
EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES IN HANDLING NON-READERS

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the effective teaching practices in handling non-readers of Sirawan National High School, Toril, Davao City. This seeks to answer the following objectives: describe the adjustments, effective strategies, and scaffolds utilized by teachers in handling nonreaders; analyze the teaching reading efficiency of nonreaders using effective teaching reading strategies; and find relationship of non-readers' reading efficiency and reading teachers' reading adjustments, strategies and scaffolds. Five public school teachers were selected as primary subjects, who were interviewed in handling nonreaders in the areas of adjustments, strategies, and reading scaffolds while non-readers of grades 9 and 10 participated in the study. Handling nonreaders in order to read and understand better in the lesson is an arduous act, yet; once done with effectiveness and passion, it yielded a great amount of learning success. Effective teaching practices in handling nonreaders comprised the use of teachers' adjustments, strategies, and scaffolds to establish reading mastery, exposing them to letter sounds, short stories, and the use of follow-up.

Keywords: Adjustments, strategies, scaffolds, non-readers, efficiency, interviews

1. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, upgrading its educational system, through the K to 12, is geared toward the improvement of quality education. Former and late President Benigno Aquino III sets out the ten-point Educational Agenda and one of these points is making every child a reader in Grade 1. There are many cases that a Grade 1 learner is promoted to Grade 2 without meeting this expectation. It is necessary to know the adjustments and effective strategies of a Grade 2 teacher in teaching reading to nonreaders.

The ultimate challenge of a teacher is not letting the child know that he or she is left behind. How the teacher differentiates and modifies his or her instruction, considering that the class is composed of readers and nonreaders, establishes the difference in teaching and learning. No research has been conducted on the adjustments of Grade 2 teacher toward nonreaders. Not much research has been conducted on the effective strategies of a Grade 2 teacher in teaching nonreaders effectively, thus, this study is conducted.

Adjustment means the act or process of changing or adjusting something or the cognitive flexibility of the teacher to respond to non-readers. Strategies are high level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of uncertainty or simply the skill of making or carrying out plans to achieve a goal. Scaffolds refer to the temporary support that the teacher uses to help the learners reach higher levels of comprehension and skill acquisition that they would not be able to achieve without assistance. Scaffolding refers to a variety of instructional techniques, which are used to move learners progressively toward better understanding and, ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. This study endeavors to help novice reading teachers adjust their strategies in teaching nonreaders. Likewise, this study is also beneficial to them in strategic management, when they employ effective learning in the classroom. Thus, this study provides new perspectives in seeing teachers' needs in teaching nonreaders more effectively.

Reading failure is a serious national problem and cannot simply be attributed to poverty, immigration, or the learning of English as a second language by the Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc. (2019). From Brozo as cited by Conde (2020), the problems of our schools, the growth of poverty, and the loss of family values show some association with poor reading. To Goldenberg, a growing body of evidence suggests that reading problems are preventable for the vast majority of learners who encounter difficulty in learning to read, if these learners receive extra support in the form of an early intervention program (Goldenberg, 2020).

Based on Zunguze (2020) factors such as levels of education of parents, child entry at school, reading habit at home, family socio-economic status, preschool experience, similarity between the language of initial instruction, and the language spoken at home are encountered as factors that may contribute to low level readings. The latter seems a contradiction of Chapman's statement that, first of all, there is no single cause of reading problems. The ability that correlates most highly with literacy achievement is language development, not phonemic awareness (Chapman, 2020). To Scalon and Velluntino (2019) what a child knows about written language, not phonemic awareness, when he or she enters school is the best predictor of success in learning to read. There are factors that influence acquisitions of reading ability, according to Alcantara, Villamin, and Cabanilla (2019) and these majors factors affect reading performance such as interest, language facility, auditory discrimination, intelligence, motivation, visual

discrimination, motor-ocular, home background teaching strategies and attitudes (parents, siblings, teachers, peers).

