

Summer Reading Tutorial in Zambales. Did it work?

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Abstract

This study assessed the improvement in reading skills of students after the implementation of Reading tutorial program. It also assessed the implemented reading program. The participants belong to different grade levels. These participants were categorized as non-reader and slow readers. Participatory action research design using mixed methods was employed in the study. Qualitative approaches were used to describe the impacts of Reading tutorial program conducted at Bani Elementary school. Quantitative approaches were used to determine if there is significant difference between the pre -test and post-test scores of students. Based on the need assessment, reading materials were prepared and were validated by experts. Assessment tools were also prepared to gauge the progress of students. There was a significant difference between the pre-test and post test scores of students. When male and female readers are compared, their performances do not significantly differ, thus the program did not result to gender gap in reading skills of male and female students. The students learned about the letter sounds which is very crucial in acquiring reading skills. In addition, non-readers became slow readers, and some slow readers became fast readers. The program resulted to easier coordination, positive response to children's needs, established partnership with other stakeholders and continuity of the program. By using appropriate learning materials, the program positively responded to the children's needs. Involving parents and teachers resulted to established partnership with other stakeholders. Moreover, guidance and assessment of the program resulted to its continuity. With the findings of this research, we recommend that reading tutorials be used to improve reading skills of students. Proper monitoring of the implementation is needed to make necessary adjustments while the program is on-going. In addition, we also recommend to have parents' participation in the design and implementation of this program. Moreover, continuity of the program should be established. Through this, the program can continuously improve reading skills of students.

Keywords: Reading Tutorial; Program; Summer Reading

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific,, and cultural organization (UNESCO), literacy transitions are linked to growth in education. Similarly, improved literacy rates in the country can be attributed to the formalization and expansion of the educational system and its success in attaining its fundamental goal of developing students' literacy skills. However, there are still around 900 million across the world who cannot read and write. Illiteracy was exacerbated by the tremendous increase in the number of pupils

who attend formal schooling. Reading skill is important to develop in students because it is a basic tool for learning other subject areas. Reading skills is proportional to academic success of students (Otaiba and Fuchs, 2002). In the Philippines, developing among its people literacy skills or the ability to read and write is a top priority. The attainment of this goal is evidenced by the results of the surveys in 2015, revealing youth literacy rate of 98.2 % , up from 98.1 % in 2013 and the adult literacy level of 96.6% which is higher than 96.4 % in 2013. These data indicate that significant gains in literacy have been achieved brought about by various factors that contribute to the improvement of literacy status in the country (Cristobal, 2015). Various educational institutions in the country recognize their significant roles in building a strong nation through literacy. As a response to the United Nations Millennium Development goals and the Education for all (EFA 2015), the Philippines created the EFA 2015 National Action plan. “Functionally literate Filipinos: An Education Nation, which aims to improve literacy levels, produce remarkable learning outcomes and strengthen education institutions. The Department of Education also implemented Every child a reader program or ECARP through DepEd Memorandum no. 402, series of 2004 and Administrative Order no. 324. This program provides planned training in reading and writing to make the public elementary pupils, become young readers and writers (Recamara, 2018). However, despite the programs implemented, there are still non-readers among Filipino learners. In Region 1, the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) results show that out of 346, 625 pupils tested, 31, 695 or 9.14 percent were found to be non-readers; 100, 091 or 28.87 % were on frustration level; 160, 840 or 46.40 percent were on instructional level and 53 999 or 15.58 percent were on independent level (Fernandez, 2015). Remedial reading programs are also conducted across the Philippines to fill the gap between children reading within the grade level and those who are reading below their grade level.

Reading is one of the essential skills that should be learned during the developmental years of a child. It is a means of language acquisition, communication and of sharing information and ideas. Learning is a social process where communication plays an important role, thus reading should be developed among the learners. Reading ability equips the students to learn on their own. Reading is also defined as a complex interaction between the text and the reader. For the students to develop their reading skills, the reading process should be a continuous practice. (Dt, 2011). Reading abilities is associated with academic excellence. Students having reading abilities can succeed in academics, while non-readers are considered to have learning difficulties (Recamara, 2018; Titus, 2018). Reading is also defined as a habit where students can learn, gain knowledge and develop new skills (Olivar, 2014). In learning how to read, one should understand how written language and oral language correspond. One should also understand the alphabetic principle, he or she should recognize that spoken words consists of sequence of sounds. This understanding is known as phonemic awareness. Reading comprehension is defined as the ability to understand what we read. Reading comprehension skills

