

# Bridging intervention toolkit for the enhancement of phonemic awareness among the struggling readers in secondary level

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## Abstract

The study dealt on determining the effectiveness of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) as a bridging intervention for the identified struggling readers at the secondary level. Respondents used the developed bridging intervention toolkit for the identified 50 struggling readers at the secondary level. An initial evaluation was done through the DepEd's activity Brigada Pagbasa, and from the data, the 50 struggling students were selected. An orientation was done to discuss the intervention program immediately followed by a pre-test to assess the students reading level and capability. Respondents underwent a five-week session to acquire the different phonemic awareness skills in different difficulty levels followed by a weekly assessment using Jerry L. John's Basic Reading Inventory. In the fifth week, a post-test and individual oral reading evaluation was done to see the respondents' progress. Based on the result of the pre-test and post-test scores, it implies that the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit was an effective tool in learning the different phonemic awareness skills. The study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between the bridging intervention toolkit using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) and the respondent's phonemic awareness.

*Keywords: Phonemic Awareness; Reading Intervention; Struggling Readers; Toolkit.*

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## Introduction

The devastating effect of COVID-19 on children's education is apparent and profound. The pandemic has caused the largest and the worst disruption to education in history. The suspension of face-to-face instruction in schools worldwide during the pandemic has led to concerns about the negative impact and consequences on students' learning. This crisis is a global phenomenon.

In the Philippines, the outcome of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan by the Department of Education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic did not hit the target. Blended learning, which combines online distance learning, modular distance learning, and TV/Radio-based Instruction, still needs to deliver the desired knowledge.

The progressive expansion of face-to-face classes has revealed a sad reality. Many learners must improve their mastery of basic skills and competencies such as writing, reading literacy, numeracy, and basic arithmetic operations. The learning loss is due to many factors, such as lack of academic interest, absence of physical classes, ineffective learning delivery, and economic and health issues.

According to the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP) report co-hosted by UNICEF and World Bank, learning loss must be urgently recovered to avoid long-term damage to children's well-being and productivity.

Following the alarming discovery, the Department of Education immediately developed a recovery learning plan framework to guide schools in addressing learning gaps. It is anchored on learning remediation, intervention, professional development, health, safety, and wellness.

Also included is the extension of the school calendar, expanding learning time, establishing a learning support center in schools and community-based learning spaces, and hiring additional learning support aides.

Moreover, DepEd plans to intensify its reading interventions, conduct regular home visits and follow-ups, implement physical and virtual study groups/buddy systems, establish literacy at home and in the

community, tap the services of parent or guardian teacher-volunteers, and develop appropriate assessment tasks and resources.

The school's response to the said urgency was imperative to the observed needs of the learners, and one of the most profound needs observed in the first quarter of the back-to-school face-to-face classes of the learners is the students' incompetent skills in reading.

Every year, students' reading ability is evaluated through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PhilIRI), a reading assessment of students reading speed and comprehension. Moreover, each year, many students still fall under the category of frustrated readers, wherein students are either identified with low comprehension skills or with slow reading skills and, to make it worst, even a non-reader.

It is a challenge to encounter students identified as non-readers at their secondary level, where students are expected to be proficient in reading with understanding. However, with what the world has experienced, their learning progress was also affected.

The struggling adolescent reader faces challenges in accessing the core standards in the secondary setting because of their limited ability to navigate and comprehend text. In the book *Teaching Adolescents to Read: It is Not Too Late* (2015), Louisa Moats describes the challenge well: the nicely older struggling readers may need instruction in skills they missed in the early grades, but in many other ways, they present unique challenges that set them apart from their younger selves. Reading and writing for these students are slow, taxing, frustrating, and unsatisfying endeavors. Moreover, students' difficulties are chronic and traceable; often, too early fail with the basics. Day in and day out, for many years, the students have been given tasks that are too difficult for them to accomplish independently and successfully. It is thus no surprise that, for the most part, they avoid reading and have learned maladaptive coping strategies when faced with academic assignments.

Therein lies the most challenging aspect of teaching older students: because reading is difficult for them, they do not like to read, so they read (and write) very little. As a result, they are not familiar with the vocabulary, sentence structure, text organization, and concepts of academic "book" language. Over time, they fall further and further behind. Consequently, factual, and experiential knowledge of the world may be very minimal telling and writing are poor. What begins as a core phonological and word recognition deficit—often associated with other language weaknesses—becomes a diffuse, debilitating problem with language, both spoken and written.

Consider the nature of adolescence as well. To a junior high school or senior high school student, peer relationships, peer group status, identity as an individual, and concerns about the future are all important. A struggling reader is equally, if not more, in need of school experiences that promote self-respect, competence, self-reliance, social integration, and peer collaboration.

Recognizing the problem and concerns in education, specifically on reading skills, the researcher came up with the idea wherein there will be effective and intensive reading instruction tailored for older students. Basic reading skills can be bolstered in a respectful, age-appropriate, and engaging manner, especially within a blended learning set-up. At the same time, language comprehension and navigation of challenging text can be taught. The overriding goal to improve all aspects of language on which reading and writing depend—is attainable given time and specially designed and engaging instruction.

A bridging intervention toolkit was formulated so that it will serve as a connector for the learners who have missed a part of their reading skills during their early years to the skills that they must possess at their present level. The resources within this toolkit will support educators in providing reading intervention that will enable students to acquire the skills they are missing and advance their skills significantly, improving their overall academic success.

## Background of the Study

Reading research has become somewhat cliché because so much reading research has already been undertaken on various reading remediation and practices. There are already many resources and reading interventions available. Still, now that we have experienced an alternative teaching-learning modality brought

about by the pandemic, we have yet another story to share. As we have seen, different teaching-learning modalities existed during the pandemic period in various modes of the teaching-learning process. The question now is how we will develop the learners' macro-skills, precisely the students' reading skills, despite the learning gap that they have experienced.

The impetus for the study of teaching basic reading skills in secondary schools came from national concern for the large number of students being graduated from elementary who needed to be more nationally competent in reading, writing, and computational skills. This problem was brought to national attention.

Testing students to assess essential skill deficiencies is applicable only if strong remediation measures are taken. To meet the requirement, remedial classes in reading are being offered, whether or not teachers with reading credentials are available. Teachers have been allocated to teach regardless of their backgrounds. As a result, extensive and intensive in-service training is needed to help these teachers learn how to teach essential reading. It is difficult to change a long history of failure to read into a story of success for secondary students.

The researcher found it possible to use Grade 7 students who are identified as struggling readers during the reading assessment using the PhilIRI. Working as Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) and school reading coordinator, it is a challenge to identify the students' reading ability, especially for the Grade 7 students who are freshmen, and the school does not have data on students' academic performance, specifically in reading. By the time the Phil-IRI assessment was conducted, it had identified many struggling readers, and even some are non-readers—which accounts for much of their struggle.

To cater to the needs of the learners identified as frustrated readers, the researcher formulated an innovative reading intervention that will support learners in learning how to recognize words and how to read. An intervention that will serve as students' bridge in catching up on their left-behind skills in reading. A Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) is an accessible tool to assist students in learning how to read step-by-step focusing first on phonemic awareness. Compiled in terms of their potential impact on attaining the target goals, the toolkit will support learning how to read and their applicability.

### **Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework**

Phonics is an approach to teaching various aspects of literacy that involves increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the relationship between written symbols and sounds. Understanding written text requires hearing, recognizing, and using sound or phoneme patterns. The goal is to teach pupils the relationship between these sounds and the written spelling patterns, or graphemes, that methodically express them. Phonics emphasizes the ability to sound and combine or 'blend' the sound-spelling designs.

Phonics has a positive impact with pervasive evidence and is essential in developing early reading skills, predominantly for students from underprivileged backgrounds. With this, the phonics teaching be explicit and systematic to support students in making connections between the sound patterns they hear in words and how they are written. The teaching of phonics should be matched to students' current skill level regarding phonemic awareness and knowledge of letter sounds and patterns (graphemes).

