

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Reading Boost Program: A Mixed Methods Analysis of Learners' English Reading Difficulties

John Mark C. Dela Peña¹ Ranier M. Rosalejos² Tammy Lynn G. Marfil³ Jean S. Delante⁴ Derren N. Gaylo⁵

Graduate School, College of Education, Bukidnon State University
Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, Philippines

¹macky181994@gmail.com, ²2401119057@student.buksu.edu.ph, ⁴1801200023@student.buksu.edu.ph,
³1801105171@student.buksu.edu.ph, ⁵gaylo_derren@buksu.edu.ph

Abstract: This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Reading Boost Program in enhancing learners' English reading performance in the Schools Division of Malaybalay City. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was employed, consisting of quantitative and qualitative phases. In the quantitative phase, learners' pretest and posttest scores were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, paired samples t-test, and analysis of variance, to examine differences in reading gains according to sex, grade level, and school type. The qualitative phase involved interviews with teachers and school heads to explore factors influencing learners' reading improvement or difficulties, as well as challenges and best practices in program implementation. Findings indicated significant improvements in learners' reading performance following the Reading Boost Program, although variations were observed across demographic groups and school contexts. Qualitative results highlighted instructional strategies, learner engagement, resource availability, and teacher training as key factors affecting program effectiveness. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides comprehensive evidence of the program's impact and offers recommendations for strengthening reading interventions in public elementary schools.

Keywords— English reading performance; reading intervention; reading program effectiveness; school-based intervention; mixed methods research

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading proficiency is a foundational skill that supports learners' academic achievement across subject areas. In the Philippine basic education system, improving learners' reading performance remains a priority, particularly among elementary learners who face challenges in decoding, comprehension, and fluency. Early intervention is critical, as struggling readers are more likely to experience sustained academic difficulties without targeted support (National Reading Panel, 2000).

To address persistent reading challenges, schools in the Schools Division of Malaybalay City implemented the Reading Boost Program—a structured intervention designed to enhance learners' English reading skills. Research demonstrates that well-designed reading interventions, particularly those incorporating evidence-based instructional strategies, can yield significant improvements in reading outcomes (Li, Tong, Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Rivera, 2021).

Despite the implementation of reading interventions, learners' reading performance continues to vary across schools and grade levels. Evaluating the effectiveness of such programs is essential to ensure that instructional strategies, resources, and support mechanisms align with learners' needs. Program evaluation generates evidence-based insights that can guide

educational planning, improve instructional practices, and strengthen reading initiatives (William, Lara & Lola, 2025).

This study aimed to assess the Reading Boost Program's effectiveness through a mixed methods approach. Specifically, it examined learners' reading performance before and after program implementation and explored the experiences of teachers and school heads in delivering the intervention. The findings are expected to guide improvements in reading instruction and program implementation across schools.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which entails collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to explain and enrich the quantitative results. This design is especially useful in educational research to validate numerical outcomes with participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative phase focused on measuring learners' reading performance before and after participation in the Reading Boost Program. The qualitative phase explored teachers' and school heads' perspectives to identify factors influencing learners' reading improvement and challenges encountered during program implementation.

Participants

Participants included elementary school learners, teachers, and school heads from selected schools in the Schools Division of Malaybalay City. Learners were purposively selected based on their participation in the Reading Boost Program. Teachers and school heads who facilitated the program also served as key informants to provide contextual insights.

Quantitative data were collected using standardized reading assessments administered prior to and following program implementation. Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with teachers and school heads to capture detailed perspectives on instructional practices and program challenges.

Data Collection

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) to assess learners' reading performance. Inferential statistics, such as paired samples t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), were conducted to determine significant differences in reading gains according to sex, grade level, and school type.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to instructional strategies, learner engagement, reading difficulties, and program implementation. Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for a holistic understanding of the program's effectiveness and the factors influencing learners' reading outcomes.