lead to proficient reading, effective learning and problem-solving and can even lead to success in life. The goal of reading is reading comprehension, to retrieve the meaning from any printed page (Dt, 2011). Reading is very crucial in the learning process, the better a child can read, it will be easier for them to learn what they need to in school (Titus, 2018). Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, teacher education and metacognition were identified as important components in improving reading scores (NRP, 2000). Phonemic awareness is defined as the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. This plays a vital role in learning to read. This technique was proven to be beneficial to learners who are beginning readers or who are disabled. This was proven to improve children's word reading and reading comprehension (Adler, 2001). Phonics instruction on the other hand helps learners know about the relationship between letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. In phonics instruction, children can identify that consonant letter represents a sound. Then students learn about vowels and various sounds associated with vowel. It was also found that systematic and explicit phonics instruction results to increased word recognition, spelling and reading comprehension. Phonics instruction is also most beneficial which introduced at an early age (Adler, 2001). Fluency refers to the ability to correctly read a text at a shorter period of time. It helps the students to understand what they read. In order to improve fluency, students should practice repeated oral reading. Vocabulary is defined as the words that we must know to communicate effectively. It can be learned through daily communication, listening to adults, and reading on their own. This can be learned through direct instruction. Reading comprehension is defined as the thinking process used to give meaning to what is read. In order to develop comprehension skills of students, modeling, thinking aloud process, inferring, summarizing, making connections, questioning and predicting are the strategies which should be implemented as early as kindergarten (Block & Israel, 2005). Preparation of teachers or teacher education is also a contributing factor to effective teaching of reading comprehension. Teacher education should provide extensive instruction on how to teach comprehension strategies in classroom (NRP, 2000). Metacognitive is defined as an awareness of strategies for planning, monitoring and controlling one's own learning (Block, Gambrell & Pressley, 2002). To develop metacognitive, teachers should teach students to be thoughtful and aware of their own thinking (Block & Israel, 2005).

Despite the programs of the Department of Education, there is a widespread problem on difficulties in reading among elementary school children. (Recamara, 2018 and Balinas et.al, 2017). The 2005 National assessment of educational progress (NAEP) reading report card shows that 69% of the 4th graders in the Philippines do not read proficiently and 35% could not even read at a basic level. PHIL IRI was used by the Department of Education as an assessment tool which evaluates the reading proficiency of the elementary school pupils on various levels. In Dapitan City division, teachers claimed that this instrument is supposed to

assess the learners' reading abilities and interventions should follow after knowing the results of assessments. However, there were no follow up intervention introduced by the administrators. The teachers were left behind in designing an appropriate classroom intervention (Recamara, 2018). Other teachers only use the tool for documentation of the results of the diagnostic tests and no follow up or intervention was conducted to address the existing problems. The problem on the reading proficiency of the pupils cannot be taken for granted because, reading together with writing serves as the major foundational skill for all school based education. Remedial reading strategy is an evidenced -based strategy used to improve reading fluency and comprehension of students. Crowe (2005) found out the remedial reading strategy is effective because feedback was given to the students during the oral reading. This feedback help students improve their word accuracy, reading comprehension and fluency. It was also observed that participants who completed the remedial reading sessions have significant gains over those who have not completed the program. Aside from remedial reading strategy, other studies reported school reform, data driven decisions and engagement of diverse literacy strategies, reading aloud, adult-child reading pairs involving parents, paraphrasing as means of improving the reading literacy and comprehension of students (Zucker, Justice & Piasta, 2009; Cadieux, & Boudreault, 2005)

This study aims to assess the improvement in reading skills of students after the implementation of Reading tutorial program. It also aims to assess the implemented reading program. It specifically aims to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the Reading skill pre-test and post-test scores of students?
2. Is there a significant different between the post test scores of male and female students?
3. How do the reading skills of the students improve after the implementation of the program?
4. How does the partner agency describe the impact of the reading program?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

Participatory action research design using mixed methods was employed in the study. Qualitative approaches were used to describe the impacts of Reading tutorial program conducted at Bani Elementary school. Quantitative approaches were used to determine if there is significant difference between the pre -test and post-test scores of students.

Data gathering procedures and analyses

We present this section using plan, act, observe and reflect cycle format, a four-step model for

implementing change.

Plan.

Prior to the implementation of the reading tutorial program, needs assessment was conducted. The weaknesses of students in terms of developing reading skills were identified. Based on the need assessment, reading materials were prepared and were validated by experts. Assessment tools were also prepared to gauge the progress of students. Student tutors were also trained before the implementation of the program. English teachers facilitated the trainings of the tutors.