Phonics improves the accuracy of the students' reading but not necessarily their comprehension. Children must succeed in progressing in reading, including awareness, the development of vocabulary, and spelling, which should also be taught explicitly.

Phonics approaches have been consistently found to be effective in supporting younger students to master the basics of reading, with an average impact of an additional five months' progress. Research suggests that phonics is particularly beneficial for younger students (4–7-year-olds) as they begin to read. Teaching phonics is more effective on average than other approaches to early reading (such as whole language or alphabetic approaches). However, it should be emphasized that effective phonics techniques are usually embedded in a rich literacy environment for early readers and are only one part of a successful literacy strategy.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was a crucial construct in Lev Vygotsky's theory of learning and development. The Zone of Proximal Development is the space between what a learner can do without assistance and what a learner can do with adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

In the case of teaching a learner how to read English text, the immense potential they bring through the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) is comprised of their intellectual, linguistic, and creative strengths that are waiting to be built upon. This toolkit can provide students with appropriate learning experiences and support to help them realize their potential development.

The zone of proximal development (ZPD), or potential development growth range of abilities an individual can perform with the guidance of an expert but cannot yet perform independently. Vygotsky believed that when a student is in the zone of proximal development for a particular task, providing the appropriate assistance will give the student enough of a "boost" to achieve the goal.

Several core concepts have been developed by Vygotsky and expanded upon by others following him that have helped round out this learning theory. The success of this learning process involves The presence of someone with the knowledge and skills to guide the learner; Supportive activities, known as scaffolding, provided by the expert that help guide the learner; and Social interactions that allow the learner to work on their skills and abilities. This learning theory became the theoretical basis of this study, wherein it tries to identify how learning takes place if the students need someone with the knowledge and skills to guide the learner. With this concern, the idea of how well the teaching of reading occurs if the students struggle with the said skills at the beginning.

### Research Paradigm

#### INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

##### **Bridging Intervention Toolkit**

- I.** Use of the Reading Toolkit
- II.** Assessment of the Reading Toolkit
  - a. Purpose
  - b. Meaningfulness
  - c. Responsiveness
  - d. Usefulness
  - e. Presentation

#### DEPENDENT VARIABLES

##### **Phonemic Awareness**

- I.** Phoneme segmentation.
- II.** Phoneme blending and splitting.
- III.** Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration.
- IV.** Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting.
- V.** Phoneme manipulation.

The bridging intervention toolkit has been created to support schools and reading teachers in providing quality and practical instruction for struggling adolescent readers. The toolkit focuses on phonemic awareness—specific resources in structuring, designing, and facilitating a reading class to support struggling teenage readers best. The recommendations, tools, and strategies included are based on evidence of their effectiveness in improving student achievement outcomes in reading. As such, incorporating the components in the toolkit may provide invaluable support for organizing classes.

This 'learning to read' is called attaining phonemic awareness. It has five distinct levels that coincide with the milestones of a progressive learning curve. This means the student has to be conversant with the phoneme, the smallest unit of the sound of a letter, at the start. And then, the student learns to blend, rhyme, and identify them apart.

If we weaken a word into letters, we will realize that every letter corresponds to a starting sound, a middle sound, and an ending sound. All these sounds are called phonemes. The ability to manipulate and employ these sounds to sound out words correctly is only phonemic awareness. So, this awareness is achieved when a learner absorbs the following levels of phonemic cognition (Adams, 1990).

Building phonemic awareness means learning to read. It is the total of recognizing and blending phonemes to build words, further developing reading skills. This awareness in reading beginners is one of the parameters to assess learning difficulties in children, if any.

### Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine whether there is a significant effect of using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) among the identified struggling readers in Paaralang Sekundarya ng Lucban Integrated School.

Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents on Phonemic Awareness before and after the utilization of GRIT in terms of:
  - 1.1. Phoneme segmentation;
  - 1.2. Phoneme blending and splitting;
  - 1.3. Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration;
  - 1.4. Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting; and
  - 1.5. Phoneme manipulation?
2. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores on phonemic awareness?
3. What is the assessment of the users as perceived in using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in terms of:
  - 3.1 Purpose;
  - 3.2 Meaningfulness;
  - 3.3 Responsiveness;
  - 3.4 Usefulness; and
  - 3.5 Presentation?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the use of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) and the development of readers' phonemic awareness in terms of:
  - 4.1. Phoneme segmentation;
  - 4.2. Phoneme blending and splitting;
  - 4.3. Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration;
  - 4.4. Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting; and
  - 4.5. Phoneme manipulation?

### Research Hypothesis

The study suggests the hypothesis that:

- A. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents with the use of GRIT (Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit)
- B. There is no significant relationship between the bridging intervention toolkit and the respondent's phonemic awareness development.

### Significance of the Study

This study yielded data that are helpful to the following groups of people:

**The Teachers.** The result of this study would offer teachers, particularly language or communication teachers, teaching reading. It will lead them to employ this as an effective technique in handling slow readers or those at the frustrated reading level.

**The Struggling Readers.** In particular, the students in the frustration level would be equipped with how Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) is done and how it works to improve their reading level.

**School Reading Coordinators.** The findings of this study would serve as a guide in utilizing the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) as an intervention that will help frustrated readers become independent readers. Also, the said intervention may be included as a component of the school's remediation activity in reading or as a part of the school's reading program.

**Parents.** The results of this study would provide parents with an understanding of their student's reading development and will help them in assisting the needs of students in improving their reading skills. This study will also allow them to be hands-on tutors to their children and foster stronger teacher-parent-student cooperation.

**Future Researchers.** The findings of this study would guide them on the linguistic concerns the students usually encounter in reading. It will pave the way for more studies on applied linguistics and its direct effects on language acquisition.

### Scope and Limitation

The study is confined to the impact of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) - what it is, how it is done, and why it is essential to be integrated into the reading program to handle secondary-level students at the struggling reading level.

Furthermore, this study is limited to the identified students struggling with reading at Paaralang Sekundarya ng Lucban Integrated School for the school year 2022-2023. Only those who took the pre-test and post-test and underwent the program were considered the respondents of this study and source of data, which was computed and analyzed afterward.

### Definition of Terms

For enlightenment and clarity of the study, the following terminologies are defined conceptually and operationally:

**Bridging.** The process of bringing the learners linked to their current learning level.

**Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit:** A reading intervention toolkit designed to assist struggling readers at the secondary level. This toolkit focuses on the enhancement of the phonemic awareness skills of struggling readers as their first step in becoming effective readers

**Intervention.** Intensive or targeted instruction will accelerate those students with a reading level below their expected instructional level.

**Phil-IRI.** Philippine Informal Reading Inventory, 2018 of the Department of Education, 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. These three types of assessments aim to find the students' reading level- independent, instructional, or frustrating.

**Phonics.** It is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skillfully. They are taught to recognize each letter's sounds, identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo'; and blend these sounds from left to right to make a word. Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.



**Phonemic Awareness.** The ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds (Yopp, 1992)

**Phoneme Blending and Splitting.** It refers to the blending and splitting of phonemes to create new words. Once the student learns the sound of each phoneme, the correct blending is required to read the word correctly. So, the concept of onset-riming, which means sounding out the beginning (onset) and end (riming), is learned by mentally splitting and blending the phonemes. When teachers ask to speak and write, they are given the pretext to learn spellings using phoneme splitting and blending.

**Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting.** The words change when contrasting phonemes are used to make the word sound. Means, f, and v are the contrasting phonemes because these are sounded out by applying phonetic differences. Moreover, using these sounds replaceable changes the meaning of the word entirely. Fan and Van may be rhyming, but phonetic difference leading to different meanings of words puts them in contrasting phoneme categories.

**Phoneme Manipulation.** The ability to move or alter individual phonemes while remembering their specific roles in constituting a word's sound is described as phonemic manipulation. Several activities happen behind a simple act of reading. Learners cognitively delete, add, substitute, or rearrange sounds to arrive at the correct way of voicing the word. This process is required to be fluent in reading connected text.

**Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration.** It involves words that represent a familiar sound. Rhyming focuses on the commonality of ending sounds, while alliteration focuses on learning words that start with the same sound. When the teacher asks a child to write rhyming words, the answers are mostly those words with the same rhyming lettering.

**Phoneme Segmentation.** The segmentation of syllables. It involves counting and sounding out the phonemes separately to understand a word's sound. Since phonemic awareness recognizes parts of the word/letter/sentence, it means differently moving from word to sentence segmentation.

**Toolkit.** A research-based tool that can improve students' reading skills, primarily phonemic awareness. This practical resource offers classroom-tested interventions to use with struggling readers. It supports implementation, management, and assessment to support student development.

## Literature Review

This chapter presents related literature and studies previously conducted by other researchers that have direct relevance to the current study. It involves theories about phonemic awareness and topics discussing concerns and studies related to struggling readers. Reading from different books, periodicals, and related articles conducted locally and in other countries is also shown here to give direction to this study.

## Struggling Readers

Reading is a skill that learners must fully develop to learn other life-long skills. Reading enables Filipino learners to compete globally. Acquiring reading skills is necessary for all students to meet time demands. Moreover, reading empowers every learner to reach his goals in life.

Developing reading skills is critical to effective learning, and the Department of Education recognizes that there must be a proactive approach to bridge the gaps in learning. Schools are advised to frame their reading programs and interventions within the guidelines prescribed in Enclosure No. 1 of D. O. No. 39 s. 2012. Children with poor reading skills face many challenges and may be at risk for cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disorders. When students do not receive help in the early elementary years, learning to read becomes increasingly difficult as they progress through school (Dawoud, 2013)

Garcia (2021) emphasized that students must learn the basics of reading and comprehension early. This is important to attain functional literacy. Possible solutions are immersing them with vocabulary and reading exercises, reinforcement of reading at home by parents, and a positive attitude towards reading. Improved comprehension skills can also be attained by promoting the culture of reading cultures and in the community. In that way, students are ensured successful reading and learning experiences.

In the study, Macapaar (2019) emphasizes that teachers should be more aware of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses when it comes to reading for them to develop the best approach to ensure maximum learning for each of the learners. Learners have different styles and abilities. Teachers should be aware of their pupils' mental and emotional capabilities. Having enough information on learners allows them to review the quality of each learner's performance and design instruction accordingly. The results of the Phil-IRI assessment must not be used as a means for making decisions regarding promotion or retention. The data gathered must be used for designing reading instructions and interventions to help pupils improve their oral reading performance and reading behavior.

According to Escantilla (2019), The successful evolution of oral reading includes learning to give proper attention to different kinds of reading material; determining the essential ideas of reading text; grasping main ideas with minimum eye fixations; tying together closely related ideas in the text; achieving comprehension of the text without difficulty; and subconsciously determining what might be best for recollection later.

Adult struggling readers are a heterogeneous population with vastly different reading skill levels and language learning profiles. They may have difficulties in any component of literacy, including decoding (word attack), word reading (word recognition), spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension (Alamprese, MacArthur, Price, & Knight, 2011; Ehri, 1997; Sabatini, 2002). This preliminary intervention study addresses the diverse needs of adult struggling readers by teaching analysis of complex vocabulary words to adults seeking alternative high school diplomas or General Education Diplomas (GED) with sixth-grade reading skills on average. Vocabulary instruction involving the analysis of words' morphemes (most minor units of meaning) and phonemes (most minor units of sound) compared to a more traditional kind of vocabulary instruction involving studying whole words.

Based on the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Second Edition Toolkit published by RTI International, 2016 reading and comprehending a simple text is one of the most fundamental skills a child can learn. Without basic literacy, there is little chance that a child will escape the intergenerational cycle of poverty. However, in many countries, students enrolled in school for as many as six years cannot read and understand a simple text. Evidence indicates that learning to read early and at a reasonable rate (with comprehension) is essential for learning to read well.

Unlike many skills, such as walking and speaking, the ability to read is not acquired naturally without instruction. Studies suggest that without quality instruction, a child who reads poorly in the early grades will continue to read poorly in the upper grades acquiring more and more instructional intervention to "catch up" (Juel, 1988).

The more children struggle at school, the greater the risk of becoming discouraged and dropping out, forfeiting any potential benefits that education would afford them later in life. In contrast, the more and better children learn, the longer they stay in school (Patrinos & Velez, 2009). One study found that the strongest predictor of primary school completion in Senegal was the child's reading success level on grade (Glick & Sahn, 2010). Whether for an individual child or a whole educational system, it addresses a reading deficit in the early grades more efficiently.

According to Patricia Martin and Peter Pappas in their *Content Reading Strategies that Work* (2006), a non-reader lacks the skills of a fluent reader. They read below grade level and struggle with comprehension, phonics, and vocabulary. Feelings of defeat have turned off their desire to read, and they exhibit inappropriate behaviors to hide their inability to read and comprehend. They read very little and do not like to read. Lacks practical word attack skills. Exhibits poor comprehension skills. Has limited language and vocabulary.



## Literacy

It is mentioned that basic literacy is the foundation children need to succeed in all other education areas. Children first need to “learn to read” so that they can “read to learn.” As children pass through the grade levels, more and more academic content is transmitted to them through text, and their ability to acquire new knowledge and skills depends mainly on their ability to read and extract meaning from text. For example, math is an important skill, but using a math book requires the ability to read. Students are also increasingly required to demonstrate their learning through writing, a skill integrally tied to reading and reading comprehension. Moreover, a low level of literacy severely constrains a person’s capacity for self-guided and lifelong learning that is so important beyond the classroom walls into the world of adult responsibilities.

Acquiring literacy becomes more complex as students grow older; children who do not learn to read in the first few grades are more likely to repeat grades and eventually drop out of school. The foundational, more solid not acquired early on, gaps in learning outcomes (between students who have mastered foundational reading skills and those who have not) grow more significant over time. The common metaphor of “the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer” is often quoted in discussions of the disparities between fluent and non-fluent readers for children who cannot acquire reading and comprehension skills in the early grades (Gove & Wetterberg, 2011).

Traditional paper-based tests require that children already have acquired essential reading fluency and comprehension skills. If they have not (i.e., if they are unable to read the question or write the answer), the test will not be able to measure what children know accurately. In technical terms, the results will suffer from a floor effect, with many students scoring zero. In those cases, the paper-based test tells us only what the children do not know, but not what they do know or where they are along the developmental path.

In many countries, students must pass a national “exit” examination at the end of grade 6 to earn their primary education completion certificate and to enter secondary school (Braun & Kanjee, 2006). Furthermore, international assessments through the Progress in International Reading Study, or PIRLS (given to fourth graders) and Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA (given to 15- year-olds), are administered in numerous (mostly higher income) countries around the world. In both kinds of assessments, students are generally asked to read several short passages and answer multiple-choice questions. If the student’s reading and comprehension skills are insufficient to understand the test, they will fail the assessment—but the resulting data will not reveal why they failed. Did the students not know how to answer the questions, or were they just unable to read them?

Reading fluency and comprehension are higher-order skills in the reading acquisition process, and they build upon several lower-order foundational skills such as phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, decoding, vocabulary, etc., which can be detected through an oral assessment. An oral assessment, therefore, can give us more information about what students know and where they are in the reading acquisition process early on. Oral assessments can also help detect early growth over time—changes that are not yet detectable on a paper-based test but constitute progress toward reading acquisition.

### Phonemic Awareness

In one of the leaflets of the UK Department of Education (2013) titled “Learning to read through phonics: Information for parents, they emphasized that Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way, almost all children who receive good teaching phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any text fluently and confidently and to read for enjoyment. Children with phonics also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods, such as ‘look and say.’ This includes children who find learning to read complex, such as those with dyslexia.