The readiness of a child to learn how to read is important. According to *Early Reading: Igniting Education for All*, no two children develop their reading skills at exactly the same rate, readers progress through stages in their reading development, some simultaneously, which Gove and Cyelich support (2021). Alcantara, Villamin, and Cabanilla (2019) stated that there are various means in detecting a sign of the child's non readiness such as readiness test, physical examinations, and observation. Develop readiness of a child to read such as providing many and wide experiences, providing experiences with materials and techniques of reading, develop ability to recognize likeness and differences in words, word forms or other forms; training children to be attentive when in group, developing work habits.

This study is supported by Lev Vygotsky's Social Development theory, which provides the importance of scaffolding lessons in reading by teachers who are considered as the more knowledgeable others' or MKOs that affect their learners' zone of proximal development in reading. Reading teacher also use other sources like worksheets, online materials, and televisions ads as other MKOs to scaffold learners' learning. Scaffolding is justified as a form of prompting the learners to read based on their existing schema. Karl Jung's Schema Theory provides an archetypal convergence of Vygotsky's theory that propels a connection of meaningful learning experiences, where learners' construct their own meanings, in a more constructivist approach of teaching comprehension (for example, an inference training program), while another may need explicit teaching of particular phonics.

Therefore, teachers need to seek out interventions relevant to their particular context and learners' individual needs (Bond, (2019). The teacher must know the nature of reading growth, the types of reading difficulties that might impede growth, and the characteristics of children that might predispose them to reading difficulties. Moreover, children grouped according to reading ability would not be similar in many other characteristic (Goldenberg, 2020).

Non-readers as defined by Carmine, Silbert and Kameenui (2019) are learners who are virtually unable to decode, who are able to identify 50-100 words by sight; however, they have no generalizable strategy for decoding words. Martin and Pappas (2020) believe that non-readers lack the skills of a fluent reader. To Torgesen, to be a fluent reader, children must be able to: (1) recognize most of the words in a passage by sight (2) correctly pronounce words 5 -10 times before they become sight words; and (3) make accurate first guesses when they encounter new words, or growth of their sight word vocabulary is delayed—they never become fluent readers (Torgesen, 2021).

Since there is no best way to teach beginning reading, professionals who are closest to children must be the ones to make the decisions about what reading methods to use and they must have the flexibility to modify those methods when they determine that particular children are not learning. The federal and state governing bodies, in the US, never prescribes particular methods, but rather support balanced approaches to reading instruction at the state level. International Reading Association Policy makers provide funds for professional development and books, so that children can read for enjoyment (International Reading Association, 2019). With the factors that affect the child to be a non-reader, teachers and parents should work collaboratively.

To improve reading instruction teachers need to be better educated in the area of reading. Improvement in instruction in the form of materials does not replace teacher knowledge in helping struggling readers become independent readers (International Reading Association, 2019). Clay notes that children may develop phonemic awareness in reading in other learning activities such as playing with rhyme and exploring beginning writing. An essential component of recording one's speech in print is to work out what is heard can be recorded by letters (Clay, 2019).

Reading scaffolding, as defined by Benjamin, is a learning support system of some kind that brings learners far enough along that they can complete the rest of the task themselves (Benjamin, 2020). In dealing with non-readers, oral strategies are commonly used, provide any essential information aloud or taped as the learner follows the print (Martin, & Pappas, 2020). To Cabalquinto (n.d.) sounds of letters are taught instead of names of the letters of the alphabet.

Benjamin denotes that, scaffolding for reading instruction is not giving learners the answer, doing the work for them, reading aloud for them, giving hints or diluting the information and learning it for them (Benjamin, 2020). Kinberg states that scaffolds provide learners with support in their learning. He also adds that, these supports are designed to be temporary and they serve the purpose of assisting the learners until they can complete the task independently. Scaffolds can take many forms; some of these are hand-outs, wall charts, graphic organizers, verbal reminders (Kinberg, 2020).

Boom, in Alumbro cites that good reading does not happen overnight. It can only result from a carefully planned program of instruction with evaluation as its indispensable component (Alumbro, 2019).