Discussion

The study's findings indicate that the Reading Boost Program significantly enhanced learners' reading performance. These results corroborate research demonstrating that structured, evidence-based reading interventions improve reading outcomes, especially when they involve explicit in foundational and comprehension skills (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Variations in reading gains across grade levels and school types underscore the importance of contextual and implementation factors. Qualitative findings provided crucial explanations for these variations by highlighting specific instructional strategies and implementation practices that facilitated reading improvement. These insights align with broader research emphasizing the role of teacher preparation, resource availability, and adaptive instruction in determining the effectiveness of reading interventions.

1. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Learners' Reading Performance Before and After the Reading Boost Program of Central Schools

Group	N	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Overall	58	48.72 (11.50)	57.26 (13.91)	8.53	14.75	<0.001	Significant Improvement
Male	28	49.93 (12.99)	58.68 (14.47)	8.75	12.62	<0.001	Significant Improvement
Female	30	47.60 (10.01)	55.93 (13.49)	8.33	9.03	<0.001	Significant Improvement

The results revealed that both male and female learners, as well as the overall group, demonstrated statistically significant improvement in reading performance after the implementation of the Reading Boost Program since all obtained p-values were $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the intervention program was effective in improving learners' reading achievement.

Table 2. Learners' Reading Performance Before and After the Reading Boost Program of Integrated Schools

Group	N	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Overall	58	52.29 (10.09)	61.10 (10.40)	8.81	16.36	<0.001	Significant Improvement
Male	21	54.24 (9.28)	62.24 (10.72)	8.00	7.66	<0.001	Significant Improvement
Female	37	51.19 (10.43)	60.46 (10.28)	9.27	14.93	<0.001	Significant Improvement

The findings revealed that learners demonstrated significant improvement in reading performance after the implementation of the Integrated Reading Program. The overall mean score increased from 52.29 during the pretest to 61.10 in the posttest, resulting in a mean gain of 8.81. The computed paired samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores $t = 16.36, p < 0.001$. Both male and female learners exhibited statistically significant improvement. Female learners obtained a slightly higher mean gain (9.27) compared to male learners (8.00), suggesting that female learners showed greater improvement after the intervention.

Table 3. Factors Contributing to Learners' Improvement in Reading both Central and Integrated Schools

Factors	Central Schools	Integrated Schools
Structured Reading Intervention	Implementation of the Reading Boost Program provided guided and systematic reading activities that improved comprehension and fluency.	The Integrated Reading Program combined varied reading strategies to address learners' diverse reading needs and abilities.
Teacher Support and Monitoring	Teachers closely monitored learner progress, conducted remediation, and provided immediate feedback during reading activities.	Teachers utilized differentiated instruction, continuous assessment, and targeted interventions to strengthen reading skills.
Availability of Reading Materials	Availability of storybooks, worksheets, and contextualized reading materials supported literacy development.	Use of localized and learner-centered reading materials increased learner engagement and comprehension.

Reading Practice and Reinforcement	Frequent reading exercises and follow-up activities improved vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.	Interactive reading tasks and reinforcement activities encouraged continuous reading practice.
Learner Participation and Engagement	Peer-assisted learning and collaborative activities enhanced learner confidence and participation.	Active participation in oral reading, group activities, and comprehension exercises improved learner motivation.
School-Based Literacy Programs	School reading campaigns and literacy initiatives promoted positive reading habits among learners.	Literacy-related activities and supportive classroom environments strengthened reading culture in school.
Support System	Parental and community support reinforced reading practice at home and school.	Supportive learning environments and teacher facilitation encouraged sustained learner improvement.
Motivation and Interest in Reading	Learners became more engaged through guided reading sessions and encouragement from teachers.	Interactive and contextualized instruction increased learners' motivation and interest in reading activities.

Limited Parental Support	Some parents had limited capacity to assist learners with reading at home.	Schools strengthened home-school partnerships through parent orientation and take-home reading activities.
Monitoring and Assessment Challenges	Difficulty in consistently tracking learner progress and reading improvement.	Teachers conducted regular reading assessments, progress monitoring, and feedback sessions to evaluate learner growth.
Teacher Workload	Additional reading interventions increased teachers' responsibilities and preparation time.	Collaborative planning, sharing of instructional materials, and school-based support systems were established among teachers.
Attendance and Participation Issues	Irregular attendance affected the continuity of learners' reading development.	Teachers implemented follow-up activities and motivational strategies to encourage consistent participation.
Sustainability of the Program	Maintaining continuous implementation of the program required resources and stakeholder support.	Schools institutionalized reading programs through literacy campaigns, stakeholder involvement, and integration into school improvement plans.