The report of the Ice for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) in that regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people and education and skills for learners of all ages. They have mentioned that the diligent, concentrated, and systematic teaching of phonics is central to the success of all the schools that achieve high reading standards in Key Stage 1. This requires high-quality, expert teaching following a carefully planned and tightly structured approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills. Pupils are given opportunities to apply what they have learned through

reading – including time to read aloud to adults to practice their decoding skills – writing, and comprehension of what they are reading.

Planned structure, fast pace, praise and reinforcement, perceptive responses, active participation by all children, and evidence of progress characterize the best phonics teaching. Effective teachers are highly trained to instill the principles of phonics, identify the learning needs of young children, and recognize and overcome the barriers that impede learning. Schools with Nursery classes begin such teaching early on. The curriculum gives children rich opportunities to talk and listen to various texts. This contributes to developing their familiarity with focus on developing the children's capacity to listen, concentrate and discriminate between sounds.

Moats (2002) mentioned in her article entitled "When Older students cannot Read" that if children receive phonological and alphabetic skills instruction and apply that knowledge to decoding words, they will likely succeed at reading. Once children fall behind, they seldom catch up.

Well-structured resources are used appropriately, individually or in combination, to support the teaching program. Phonics teaching is monitored to ensure consistency, and steps are taken if improvement is called for.

Some children need more instruction in phonics than others. Good phonics teaching allows for differences among children and progresses as slowly or as rapidly as children need to master the necessary knowledge and skills.

Buckingham (2016) describes that Not all approaches to teaching phonics are equally effective. Incidental or embedded teaching of phonics involves pointing out letter sounds while reading words or texts; however, generally, not the first problem-solving strategy when a child cannot read a given word. Word phonics teaching does not involve direct teaching of letter-sound correspondence. It is opportunistic rather than systematic or sequential. So there is no guarantee that children will learn all the alphabetic codes. By contrast, explicit phonics methods teach directly and systematically. There are two main approaches to explicit phonics instruction: analytic and synthetic.

Analytic phonics involves analyzing (breaking down) words into their parts. In analytic phonics instruction, children learn whole words first and are taught sounds in the context of the words. Once all letter sounds have been taught, children are introduced to blending sounds to make words. In synthetic phonics, children are taught how to build up (synthesize) words from their smallest unit (graphemes) by teaching a carefully planned sequence of small groups of letters at a time, introducing blending after a few letter sounds have been learned. If children master these skills quickly, teachers can introduce more letters and letter combinations so that children start reading and writing more complex words as soon as possible. If children have difficulty learning letter sounds and blending, teaching can keep pace with their instructional needs. Research indicates that systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) is the most effective way to teach children how to decode words.

Davis (2013) is underpinned by the claim that research has shown systematic synthetic phonics to be the most effective way of teaching children to read. Andrew Davis argues that there is a fundamental problem with this claim. Whatever it is that empirical researchers take themselves to be doing when they investigate synthetic phonics, they are not investigating a specifiable method of teaching reading. This is for two reasons. First, there are no such things as specifiable methods of teaching. Teaching is a vastly complex human activity involving contextual and reactive practical judges responsive to classroom life's myriad contingencies. The idea that teachers might use prescribed methods rather than practical judgments is a fantasy.

### **Intervention**

The assessment of individual pupils' progress, phonic knowledge, and skills is sufficiently frequent and detailed to quickly identify the pupils who are failing or in danger of failing to keep up with their peers. Adequate provision for them to catch up is implemented early, and there are high expectations of what all pupils should achieve. Children should be involved in assessing their progress and receive regular supportive

feedback on their work. The quality of formative assessment and the interaction that stems from it makes an essential contribution to learning.

Katigbak (2019) suggested that giving essential medication to students with reading problems is essential. This is valuable to the students as it brings productive and interactive communication and comprehension in their studies, improving their academic performance. Likewise, among the administrators and teachers, it reflects good feedback to the school.

In their study, Vaughn et al. (2019) stated the Educational Impact and Implications Statement that many high school English learners (ELs) have difficulty reading and understanding the text, which may impact their graduation rate and employment opportunities. In the current study, adolescent ELs with shallow reading comprehension in English from a large, urban school district were assigned to receive either a supplemental reading intervention (i.e., in addition to their regular core classes) or to a comparison group for two full school years. Adolescent ELs who participated in the reading intervention performed better than comparison students' sentence-level reading comprehension and a vocabulary test of words taught, but not on word reading or text-level reading comprehension measures. Results from this study demonstrate that there are improving reading achievements for adolescent ELs, and future research may need to examine school wide, multiyear approaches to this problem.

According to Flojo (2007), the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory was used to determine students' strengths and weaknesses. According to the findings of the study, students should be encouraged to be more aware of their level of achievement as well as specific reading strengths and weaknesses. Instruction becomes more effective as learners' awareness grows.

In a synthesis of quantitative research on reading programs for secondary students by Baye et al. (2018), the Categories of programs using one-to-one and small-group tutoring, cooperative learning, whole-school approaches including organizational reforms such as teacher teams, and writing-focused approaches showed positive outcomes. Individual approaches in a few other categories also showed positive impacts. Categories in which these individual programs appear include programs emphasizing social studies/science, structured strategies, and personalized and group/personalization rotation approaches for struggling readers. Programs that provide a daily extra period of reading and those utilizing technology were no more effective, on average than programs that did not provide these resources. The findings suggest that secondary readers benefit more from socially and cognitively engaging instruction than additional reading periods or technology.

In the study by Tolentino (2019) entitled "The Essence of Reading Comprehension Intervention to the Frustration Readers of Malabag National High School," the results show that: a) reading intervention helped the learners to escalate their reading comprehension and) every learner needs different reading intervention strategy. The value of reading comprehension was developed in the learners since they met progress during given interventions. The findings of this study immensely helped the reading teachers formulate an innovative approach/strategy in handling the individual needs of frustrated readers to meet the development of their reading comprehension skills.

Northrop and Kelly (2018) found that track level continues to be a significant predictor of what happens instructional in the classroom. Struggling readers placed in low-track classes spent more time on skills and strategy instruction, completing worksheets, watching videos, and reading aloud than students in grade-level classes. Students in high-track classes spent more time on literature analysis, comprehension instruction, and group projects and were more frequently assigned homework than students in grade-level classes. Although there was considerable overlap in the text complexity titles of books assigned at each track level, students in low-track classes read less challenging texts than those in grade-level or above-grade-level classes. Regression models controlling for various teacher and school variables, including student achievement, show that these adjustments in class time allocation, instructional practices, and text complexity go above and beyond expectations based on student achievement alone.

According to Lupo et al. (2018), Many teachers feel that students should not struggle with text; instead, they should read more accessible texts to learn from them and make adequate growth in reading. Teachers might use more accessible or leveled texts as a solution or a graphic novel or multimodal version to

differentiate text reading and motivate and engage reluctant readers. The authors refute commonly held assumptions or misconceptions and offer alternative recommendations to improve students' ability to learn from text and develop reading comprehension. The authors also suggest that teachers should embrace the struggle by providing supportive opportunities for all students to engage with challenging texts with appropriate instructional scaffolds, including addressing adolescent readers' knowledge and vocabulary needs, engaging readers in a discussion about the text, and motivating and engaging readers with the topic and text throughout the reading experience.

In the book *Teaching Adolescents to Read: It is Not Too Late* (2015) by Louisa Moats, she describes the challenge of struggling adolescent readers as follows: The older struggling reader may need instruction in skills they missed in the early grades, but in many other ways they present unique challenges that set them apart from their younger selves.

Reading and writing for these students are slow, taxing, frustrating, and unsatisfying endeavors. Moreover, students' difficulties are chronic and traceable; often, too early fail with the basics. Day in and day out, for many years, the students have been given tasks that are too difficult for them to accomplish independently and successfully. Thus, It is no surprise that for the most part, they mostly avoid reading and have learned maladaptive coping strategies when faced with academic assignments.