The study determined the effective teaching practices in handling nonreaders. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the adjustments, effective strategies, and scaffolds utilized by teachers in handling non-readers?
2. What is the reading efficiency of non-readers using effective teaching reading strategies?
3. What is the significant correlation of non-readers' reading efficiency and reading teachers' reading adjustments, strategies and scaffolds.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized mixed methods of research. Study of five public school teachers were selected as primary subjects, as being a reading teacher in Grade 2 for more than 5 years, who were interviewed in their lived experiences in handling nonreaders in the areas of adjustments, strategies, and reading scaffolds. Actual teaching observation of each of them was conducted according to their most convenient time in order to examine the nuances of meaning of the responses they had given from the interview.

In ascertaining the non-readers' academic performance, the learners' grades in English subject was analyzed using T-Test within subject design. These teachers were selected by the principal after a letter of permission was granted. Data generated from each of them were coded in letters as Teacher A, B, C, D, and E to ensure confidentiality of the results.

The data analysis underwent many phases – the questionnaire was administered and the data was tabulated with the mean determined through statistical treatment; the researcher will use t-test to determine the mean; Pearson r to determine the significant correlation. A Likert scale was constructed by the researcher to employ in the analysis and interpretation of the mean.

3. RESULTS

Adjustments, effective strategies, and scaffolds utilized by teachers in handling non-readers

The most dominant adjustments in the teaching of reading are the use of technology and separation of non-readers to those who are fluent readers. The separation of fluent readers to those who are not is supported by Briggs in Abadiano and Turner (n.d), when-fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they focus on what the text means. They recognize words and comprehend at the same time. Non-readers focus their attention on figuring out the words leaving them little attention for understanding the text.

Another adjustment that is featured by the teacher informants are the exposure to reading materials, basic vowel sounds, and collaboration with peer. The teaching techniques like short stories and remedial classes for learners enhance their comprehension skills by using the WH-questions. Additional strategies that they use are individualized instruction in reading and learners 'constant follow-up. Two out of five teachers possess more effective strategies. Teachers have used varied strategies, which are effective followed by some teacher who also used expected number of strategies.

The most dominant scaffold in the teaching of reading is using flash cards and drill cards. Another scaffolds featured by the teacher informants are the use of CDs for Audio- Visual learning, colorful pictures, big books, diorama, textbooks, and vocabulary words. UNESCO-UNICEF CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAM reveals that research shows 80% of learning occurs through the sense of sight and hearing and, therefore, planned use of audio-visual aids which are essentially materials of sight and sound, help to improve learning and teaching.

Reading efficiency of non-readers using effective teaching reading strategies

The reading efficiency of learners follows the three effective reading techniques. The most extensive reading technique is reading strategies which has a mean of 4.07, followed by the use of scaffolds which has a mean of 3.60. Reading teachers uses adjustment techniques in teaching non-readers which has a mean of 3.57.

Significant correlation of non-readers' reading efficiency and teachers' teaching adjustments, strategies and scaffolds

Based from the result on the t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means computation, it showed that the teachers teaching techniques, adjustments had a low degree to negative correlation on the learners reading proficiency while strategies and scaffolds have no correlation on the reading proficiency of non-readers. This implies that these two factors were highly correlated to the reading proficiency of the non-readers' learners.

In other words, the more frequent were the teaching adjustments affecting non-readers, the higher was the efficiency of the non-readers and the less adjustments affecting reading the lower was the efficiency of non-readers. It was found out that strategies and scaffold as indicators in this study had little effect on the reading efficiency of the non-readers.

Analysis

To Clark and Foster, primary and secondary learners prefer different reading materials, which partly reflect on their age differences and access to resources such as computer (Clark & Foster, 2020). According to Klinger and Vaughn (2019), collaborative strategic reading is an excellent technique for teaching learners reading comprehension and building vocabulary and also working together cooperatively. Of the five teachers, Teacher B is the most flexible teacher of the expected numbered adjustments. Teacher A follows. The rest of the teachers show less adjustments due to these reasons: number of learners the teacher needs to handle in a class; time allotted to teach for they are only having a half day class; and they do not focus much on non-readers.