Act

The participants of the Reading program were identified by the English teachers at different grade levels. Among the thirty-eight participants, twenty-four are males and fourteen are females. The participants belong to different grade levels. These participants were categorized as non-reader and slow readers. Reading modules were prepared based on the initial assessment of students' reading skills. The reading modules were designed to be appealing to the students by using colorful illustrations. Prior to the implementation of the reading program, Student-tutors were trained by English teachers. They were trained on how to teach reading to children belonging to Grade 1 to Grade 3. A seminar on child development was also conducted, to orient the student-tutors about child development and the things that they have to consider when teaching children of different capacities and skills. The summer reading tutorial was conducted for 14 days. The tutors visited the tutees at Bani Elementary school. The tutees were grouped and assigned to their tutors. The developed modules were used by the tutees during the 14 day Summer Reading tutorial.

Observe

During the implementation of the Reading tutorial program, improvements of the students were observed. To describe the impact of the reading tutorial to the participants, focus group discussions with the student tutors were done. The results of the focus group discussions were transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. To describe significant change on the skill reading of students, pre-test scores and post-test scores of the participants were subjected to Mann Whitney U-test. To identify if there were significant differences on the reading skills of male and female students, Wilcoxon-Signed Rank test was applied. To further describe the improvement of the reading program implemented by the partner agency, focal persons of the project were also interviewed.

Reflect

The results of the analysis determined the next action. If there are positive outcomes in terms of the development of students' reading skills, the reading tutorial program can be implemented in other partner schools of the college. Otherwise, findings will dictate how to further improve the reading tutorial program.

2.2. Instrument

Word recognition was used to assess the students' reading ability. The assessment tool was developed by English teachers and was subjected to face and content validation. For the scoring of the students reading skill, one word identified by the students using the instrument is equivalent to 1 point. There were 40 words included in the assessment tool used. For the qualitative part, semi-structured interview guide was prepared.

3. Results and Discussion

The following table shows the pre-test and post-test scores of students who participated in the Reading tutorial program.

Table 1. Pre-test and post test scores of students

Respondent no.	Sex	Pre-test	Post-test
1	Female	3	12
2	Female	4	10
3	Female	19	27
4	Male	5	16
5	Male	2	10
6	Male	32	40
7	Male	17	26
8	Female	18	30
9	Male	9	18
10	Female	28	36
11	Male	16	24
12	Female	12	25
13	Female	28	38
14	Male	16	31

15	Male	7	17
16	Male	8	14
17	Male	3	10
18	Male	0	3
19	Male	10	22
20	Male	2	5
21	Male	34	40
22	Male	6	13
23	Male	15	35
24	Male	25	36
25	Male	20	35
26	Male	20	32
27	Female	26	39
28	Female	30	38
29	Female	30	38
30	Male	34	40
31	Male	8	17
32	Male	36	40
33	Female	16	26
34	Female	8	12
35	Female	12	19
36	Male	24	30
37	Male	23	28
38	Female	17	24

Average	16.39	25.16
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The average post test scores of students is equivalent to 25.16, and the average pre-test of students is equivalent to 16.61. There was an increase in the average scores of students after the implementation of the Reading tutorial program.

Table 2: Related Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank test between pre and post test results of students

		N	Rank Average	Sum of ranks	z	p	Decision
Post-test – Pre- test	Negative rank	0	0	0	-5.381	0.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
	Positive rank	37	19.50	741.00			
	Equal	1					

The results of the Related Samples Wilcoxon Signed Rank test between Reading assessment pre-test and post-test of students show that there is a significant difference in the reading performance of students ($Z = -5.309$, $p=0.000<0.05$). Thus, the reading skills of students have improved after the implementation of the Reading tutorial program. As described in Table 2, there were three students who observed to have very high improvement, 2 students had high improvement. Fourteen and thirteen students have moderate improvement and slight improvement respectively. However, there were still six students who have not shown any improvement after the summer Reading tutorial program.

Table 3. Mann Whitney U test of pre-test and post test scores of female and male students.