Without a single broadly applicable and successful intervention that can be applied with universal success, more must be known about teacher perceptions of struggling learner barriers and their implications for curriculum delivery. While streaming students by ability may not be associated with learning benefits, and "in highly stratified systems, education is less equitable" (OECD, 2013b, p. 72), teaching students with a wide range of abilities and difficulties in a mainstream (unstreamed) classroom offers notable challenges. In these contexts, teachers must meet the needs of students requiring diverse teaching and learning adjustments within the mainstream classroom to ensure that students experiencing intrinsic and extrinsic issues, difficulties, and disabilities that can impact upon learning all enjoy an inclusive learning experience. However, research suggests adequate resourcing to optimize learning may not always support this mainstream inclusion. For example, in the Canadian context, Lindsay et al.

Jerry L. Johnson Basic Reading Inventory is an individually administered informal reading test composed of a series of word lists and graded paragraphs the child reads aloud to the teacher. Comprehension questions follow the reading of each paragraph. As the child reads, the teacher notes reading miscues such as mispronunciation of words, omitted words, reversals, repetitions, substitutions, and word-by-word reading.

Basic Reading Inventory provides teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions for planning reading instruction. Respectively, chapters discuss (1) the purpose and nature of IRIS; (2) estimating reading levels from IRIs; (3) administering, recording, and scoring individual IRIS; (4) diagnostically interpreting the results of IRIs; (5) individual word recognition tests; (6) constructing informal reading inventories and word recognition tests; (7) group informal reading inventories; and (8) conclusions. It is argued that the best IRIs evaluate reading through procedures as close as possible to natural reading activities and attempt to achieve a close fit between assessment and instructional materials. Further, it is emphasized that teachers must have a sound understanding of the reading process and IRIS's flexible diagnostic uses before using them to determine a student's reading level or to answer specific instructional questions. (Johnson, 1987)

When students do not attain reading fluency, their abilities to participate in the general education curriculum and to attain academic success are severely impaired. Successful reading requires the reader to process and comprehend a text. When older students read several years below grade level, it is safe to assume that reading fluency instruction alone will not suffice, especially in this learning set-up where students learn independently without direct coaching coming from the teachers.

### **Research Methodology**

This chapter discusses the research design, the population, the sampling technique, locale, duration, instruments, data gathering procedure, and statistical treatment for the study.

### Research Design

This study used an experimental and descriptive type of research. Developmental research has been employed as the researcher crafted a toolkit to serve as intervention material. Developmental research has been defined as the systematic study of designing, developing, and evaluating instructional programs, processes, and products. A Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) was utilized to improve the student's reading ability. This study employed the grown-groupset and post-test design. The researcher developed an intervention material subjected to validation by administering pre-test and post-test. At the same time, a questionnaire was administered to determine the toolkit's degree of acceptability.

### Respondents of the Study

During the enrollment period for the school year 2022-2023, PSLIS Conducted the Brigada Pagbasa as part of the annual activity of the department Brigada Eskwela. Incoming grade 7 students were catered to during the said activity. Through the said activity, language teachers (Teachers from the Filipino and English department) conducted an oral-reading assessment for the new students to test their reading ability. Students were categorized as fast, slow, very slow, and non-readers. The school identified 178 very-slow readers and 11 non-readers through the said activity. Through the gathered data, the researcher and the school reading coordinator conceptualized a reading intervention to cater to the needs of the identified struggling readers.

With the identified struggling readers through Brigada Pagbasa, the researcher automatically chose the 11 identified non-readers and randomly chose 39 very slow readers to complete the 50 respondents of the study.

### Research Instrument

The Department of Education Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Module served as a reference for reading materials for the Brigada Pagbasa oral reading assessment. From the preliminary assessment, the researcher language teachers (Filipino and English Teachers) identified 178 very-slow readers and 11 non-readers. From the list of identified non-readers and very slow readers, the researcher chose the 11 non-readers and randomly chose the 39 very slow readers to be the study's respondents.

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique as part of the selection process, with the identified 50 respondents who underwent an orientation regarding the study that the researcher will be conducting, the orientation was immediately followed by a 30-item pre-test consisting of the different phonemic assessments at different levels. The week after, the respondents were given a schedule for their reading intervention session using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT), an intervention toolkit crafted by the researcher. The GRIT consists of 4 weeks of lessons with different phonemic awareness activities at different levels. Week 1 for the easy level, Week 2 for the average level, Week 3 for the difficult level, and Week 4 for the independent level. Week 5 was allotted for the individual assessment of the respondents using the Phil-IRI oral assessment and the conduct of the post-test with the same set of questions from the pre-test but with a re-arranged set of choices.

The Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) will serve as a guide of the students in improving reading skills through phonemic awareness skills and at the same time a monitoring and assessment tool for the reading teachers to monitor the reading progress of the learners. The toolkit consists of Phil-IRI General Screening Test Questionnaire to determine the readers' grade-level reading ability. A Phil-IRI graded passage together with its pre-test and post-test summary form is also included to have an intact compilation of student's data in reading. And to assess the readers' weekly reading progress Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory was also included with its list of sight words from pre-primer level up to Level 8.

### Research Procedure

As an approach to enhance students' reading levels, the Triangular Model includes three significant phases encompassing the whole process. These are the planning phase, implementation phase, and evaluation phase. Each phase will be comprehensively discussed in this part of the study.



During the enrollment period, Brigada Pagbasa was conducted as part of the annual activity of the Department of Education Brigada Eskwela. Incoming grade 7 students were catered to during the said activity. Through the said activity, language teachers (Teachers from the Filipino and English department) conducted an oral-reading assessment for the new students to test their reading ability. Students were categorized as fast readers, slow readers, very slow readers, and non-readers. Through the screening, the school had preliminary data on how many students will need a reading intervention as early as the beginning of the school year. It also served as the researcher's reference on who will be the respondents of this study.

The Phil-IRI is suggested to describe decoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension to assess oral reading skills. It is recommended to use the Phil-IRI Testing, which consists of the Manual of Administration; Group Screening Tests in English; Graded Passages with Comprehension Questions; and the Phil-IRI Forms.

Among the identified respondents of the study, fifty (50) struggling reader students underwent a Phil-IRI General Screening Test (GST) to test their instructional level. The General Screening Test was administered by reading the questionnaire considering that there were identified non-readers in the group. After the Phil-IRI GST, a Phil-IRI Oral reading assessment was conducted to test the student's reading ability and identify their common miscues in reading.

Next to the planning/assessment phase is the implementation phase, where the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) was introduced and implemented immediately following the set timeline. After conducting a series of tests, students were oriented on the reading intervention program they would be in within the next couple of weeks. Students had a five (5) week reading intervention program focusing on phonemic awareness. They had a 45-minute session every day for the said intervention.

The 45-minute session was divided into 10 minutes for the whole class instruction and 35 minutes for the small group instruction/independent practice. Every last day of the week, students had an assessment using Johns' Reading Inventory Form to see their progress in reading.

To measure the quality of a student's reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, the reading skills examination using the Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory was used to identify the word recognition level of the learners.

Jerry L. Johnn Basic Reading Inventory is an individually administered informal reading test comprising a series of word lists and graded paragraphs that the child reads aloud to the teacher. Comprehension questions follow the reading of each paragraph. As the child reads, the teacher notes reading miscues such as mispronunciation of words, omitted words, reversals, repetitions, substitutions, and word-by-word reading.

The five-week intervention program will consist of different levels: Week 1 – Easy Level Activities, Week-2 Average Level Activities; Week-3 Difficult Level Activities, Week 4 Independent Level Activities; and Week-5 – Post-Assessment Activities. Each activity covered the phonemic awareness activities on their respective levels.

The last phase that completed the whole process was the Evaluation phase, wherein the individual assessment of the respondents using the Phil-IRI oral assessment and the conduct of the post-test with the same set of questions from the pre-test but with a re-arranged set of choices was administered.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

For the interpretation of the gathered data from the survey questionnaire, the researcher employed the following statistical procedures:

To see the respondent's level of phonemic awareness, the frequency and percentage were employed on their pre-test and post-test results. Moreover, to test the difference between the pre-test and post-test results, paired t-test was used. In interpreting the level of achievement of the respondents in the pre-test and post-test: the test consisted of thirty (30) questions, six (6) questions for each phonemic awareness, with the legend: 6 (Independent), 3-5 (Instructional), and 0-2 Frustration as the verbal interpretation. The basis for the



legend of scores was the score distribution of the Department of Education's Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual.

