for academic success. The primary objectives were to improve word recognition and foster basic comprehension through reading exercises. Using a quasi-experimental research design, data were collected to assess the impact of Project RIDER on the targeted student group. The findings revealed that Project RIDER significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of Grade 7 students. The increase in performance from pre-test to post-test assessments highlighted the program's effectiveness in fostering reading readiness skills. This positive outcome was attributed to the use of innovative strategies and diverse materials, including interventions adapted from Tigbao Integrated School. The study also pointed out a gradual reduction in reading readiness issues among the students. It is strongly recommended to continue and enhance Project RIDER, as it has the potential to significantly improve reading skills in this age group. This research offers valuable insights into the development and optimization of reading intervention programs for young learners, contributing to their academic success.

Keyword: *English Language Teaching, reading, project RIDER, reading level, word recognition, simple comprehension, quasi-experimental research design*

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1. TITLE-1 QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON PROJECT RIDER AS AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The development of good reading proficiency involves comprehending words, sentences, phrases, and paragraphs. Recent research has identified that remedial reading courses can significantly enhance reading fluency and comprehension in junior high school students. A more recent study by Hausheer et al. (2022) utilized a remedial reading program to investigate its impact, concluding that students' reading fluency and comprehension scores improved significantly over the course of the term [1]. The results suggest that targeted reading interventions have the potential to enhance students' literacy levels, resulting in improved comprehension and more effortless reading. These require relevant remedial reading programs to facilitate their reading of the counteractive reading.

According to UNESCO, in 2023, 87% of the world's population over the age of 15 years are literate, leaving the remaining 13% of individuals around the world with difficulty in primary reading and writing skills [2]. UNESCO is actively engaged in improving literacy worldwide through various programs and initiatives that extend educational

opportunities. Through the execution of specific projects, the organization aims to enhance reading and writing capabilities, strengthen communities, and provide access to quality education to people of all ages. These efforts aim to close learning gaps and create a more educated and literate global population. They comprise UNESCO International Literacy Prizes, which reward and assist distinguished literacy projects, and the Education 2030 Agenda, whose goal is to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Through fostering literacy, UNESCO works to empower individuals and communities, building sustainable and peaceful societies.

By 2023, the Philippines is expected to have a literacy rate of 98.47% for individuals aged 15 years and above. This high literacy rate reflects the country's strong commitment to education, with only a small portion of the population still facing challenges in basic reading and writing. Based on the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, only 24% of Filipino students attained a minimum of Level 2 proficiency in reading. This percentage is relatively low relative to the OECD average of 74%. PISA measures how students perform in science, mathematics, and reading, and its results reveal ongoing challenges in the Philippine educational system that stakeholders must urgently address.

Librea (2023) examines the reasons for comparatively poor reading ability among students in the Philippines. They identified several underlying issues, including the lack of key reading elements, problems encountered by struggling students, general disinterest in reading, poor teacher competence, inadequate resources and materials for reading, low parental involvement, and the impact of health issues on their ability to learn effectively[3]. Robust reading proficiency is the foundation for academic achievement and excellence across all subjects and grade levels (Kennedy et al., 2012; Cimmiyotti, 2013) [4].

The incidence of struggling readers in Tigbao Integrated School emphasizes the necessity for more reading intervention measures. The disruptions caused by the pandemic, especially the implementation of modular learning for two years, have interrupted students' learning, resulting in poor reading abilities.

Achieving grade 7 in Tigbao Integrated School means a step up to a more complex reading level. Despite this challenge, most students continue to struggle with reading comprehension and vocabulary building. Project RIDER or Reading Intervention Develops Effective Readers, is an intervention program designed to enhance students' reading skills and abilities. The project offers targeted support to students experiencing reading challenges through specialized teaching techniques and interactive exercises. By addressing personal reading barriers and inspiring a love for reading, Project RIDER aims to foster confident and competent readers, ultimately paving the way for academic success.

1.1 Studies on Reading Intervention
Ali and Razali (2019) emphasize the importance of cognitive and metacognitive approaches in enhancing reading comprehension for learners [5]. By employing these strategies, students actively engage in the reading process, which significantly improves their understanding of the material. This study emphasizes the importance of exploring additional reading interventions to identify the most effective strategies for enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. It requires actively reading the text to understand its meaning and glean relevant information. It entails skills such as analyzing and interpreting the text, as well as understanding the author's intention and viewpoint.

1.2 Reading Literacy
Robust reading proficiency is the foundation for academic achievement and excellence across all subjects and grade levels (Kennedy et al., 2012; Cimmiyotti, 2013) [6]. According to Raise the Bar Reading (2024), making conclusions is a critical reading proficiency that enables college students to read texts more deeply and foster critical thinking[7]. Proficiency in reading involves drawing information from the text, combining it with existing knowledge, and producing well-reasoned interpretations to achieve a deeper understanding that extends beyond the obvious.

2. Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 illustrates the interplay of variables used in the research. The independent variable used in this study is the Project RIDER, and the Reading Competence in achievement, as measured by the Pre-Test and Post-Test, served as the Dependent Variable.
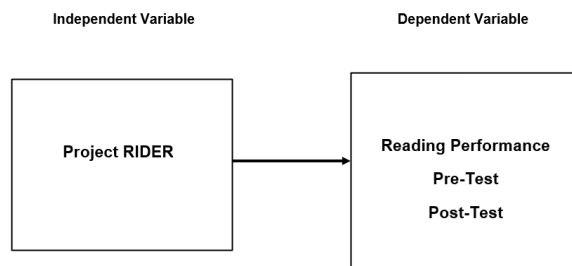
Independent Variable   Dependent Variable

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┌─────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │          │                     │
│                     │          │  Reading Performance│
│    Project RIDER     │───────▶ │                     │
│                     │          │      Pre-Test       │
│                     │          │                     │
│                     │          │      Post-Test      │
└─────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────┘
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Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.1 Reading level of the students' Pre-Test scores.

This section presents the results of the first statement of the problem, which examines the reading level of students in graded passages in the Pre-Test.

Table 1

Pretest Mean Score	Class Proficiency	Interpretation	Level of Performance
13.0	41%	No mastery level in the skills tested	Moderately satisfactory

Table 1: Reading level of the students' Pre-Test scores.

As indicated in Table 1, the reading level of Grade 7 students during the pre-test has a mean of 13.0 and a class proficiency of 41%. According to the Phil IRI standard, the competency level of the pre-test students failed to meet expectations, indicating that Grade 7 learners have difficulty reading, particularly in accurately and efficiently identifying and decoding written words. Such struggles may impact their reading fluency as well as their understanding

2.2 The Reading Level of the Students in Graded Passages In Posttest Scores

This section presents the results of the second statement of the problem, which examines the reading level of students in graded passages based on post-test scores.

Table 2

Post-test Performance of the Grade 7 Students

Posttest Mean Score	Class Proficiency	Interpretation	Level of Performance
29.4	92%	Students have mastered the skills in reading	Outstanding

Table 2: Post-test Performance of the Grade 7 Students

As indicated in Table 2, the post-test reading level of the Grade 7 students has a mean of 29.4 and a class proficiency rate of 92%. According to the Phil IRI standard, the student's competency level in the post-test is Instructional.

That indicates that the improvement in students' word recognition performance during the post-test is statistically significant. The findings also suggest that the Project RIDER platform significantly facilitates the development of reading skills among students.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Difference between the pre-test scores and post-test scores of the respondents. Students' performance during the pre-test was poor, but it improved in the post-test. The findings showed that the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming the alternate hypothesis that there existed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents.

Wanzek and colleagues (2018) conducted a meta-analysis that demonstrated a strong positive effect of intensive early reading interventions on struggling readers from kindergarten through third grade[8]. Their research, which analyzed data from 25 studies, highlights the crucial importance of providing substantial support to young readers at an early stage to enhance their reading skills effectively.

Stanovich's (2016) research on the Matthew effects in reading underscores how early disparities in reading skills can have a profound and lasting impact on a child's academic trajectory[9]. In effect, those who begin with a slight advantage in reading tend to gain further ahead over the years, while those who struggle may fall behind. It underscores the absolute necessity of early interventions to help all children establish a solid foundation in reading.

4. CONCLUSIONS

From the results, the researcher determined that the respondents showed an outstanding level of competence in reading ability. The significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores suggests that the students exhibited substantial improvement in their word recognition ability. The pre-test and post-test performance levels of the respondents who had Project RIDER enhanced conventional methods and techniques showed a satisfactory competency level in reading readiness abilities at Tigbao Integrated School. The pre-test and post-test growth manifestation is a good indication of improvement in reading readiness skills. The strategies derived from the improvised technique by other materials, including the reading intervention of Tigbao Integrated School. Therefore, the issue of reading readiness among Grade 7 pupils has been slowly decreasing, but it must be continued. It implies that when interventions are applied, they always produce positive results.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

exceptionally brilliant and supportive adviser, generously shared invaluable tips, guidance, and ideas, contributing immensely to the pursuit and success of this study, with the help also of the Graduate School Staffs.

The researcher would like to extend her heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Genalyn C. Permajin, the current head of Tigbao Integrated School, and Ma'am Jennifer B. Sarsuelo, the former school head, for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this endeavor.

To Ms. D. Young and Ms. M. Florentino, the researcher's cherished friends, and all the family and friends for their constant encouragement and unwavering support.

The researcher expresses deep gratitude to the family, Mr. & Mrs. Jose Jr. and Lolita Malaki and Mr. Ronnie T. Florentino, for their unwavering love, moral support, and financial assistance.

Above all, heartfelt thanks to the Almighty Father for granting the intellect, strength, courage, perseverance, and good health that made the successful completion of this research possible.

Thank you, and God bless!

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