	Group	N	Rank Average	Sum of ranks	z	p	Decision
Pre-test	Male	24	18.38	441	-0.818	0.427	Retain null hypothesis
	Female	14	21.43	300			
Post-test	Male	24	18.83	452	-0.485	0.643	Retain null hypothesis
	Female	14	20.64	289			

Prior to the implementation, the average scores of male and female students do not differ significantly. After the implementation of the program, the average score female students are higher, equivalent to 20.64. The

significance level is set at 0.05. Independent samples Mann Whitney U-test results of post test scores show that there is no significant difference between the post test scores of male and female students $p < 0.05$ ($z = -0.485$, $p = 0.643 > 0.05$). Therefore, the implemented program did not cause a gender gap on the improvement of the students' reading skills.

To qualitatively describe how the Summer reading tutorial helped the students, focus group discussions were conducted. This focus group discussions were participated by the student-tutors.

A tutor shared that before the reading program, there were students who are able to identify the letter however, they are not familiar with the letter sounds. Letter sounds is very crucial in teaching reading to a child. Not being familiar with letter sounds causes difficulty in reading. One tutor shared:

“Ang napansin ko po sa kanila they are familiar sa mga letters pero they are not familiar with the letter sounds. Alam nila letter B yun pero hindi nila alam mga letter sounds kaya nahihirapan silang bigkasin yun, di nila kayang bigkasin kung ano yung sound ng letter nay un.” *^ (What I observe is that they are familiar with the letters, but not with the letter sounds. They can identify for example, the letter B, but they do not know the letter sounds, that is why they are having difficulty pronouncing the letter.)*

The tutors observed improvement in the reading skills of the students, one tutor narrated:

“Yong mga non-reader po naging slow reader po sila, yung slow reader naman po naging fast reader po sila. Masasabi ko po na may malaking improvement or impact yung tutorial naming.” *(The non-reader became slow reader, slow reader became fast reader. I can say that there was a big improvement and the tutorial program has great impact.)*

Another tutor added:

“After po nung ilang weeks na pagututro naming, from wala po silang alam, narecognize na po nila yung alphabet pati po yung sounds.” *(After few weeks of teaching them, from non-reader to being able to recognize the alphabet and sound)*

The following is another remark on the reading skill improvement of a child:

“When it comes to reading po yung non reader po napupunta sa slow readers, yung fast reader naman naming mas nag improve pa po sya, pag pinapabasa pinapatranslate po naming sa Tagalog para malaman po naming kung naiintindihan po talaga nila.” *(When it comes to reading, non reader became slow reader, the fast reader also improved, when asked to read, we also ask them to translate the sentence in Tagalog, so that we will be able to know if they understand the statement)*

After the reading tutorial program, students were able to identify the letters and identify its corresponding sound. Identifying sound and being able to pronounce the sound is very important in teaching reading. Students also

improved their reading skills, from non reader to slow readers and others from slow readers to fast readers with comprehension.

Interviews with the partner agency focal persons were also conducted to further identify the improvement of the Reading program at Bani Elementary School. The following themes emerged: easier coordination with partner institution, Positive response to children's needs, established partnership with other stakeholders, and continuity of the program. These were the improvements in the Summer reading tutorial of AES in partnership with PRMSU.

Easier Coordination with Partner institution

The agency has previous partnership with a Manila based private institution before its partnership with President Ramon Magsaysay State University. They encountered problems with coordination with the module developers during that time. With the partnership with President Ramon Magsaysay State University, it was easier for them to coordinate. Coordination is crucial so that the modules can be adjusted when need arises. There were instances that the students were not able to adapt with the reading modules used and has to be adjusted immediately. A focal person shared:

"Napa ka accessible sa amin kasi nasa IBA lang ang partner, madali yung coordination namin sa PRMSU, sila din talaga naghandle ng module development, inangkop sa mismong module na ginagamit sa school. Para yung teacher coordinator din po kaya nyang icontinue yung program even after the summer reading, yung modules, yun na din po ginagamit nila sa reading sessions, may continuity po yung program, namomonitor po kung angkop yung modules. (The partner institution is very accessible, there was easier coordination, PRMSU handled the module development and aligned it with what public schools are using. So that the teacher coordinator, can continue with the program using the existing modules, the appropriateness of the module can also be monitored.)"

Positive response to children's needs

With the initial program that the agency had, there were problems with the appropriateness of the module. The modules developed by a private institution did not fit with what public school students need. The agency requested to align the modules with what the public schools are using. A focal person shared:

"Ang nirequest naming ay idesign ang module kung paano magturo ang public school teachers" ^ (We requested to align the module with how the public school teachers are teaching reading).