A descriptive survey using the Mean and SD was utilized to test the acceptability of the developed intervention material in terms of purpose, meaningfulness, responsiveness, usefulness, and presentation. The questionnaire with an acceptable and unacceptable option represented by a smiling face and a sad face was used. This strategy was applied considering the level of understanding of the respondents.

The descriptive statistics, mean, SD, frequency and percentage, and paired t-test were employed. And to test the correlation the inferential statistics Pearson-r was employed to determine the significant relationship between the use of GRIT and the development of readers' phonemic awareness.

### Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

This chapter discusses the results gathered from the conduct of the study. The collected data are presented, analyzed, and interpreted by manipulating the research instruments used in the study.

**Table 1.**

*Pre-Test Scores of the Identified Struggling Readers in Terms of Phonemic Awareness*

Scores	Segmentation		Blending and Splitting		Rhyming and Alliteration		Comparing and Contrasting		Manipulation		Verbal Interpretation
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
6	6	12	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	Independent
3-5	24	48	33	66	29	58	23	46	29	58	Instructional
0-2	20	40	14	28	21	42	27	54	21	42	Frustrated
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	

Table 1 shows the level of awareness of the respondents on phonemes. In this part, the researcher classified the students' levels according to their scores on each phonemic awareness part. The pre-test consisted of 30 questions, with six for each phonemic awareness. Those who scored six were classified as Independent, 3-5 as Instructional, and 0-2 as Frustrated. The basis for the score distribution was the Department of Education's Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual.

The result shows that the respondents' scores from the five phonemic awareness skills mainly fell on the instructional level, with Phoneme Blending and Splitting as the highest at 66%, followed by an equal percentage of 58% for Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration and Phoneme Manipulation. Phoneme segmentation garnered 48%, which also falls under the instructional level; on the other hand, Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting gathered 46% for the scores 3-5 but garnered 54% for 0-2, which makes it the highest percentage for the frustrated level.

Students are classified into four levels based on the Phil-IRI scale: nonreader, frustration, instructional, and independent. Students with frustration reading levels tend to withdraw from reading by refusing to do so. The pupil can only read when guided at the instructional reading level, whereas at the independent reading level, the pupil can read independently with ease without the guidance of the teacher.

Based on the discussion of Anderson (2021), we can consider phonology on how it examines each language's mental grammar and organizes its sounds. It considers which phonetic distinctions within each language are significant, predictable, conceivable, and impractical. The concept of contrast serves as phonology's fundamental principle. Let us say we have two sounds, and they are distinct from one another. When two sounds in a language have different meanings due to their differences, that language is said to have two sound goods.

During the first stage of the study, students were chosen via purposive sampling wherein those students who are identified as struggling readers are the ones who will be benefited from this study. During

the conduct of “Brigada Pagbasa”, a reading assessment wherein the incoming grade 7 students were assessed by their reading ability, 50 incoming grade 7 students are identified as struggling readers with difficulty in recognizing words and even pronouncing their sounds. Those identified struggling readers mostly have difficulties in blending and splitting sounds, the ability correctly read the words using the concept of onset-riming, which means sounding out the beginning (onset) and end (riming) which will be learned by mentally splitting and blending the phonemes before uttering the sound. Comparing and contrasting phonemic skills are not also familiar to them, phonetic differences leading to different meaning of words put the readers on the highest percentage on the frustrated level with 54%.

The fact that contrast serves as phonology’s fundamental principle, the result demonstrates how confusing it is for the learners to identify the comparing and contrasting of the sounds and words on the given test.

It is also observable from the result that there are no independent scores for Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration, Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting, and Phoneme Manipulation, which are considered higher phoneme awareness skills. Phoneme segmentation was the most basic among the phoneme awareness skills gathered at 12% and phoneme blending and splitting at 6%.

According to Light and McNaughton (2019), segmenting the first sounds of words is easier since these tend to be more prominent. Initially, learners choose response options where the initial sounds are distinct and later introduce response options that require finer discriminations. Once learners develop competence segmenting initial phonemes, target final sounds in words, then target middle sounds, as required.

**Table 2.**

*Post-Test Scores of the Identified Struggling Readers in Terms of Phonemic Awareness*

Scores	Segmentation		Blending and Splitting		Rhyming and Alliteration		Comparing and Contrasting		Manipulation		Verbal Interpretation
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
6	13	26	8	16	21	42	1	2	18	36	Independent
3-5	31	62	42	84	27	54	42	84	28	56	Instructional
0-2	6	12	0	0	2	4	7	14	4	8	Frustrated
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100	

The post-test scores show that most respondents still fall under the Instructional level. However, it is observable that there is a noticeable increase on the independent level.

After the five-week session, it is observable that the respondents increased their phonemic awareness of phoneme blending and splitting and phoneme comparing and contrasting, wherein both skills gathered 84%, the highest percentage on the instructional level. For the independent level per se, phoneme rhyming, and alliteration got the highest percentage for independent level. This abrupt increase in phoneme rhyming and alliteration can be associated with the activities found in the Gateway Intervention Toolkit (GRIT), which has activities that practice phoneme rhyming and alliteration through poems and chants.

Laurine (2013) emphasized that when children engage in rhyming and alliteration activities, they become more attuned to the sounds and patterns of language. This awareness is crucial for later reading and spelling skills.

With the result of the post-test, it is visible that the learners were able to familiarize and practice themselves with the different phonemic awareness skills. through a series of activities in different levels, students can now segment, blend and split, rhyme and alliterate, compare and contrast, and manipulate phonemes at their own pace.

Through the skills that the students acquired in the five-week session students were able to escalate their reading levels. Students who were classified as frustrated readers are now classified as instructional

readers, in that sense students can now read through the guidance of their reading teachers. And some students from the instructional level were able to accelerate their level to an independent level where they can read independently with ease without the guidance of the teacher.

**Table 3***Significant Differences in Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores*

Phonemic Awareness	Pre-Test		Post-Test		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	STDev	Mean	STDev			
Segmentation	3.12	1.78	4.50	1.31	-6.46	49	.000
Blending and Splitting	3.3	1.54	4.60	.989	-5.53	49	.000
Rhyming and Alliteration	2.76	1.36	4.90	1.22	-9.92	49	.000
Comparing and Contrasting	2.60	1.34	3.94	1.10	-6.66	49	.000
Manipulation	2.90	1.31	4.60	1.40	-7.10	49	.000

Table 3 shows the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents. As observed from the table, the target phonemic awareness skills gleaned a 0.00 significance on the two-tailed test, meaning an apparent significant difference between the scores. This implies that the 5-week session with the students teaching the different phonemic awareness skills became effective.

The result also implies that using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit was an effective tool in learning the different phonemic awareness skills. The five-week session discussing the different phonemic awareness skills in different difficulty levels became an effective tool in teaching struggling readers the concept of sound and word formation. The toolkit provided comprehensive resources, strategies, and materials for reading instruction. It offered a range of tools and techniques that catered to students' different learning styles, abilities, and needs.

Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents with the use of GRIT (Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit) is rejected and found to be significant.

With the five-week sessions, students were able to enhance their reading on the following phonemic skills.

For the Phenome Segmentation, students were able to count and sound out phonemes separately to better understand the word's sound. Since phonemic awareness recognizes parts of the word/letter/sentence, it means differently moving from word to sentence segmentation

In Phoneme Blending and Splitting, after the five-week session, students were able to blend and split phonemes to create new words. Students were able to familiarize themselves with the concept of onset-riming, which means sounding out the beginning (onset) and end (riming), which is learned by mentally splitting and blending the phonemes. In the activity when teacher asks students to speak and write, they are given the pretext to learn spellings using phoneme splitting and blending.