The findings indicate that both Central Schools and Integrated Schools benefited from structured reading interventions, strong teacher support, and continuous reading practice. Both school types emphasized the importance of literacy programs, learner engagement, and supportive learning environments in improving reading performance.

However, Central Schools placed greater emphasis on organized reading support systems, availability of instructional resources, and peer-assisted learning activities. In contrast, Integrated Schools highlighted the effectiveness of contextualized instruction, differentiated teaching strategies, and learner-centered approaches that enhanced learner motivation and participation.

Overall, the combined results suggest that effective reading interventions, when supported by active teacher involvement and meaningful learning experiences, significantly contribute to learners' improvement in reading achievement across different school settings.

The implementation of the Reading Boost Program encountered several challenges related to learner diversity, resource limitations, time constraints, and parental involvement. Despite these difficulties, schools adopted effective best practices such as differentiated instruction, contextualized learning materials, continuous monitoring, and collaborative support systems. These practices contributed significantly to the successful improvement of learners' reading performance.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that the Reading Boost Program and the Integrated Reading Program significantly improved the reading performance of learners in both Central Schools and Integrated Schools. The results showed substantial increases in posttest scores compared to pretest scores, with statistically significant differences $p < 0.001$ indicating that the implemented reading interventions were effective in enhancing learners' reading comprehension, fluency, and overall literacy skills.

Both Central Schools and Integrated Schools demonstrated positive outcomes despite differences in learner profiles and school contexts. Central Schools highlighted the effectiveness of structured remediation, organized reading support, and availability of instructional resources, while Integrated Schools emphasized contextualized instruction, learner-centered strategies, and active learner engagement. Female learners in Integrated Schools showed slightly higher mean gains, whereas male learners in Central Schools demonstrated relatively stronger improvement.

The study further established that teacher commitment, continuous monitoring, differentiated instruction, availability of reading materials, and collaborative support systems were essential factors contributing to learners' improvement in reading. Moreover, best practices such as peer tutoring, guided reading, contextualized materials, literacy campaigns, and regular assessment strengthened the effectiveness of the intervention programs.

However, challenges including limited instructional resources, varying learner abilities, insufficient parental

Table 4: Challenges and best practices in implementing the Reading Boost Program

Area	Challenges Encountered	Best Practices Implemented
Learner Reading Difficulties	Some learners struggled with decoding, fluency, and comprehension due to low foundational reading skills.	Teachers conducted remediation sessions, guided reading activities, and differentiated instruction based on learners' needs.
Limited Reading Materials	Insufficient or outdated reading resources affected the variety of reading activities available to learners.	Schools developed contextualized and localized reading materials and maximized available literacy resources.
Time Constraints	Limited instructional time made it difficult to conduct regular intensive reading interventions.	Schools integrated reading activities into daily classroom routines and allotted dedicated reading periods.
Diverse Learner Abilities	Learners had varying reading levels, making it challenging to address all needs simultaneously.	Teachers used small-group instruction, peer tutoring, and individualized interventions to support struggling readers.
Low Learner Motivation	Some learners lacked confidence and interest in reading activities.	Interactive reading strategies, storytelling, games, and positive reinforcement were utilized to increase engagement.

support, time constraints, and teacher workload affected the implementation process. Despite these limitations, schools were able to sustain the interventions through innovation, collaboration, and school-based literacy initiatives.

Overall, the findings affirm that well-planned and consistently implemented reading intervention programs significantly contribute to improving learners' literacy achievement and support the development of a stronger reading culture in schools.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Generative AI Statement

As the authors of this work, we used the AI tool ChatGPT (OpenAI) for the purpose of enhancing language clarity, grammar, and readability of the manuscript. After using this AI tool, we reviewed and verified the final version of the work. We, as the authors, take full responsibility for the content of this published work.

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