According to Handayani, the use of children short stories displays some advantages: it facilitates to enrich their vocabulary; it encourages their critical thinking; it increases their motivation; and it accommodates their language skill (Handayani, 2021). Learners who have comprehension understand to answer the different questions. The master teacher urges teachers to assess a student's ability to comprehend text that they read silently, orally, or loudly by another person asking the WH-questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) (The Master Teacher, Inc., 2020). Additional strategies that they use are individualized instruction in reading and learners' constant follow-up. Two out of five teachers possess more effective strategies. Teachers have used varied strategies, which are effective followed by some teacher who also used expected number of strategies.

As Rashidi and Kehtarfard (2019) in argue that textbooks are effective resources for self-directed learning and presentation material, sources of ideas and activities, reference sources for learners, syllabuses reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Lee in Farrell, Osegna and Hunter (2021) further states that Dolch words compiles this graded list to help teachers anticipate which words children most likely encounter when reading books at the indicated grade levels. Dolch words strongly advocates that teachers select sight words from books they use in the classroom. According to Lee, Dolch words intends the Word List by Grade as a guide to help teachers identify words to teach from books they are using. Of the five teachers, only two teachers used scaffolds.

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4. DISCUSSION

Handling non-readers in order to read and understand better in the lesson is an arduous act, yet; once done with effectiveness and passion, it yielded a great amount of learning success. Effective teaching practices in handling nonreaders comprised the use of teachers' adjustments, strategies, and scaffolds established reading mastery, exposing them to letter sounds, short stories, and the use of follow-up WH questions enhanced their reading performance significantly. Variations of reading teachers' nature as: an enabler, a facilitator, a humanist, a behaviorist, and an expert, as regards to their teaching practices, were proven significant to learners' reading effectiveness. Addressing to the demands of the 21st century teaching and learning provided reading teachers opportunities to develop learners' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creation.

Many Filipino learners, particularly those from low-income families or living in remote places, face severe barriers to accessing reading materials. Learners should be given various reading materials, such as books, newspapers, and online resources. This can be accomplished through various channels, including school libraries, community activities, and collaborations with non-governmental organizations. Reading comprehension should also be prioritized in the curriculum. Instructors can utilize several tactics to help learners increase their comprehension skills, such as visual organizers, summarizing, and critical thinking tasks. These strategies can assist learners in comprehending and analyzing the meaning behind the words. Furthermore, increasing the use of Filipino as a medium of instruction can assist learners in enhancing their reading ability. While English is an official language in the Philippines, it is not the first language spoken in many homes. Utilizing Filipino as a medium of instruction can assist learners in better understanding complicated sentence patterns and terminology. It can also aid in preserving the Filipino language and

culture while studying English as a second language. Reading plays an essential role in everyone's life. Reading comprehension broadens our ability to analyze things and everything that happens in our environment. It is not only involved in our English subject, but all subject requires reading comprehension. The fact cannot be hidden that almost everything requires comprehension. An individual must be trained and learn techniques in comprehension. Many educational programs have already been established to help the school provide quality learners who can read fluently and comprehend what they read.

Department of Education must assess why the Philippines still ranked last among 79 countries in reading comprehension, after all the programs implemented to boost learners' reading ability and comprehension. Factors that may consider are that the programs are not effective enough to solve the reading comprehension problems or are poorly implemented among all schools in the country. There may be lapses in part of the educational system in the country. Not implementing the "no read, no pass" policy leads to passing those learners who cannot even do the basic reading. Besides, parents also have lapsed for not some parents who depend on their child's learning from the teachers, considering that learning the child should be started at home with their primary parents. Generally, it is concluded that teaching and learning a child should be a partnership responsibility of both teachers and parents.

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