With the Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration, the teacher involves words that represent a familiar sound. Through rhyming students were able to familiarize themselves on the commonality of ending sounds, while in alliteration students focused on learning words that start with the same sound.

On Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting learners recognized the words that change when contrasting phonemes are used to make the word sound. With the practice of using the *f* and *v* as contrasting phonemes, because these are sounded out by applying phonetic differences, the sounds replaceable changes the meaning of the word entirely. Like the word *Fan* and *Van* may be rhyming, but phonetic difference leading to different meanings of words puts them in contrasting phoneme categories.

And the last among the phonemic awareness skills, the Phoneme Manipulation. Students were introduced to the ability to move or alter individual phonemes while remembering their specific roles in constituting a word's sound. Several activities happen behind a simple act of reading. Learners cognitively delete, add, substitute, or rearrange sounds to arrive at the correct way of voicing the word. This process is required to be fluent in reading connected text.

With the aid of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit, students were able to familiarize and improve their reading skills through the guidance of their reading teachers. The phonemic awareness skills became familiar to them that's why it became easy for them now to recognize sounds, words, and even read a sentence and paragraph.

**Table 4.**

*Level of Acceptability of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in Term of Purpose to the Target User among Respondents*

	Purpose	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	helps me develop my reading skills	1.00	.000	Acceptable
2	engages me in independent and lifelong learning	1.08	.274	Acceptable
3	is aligned with the sets of stages I needed to learn how to read	1.06	.240	Acceptable
4	challenges me to be an accomplished independent reader	1.06	.240	Acceptable
5	uses appropriate words and exercises appropriate to my reading level	1.02	.141	Acceptable
	<b>overall</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

**Legend: 1.00-1.49 – Acceptable; 1.50-2.00 - Unacceptable**

Table 4 indicates the summarized responses on the perceived level of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) regarding the purpose of the target users among respondents. Purpose defines as the reason for which something is done or created for which something exists. The indicators stated the purpose of the reading intervention toolkit. This part of the survey obtained an overall mean of 1.04 with a verbal interpretation of agree.

The respondents agree that the purpose of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) was served so that the respondents could utilize it and operate it according to its objective. The result of indicator 1: which helped me develop my reading skills, got a perfect mean of 1.0, which means all of the respondents agreed that GRIT developed their reading skills.

Iemmello (2021) pointed out the importance of reading intervention, as it allows students to increase reading, writing, test-taking, and study skills at their instructional level. Each class is designed to meet students' needs within a small group setting. The pace of instruction is modified to allow for different rates of learning.

**Table 5.**

*Level of Acceptability of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in Terms of Meaningfulness to the Target User among Respondents*

	Meaningfulness	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	organizes content and topics based on my reading level	1.02	.141	Acceptable
2	provides vocabulary-building information and activities	1.06	.240	Acceptable

3	is an appropriate tool to make me competent in reading, and I, realized its importance in daily life	1.06	.240	Acceptable
4	contains tools and measures to demonstrate how I improve in my work and I make a reflection on the improvement of my outputs	1.02	.141	Acceptable
5	provides activities that help to develop my vocabulary	1.06	.240	Acceptable
<b>overall</b>		<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

**Legend: 1.00-1.49 – Acceptable; 1.50-2.00 - Unacceptable**

Table 5 indicates the summarized response on the perceived level of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in terms of meaningfulness to the target users among respondents. Meaningfulness, this word is described as the quality of having great value or significance of the intervention material. This survey obtained an overall mean of 1.04 with a verbal interpretation of Agree.

Among the five indicators, Indicator 1: Organizes content and topics based on my reading level and Indicator 4: contains tools and measures to demonstrate how I improve in my work and I make a reflection on the improvement of my outputs has the highest agreed points with a mean of 1.02.

Respondents recognized that the level of difficulty of the activities on GRIT fits their needs and reading level. With that, respondents could go through the pace of learning reading without compromising their reading level. Also, with the weekly assessments of the respondents learning development using the Jerry L. Johns reading inventory, respondents boost their confidence by affirming that they are improving through the monitored records.

Jerry L. Johnn Basic Reading Inventory is an individually administered informal reading test composed of a series of word lists and graded paragraphs the child reads aloud to the teacher. Comprehension questions follow the reading of each paragraph. As the child reads, the teacher notes reading miscues such as mispronunciation of words, omitted words, reversals, repetitions, substitutions, and word-by-word reading.

**Table 6.**

*Level of Acceptability of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in Terms of Responsiveness to the Target User among Respondents*

	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
1	has contents and tasks which are appropriate to my needs and interests	1.08	.274	Acceptable
2	is suitable to my age, development, and experience with the academic user set-up	1.14	.351	Acceptable
3	presents a pace that allows me to process my knowledge and skills in the phonemic awareness	1.00	.000	Acceptable
4	contains texts and activities that develop and enhance my 21st-century literacy skills	1.02	.141	Acceptable
5	provides opportunities to develop my reading comprehension level.	1.02	.141	Acceptable
<b>overall</b>		<b>1.05</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

**Legend: 1.00-1.49 – Acceptable; 1.50-2.00 - Unacceptable**

Table 6 indicates the summarized responses on the perceived level of the Gateway Reading

Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) regarding responsiveness to the target users among respondents. Responsiveness means the quality of reacting quickly and positively. This part of the survey obtained an overall mean of 1.05 with a verbal interpretation of Agree.

Among the indicators on this survey, indicator 3: presents a pace that allows me to process my knowledge and skills in phonemic awareness, received perfect approval from the respondents. It affirms the strategy's effectiveness in how the activities on processing students' knowledge and skills in phonemic awareness were arranged from different difficulty levels, from easy to independent.

In one of the articles of Scholastic Parent Staff (2021), Leveled Reading uses various assessment tools to determine how well your child reads and then matches kids to books challenging enough for them to progress. Books are categorized into difficulty levels, which is how a perfect match, based on ability, can be made.

Table 7 indicates the summarized responses on the perceived level of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in terms of usefulness to the target users among respondents. Usefulness defines as the quality or fact of being useful. The indicators asked the respondents how the intervention material became useful. This part of the survey obtained an overall mean of 1.09 with agree as verbal interpretation.

**Table 7.**

*Level of Acceptability of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in Terms of Usefulness to the Target User among Respondents*

	Usefulness	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	has texts and exercises that allow me to practice knowledge at my own pace	1.04	.1980	Acceptable
2	helps me master the lesson at my own pace	1.12	.328	Acceptable
3	helps me apply the knowledge and skills I learned from my experiences within my academic subjects.	1.06	.240	Acceptable
4	provides activities and exercises that help me in enhancing reading skills	1.02	.141	Acceptable
5	is adequate for me to work independently	1.20	.404	Acceptable
	<b>overall</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

**Legend: 1.00-1.49 – Acceptable; 1.50-2.00 - Unacceptable**

Indicator 4: provides activities and exercises that help me enhance my reading skills, acquired the highest rate, with 1.02 as the mean. The indicator mentioned connotes that the GRIT exercises and activities with differentiated activities for each phonemic awareness skill at different levels of difficulty helped the respondents enhance their reading skills.

Based on the study Nadera (2012) stated that instructional materials add more meaningful and worthwhile discussion of a particular subject matter or learning content because they likely serve as weapons for teachers for more interactive and effective teaching. Furthermore, she emphasized that such materials significantly improve the impact of teaching because students are motivated to listen and learn. Teaching could be appealing and welcoming with the aid of instructional tools.

Indicator 2: helps me master the lesson at my own pace, received the lowest mean in this group with 1.12. With this result, we can see that even though the toolkit provides a guided way of accomplishing the activities, students still need assistance in accomplishing the activities.

With the concept of the chosen conceptual framework in this study, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), or potential development growth range of abilities, it has conversed that an individual can perform with the guidance of an expert but cannot yet perform independently. Vygotsky believed that when a student is in the zone of proximal development for a particular task, providing the appropriate



assistance will give the student enough of a "boost" to achieve the goal.

With this connection, we can connote that even though the toolkit allows the students to be independent in accomplishing their tasks, they still need assistance from someone who can assist them in completing and understanding particular lessons and activities.