In the new program aside from teaching the tutors how to teach reading, child development topics were also shared to them prior to the implementation of the tutorial program. This increased the awareness of the tutees about child development. This integration of child development in the training of tutors has resulted to positive impact. The tutors became open minded in handling the students. Once they encounter problem with

their tutees, they found ways on how to help the child. They came up with their own strategies on how to motivate their tutees. A focal person shared:

“Isinama sa module yung child development para idiscuss sa students para aware din sila. Naging maganda yung effect po nun, kasi yung mga tutors naging open minded sila sa handling sa mga bata even sila nag isip ng paraan, minsan yung mga bata naassign sa kanila may problema , nakakapag isip sila ng ibang way para I run yung module, nag iimprove yung bata, slow nga lang po pero nag iimprove” *We included child development. Topics on this were discussed to the tutees so that they will also become aware. The good thing about it is that the tutors became open minded in handling the tutees, they thought of ways on how to help a struggling child , the child improves although it is at a slower pacing).*

The program provided positive response to the child’s needs by giving them appropriate modules and by training the tutors about child development so that they can respond to what their tutees need.

Established partnership with other stakeholders

The summer reading tutorial program did not only improve the reading skills of students but also resulted to an established partnership with parents. There were students who have not shown any improvement during the reading program prior to partnership with PRMSU. The implementers decided to look into the dimension of parents’ responsibility in the learning of the child. Through parents’ orientation, the implementers gained knowledge about the background of students. There were also students who were identified to be children with special needs. The parents were also oriented about these scenario. At the end of the implementation of the program, two students were properly assessed and were transferred to SPED program. The parents of these children cooperated and accepted the conditions of their children. This claim is supported by the following statement:

“May mga parents during that time tinanggap na nila, may mga parents na in denial, nung dinidiscuss na ni Mam ano ang SPED mas naging observant ang parents, during that time 1 o 2 bata from summer reading tutorial, na inaccept ang condition ng mga bata at ilipat sa SPED. Yung 2 bata na inilipat 2 o 3 beses na naming sila naging recipient ng tutorial pero hindi din talaga nag iimprove ang status nila. Wala silang capacity to assess the students, pero isa lang ang pwede mag assess sa buong Masinloc. Maganda na may orientation sa parents and teachers especially kung may mga bata na hindi pumapasa pasa. Nagbigay ng opportunity ma assess yung bata, yung kagandahan nito ay meron silang idea ano ba talaga yung primary na makikita sa bata na may problem. *(There are parents who accepted their children’s condition, initially they were in denial, but when Ma’am started to discuss things related to SPED, the parents became observant, 2 children from the summer reading tutorial were transferred to SPED program, they became recipient of 2 o 3 x of the tutorial program but there seems to be no improvement in their status. The school has no capacity to assess a child with special*

needs, only one from Masinloc can assess. It is good that there was parents' and teachers' orientation, especially for the students who cannot pass. This orientation gives opportunity to properly assess the child, they are oriented about the signs that a child might have special needs)

Continuity of the program

The implementation of the Summer reading tutorial also led to continuity of the program. The partner school created program committees for improving the reading skills of students. They created committees on chronological awareness, explicit phonics, vocabulary and comprehension. In the created program, they ensured that parents will participate in the design of the program. Remedial instructions, making use of the developed module, were continuously conducted at 4pm to 5pm after the regular class hours of the students. Parents were asked permission for the implementation of the program and they promised to give their support to the school. The remedial instructions involve letter and sound discrimination, group reading, individual reading using Marungko approach, interactive videos and modular story reading with comprehension, 1 paragraph a week.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Summer reading tutorial conducted by President Ramon Magsaysay State University was proven to be effective in enhancing the reading skills of students. There was a significant difference between the pre-test and post test scores of students. When male and female readers are compared, their performances do not significantly differ, thus the program did not result to gender gap in reading skills of male and female students. The students learned about the letter sounds which is very crucial in acquiring reading skills. In addition, non-readers became slow readers, and some slow readers became fast readers. The program resulted to easier coordination, positive response to children's needs, established partnership with other stakeholders and continuity of the program. There was easier coordination with the module developers because distance is no longer a hindrance for coordination. By using appropriate learning materials, the program positively responded to the children's needs. Involving parents and teachers resulted to established partnership with other stakeholders. Moreover, guidance and assessment of the program resulted to its continuity. With the findings of this research, we recommend that reading tutorials be used to improve reading skills of students. Proper monitoring of the implementation is needed to make necessary adjustments while the program is on-going. In addition, we also recommend to have parents' participation in the design and implementation of this program. Moreover, continuity of the program should be established. Through this, the program can continuously improve reading skills of students.

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