**Table 8.**

*Level of Acceptability of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in Terms of Presentation to the Target User among Respondents*

	Presentation	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1	appeals to my interests due to the appropriate layout of fonts, figures, and color combination	1.10	.303	Acceptable
2	organizes the lesson accordingly, letting me achieve a product/performance output.	1.12	.328	Acceptable
3	uses graphics and pictures that are suitable to the content and level	1.04	.1980	Acceptable
4	is attractive and interesting to me	1.16	.370	Acceptable
5	imbibes uniqueness and indigenized style of physical presentation	1.12	.328	Acceptable
<b>Legend: 1.00-1.49 – Acceptable, 1.50-2.00 - Unacceptable</b>		<b>1.12</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>

Table 8 indicates the summarized responses on the perceived level of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in terms of presentation to the target users among respondents. Presentation pertains to the appearance of something which someone has worked to create. This study describes the overall visual appeal and layout of texts and figures as the content of the developed intervention material. This part of the survey obtained an overall mean of 1.12 with a verbal interpretation of agree.

Indicator 4: This is attractive and exciting to me, got the lowest approval on this group. It has to be noted that several factors affecting the development of the material should be put into consideration. Considering the learners' interests, needs, and the like is not enough. A proper distribution and proportion of what should be considered in devising enrichment material for the learners should be proper.

In addition to this, according to Saundes and Wong 2020, choosing an appropriate font is the first step, and the focus should be a clean, clear font with adequate spacing between letters. The general recommendation is for the 12-point font; the 18-point font is considered large and might be suitable for older adults and people with specific visual disabilities. Different fonts present differently, so we should experiment to find the appropriate size for the chosen font. Materials should be printed on white paper with black text, as the high contrast makes for easier reading. Another option is to use one color and vary shade rather than using different colors. Often, different colors have similar levels of brightness and will appear almost identical when rendered.

**Table 9.**

*Correlation Between the Use of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) and The Development of Readers' Phonemic Awareness*

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

	<b>Phoneme segmentation</b>	<b>Phoneme blending and splitting</b>	<b>Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration</b>	<b>Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting.</b>	<b>Phoneme manipulation</b>
	<i>r-value</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>r-value</i>
Purpose	.214	.015	.126	.193	.225
Meaningfulness	.067	.085	.176	.181	.010
Responsiveness	.289*	.299*	.276	.224	.160
Usefulness	.178	.309*	.026	.055	-.004
Presentation	-.182	.071	-.130	.037	-.165

The table shows the correlation between the use of Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) and the development of readers' phonemic awareness. The data shows a slight correlation, definite but small relationship on following areas: phoneme manipulation purpose with a correlation value of .225, responsiveness on phoneme segmentation, phoneme blending and splitting, phoneme rhyming and alliteration, and phoneme comparing and contrasting garnered a correlating value of .289, .299, .276, and .224 respectively and it should be noted that among all the areas, usefulness on phoneme blending and splitting got the highest correction value with .309.

Other than the mentioned areas above, the rest of the areas garnered a slight correlation with an almost negligible relationship but still to be considered as correlated and nothing falls under a no correlated and no relationship status.

Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the bridging intervention toolkit and the respondent's phonemic awareness development is rejected and found to be related.

It has been emphasized by Kokotsaki and Coe (2012) that it is never simple to apply findings from educational research in new contexts. Much depends on the various school systems, its teachers' levels of knowledge and experience, its students' levels of attainment and social background, and the educational outcomes that we want to improve (knowledge and skills or understanding, attitudes, and dispositions). Significantly, the Toolkit's summaries combine evidence from a variety of different research studies into a single average for each area. This average does not necessarily represent the impact of this approach in the classroom. Some approaches that are less effective on average may be effective in a new setting or if developed differently. Similarly, an approach that is more effective on average may not be as effective in a new context. However, we believe that evidence of average impact elsewhere will be useful to schools in making a good 'bet' on what might be valuable, or in seeming cautious when trying out something that has not worked so well in the past.

With the presented results of the study, it only implies that one concrete move to address a problem will become significant if it was planned and strategized properly. This study is a fruit of a long-term dream of the researcher in addressing the needs of the identified struggling readers in the secondary level. A challenging yet fulfilling task.

The use of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) as a bridging intervention for the identified struggling readers at the secondary level is a good start in assisting the students for them to become effective readers. With the compiled assessment tool, monitoring tool, and reading activities at different levels reading teachers together with the struggling students will be having a concrete intervention tool that will enhance the reading skills of the students at the same time monitor their progress.

### Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter synthesizes the result of the study. It starts with a brief summary of the findings deducted from the data gathered, conclusions derived from the findings, and recommendations based on the findings and conclusions.

## Summary of Findings

The study focused on determining the effectiveness of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) as a bridging intervention for the identified struggling readers at the secondary level.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: What are the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents on Phonemic Awareness before and after the utilization of GRIT in terms of: Phoneme segmentation, Phoneme blending and splitting, Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration, Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting, and Phoneme manipulation?; Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores on phonemic awareness?; What is the assessment of the users as perceived in using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) in terms of: Purpose, Meaningfulness, Responsiveness, Usefulness, and Presentation?; and Is there a significant relationship between the use of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) and the development of readers' phonemic awareness in terms of: Phoneme segmentation, Phoneme blending and splitting, Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration, Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting, and Phoneme manipulation?

This study used the developed bridging intervention toolkit for the identified 50 struggling readers at the secondary level. An initial evaluation was done through the DepEd's activity Brigada Pagbasa, and from the data the 50 struggling students were selected. An orientation was done to discuss the intervention program immediately followed by a pre-test to assess the students reading level and capability.

Respondents undergone a five-week session to acquire the different phonemic awareness skills in different difficulty levels followed by a weekly assessment using Jerry L. John's Basic Reading Inventory. On the fifth week, post-test and individual oral reading evaluation was done to see the respondent's progress.

Based on the result of the pre-test and post-test scores, it shows that there is a significant difference. Therefore, hypothesis number 1 was rejected.

The respondents also agreed that the bridging intervention using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) was effective for the results on the survey showed that the Purpose, Meaningfulness, Responsiveness, Usefulness, and Presentation of the toolkit really served its purpose.

The second hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the bridging intervention toolkit and the respondent's phonemic awareness development was also rejected and found out that there is a significant relationship among them.

## Findings of the Study

The following were the findings of the study:

1. The majority of the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents fall under the instructional level. On the pre-test, many still got scores that fall on the frustrated level, but on the post-test results, there is an abrupt increase in the scores on the independent level.
2. The results of the pre-test and post-test show a significant difference after the five-week bridging intervention program.
3. Respondents agreed that the bridging intervention using the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) was purposeful, meaningful, responsive, and useful.
4. There is a significant relationship between the use of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) and the development of readers' phonemic awareness in terms of: Phoneme segmentation, Phoneme blending and splitting, Phoneme Rhyming and Alliteration, Phoneme Comparing and Contrasting, and Phoneme manipulation

## Conclusion

The findings gathered in the study led to the formulation of the following conclusions:

1. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents with the use of GRIT (Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit) is rejected and found to be significant.
2. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between the bridging intervention toolkit and the respondent's phonemic awareness development is rejected and found to be significantly related.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the following recommendations are hereby formulated:

1. Since the study proved that there is still a possibility that we can help struggling readers for them to be good readers by starting to teach phonemic awareness, early identification of those struggling students is encouraged for early intervention.
2. Since the study was conducted for five-week time and progress in reading has been observed to the students, it is therefore recommended that a longer period may be used in implementing the program to prepare the learners for the next stage of reading skills.
3. Since the use of the Gateway Reading Intervention Toolkit (GRIT) are significantly effective in inculcating the students' phonemic awareness, school reading coordinators and reading teachers are encouraged to maximize the use of the material as their bridging intervention toolkit.
4. School reading coordinators and reading teachers are encouraged to formulate the same toolkit that will cater to the needs of the learners for them to be effective and efficient readers.

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