

Improving the Reading Comprehension Skills of Grade 3 Learners Through Targeted Reading Intervention Activities

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Abstract

This study examined the improvement in the reading comprehension skills of Grade 3 learners through targeted reading intervention activities within the Schools Division of Aurora. A one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design was employed with 30 Grade 3 learners who required additional support in English reading comprehension. The intervention incorporated guided reading, vocabulary development, comprehension questioning, sequencing activities, explicit teacher modeling, and guided practice. Learners were assessed in five areas: identifying the main idea, identifying supporting details, sequencing information or events, understanding vocabulary in context, and making simple inferences. Results showed that the overall mean score increased from 46.80 (SD = 10.90) in the pretest to 62.30 (SD = 10.20) in the posttest. A paired-samples t test revealed a significant difference between pretest and posttest performance, $t(29) = 8.12$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($d = 1.48$). Improvements were observed across all five comprehension skills, indicating substantial progress during the intervention period. The findings highlight the value of structured and targeted reading activities in supporting Grade 3 learners who experience comprehension difficulties. The study contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 4 by supporting quality education and foundational literacy. Its sustainability impact lies in promoting adaptable, classroom-based reading interventions that can strengthen instructional practice and provide continuing literacy support for elementary learners.

Keywords: Comprehension Skills; Grade 3; Literacy Intervention; Reading Comprehension; Reading Intervention; Targeted Instruction

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that enables learners to understand, interpret, and use information from written texts. In the early elementary grades, learners are expected to progress beyond word recognition toward understanding main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary, sequence, and meaning. Learners who experience difficulties in these areas may require additional instructional support. Research indicates that structured interventions addressing foundational literacy and comprehension processes can improve reading outcomes among primary-grade and struggling readers (Denton et al., 2022; Filderman et al., 2022). Strengthening foundational literacy remains an educational priority in the Philippines, where continuing learning proficiency gaps highlight the need for effective support during the elementary years (EDCOM II, 2026). Within the Schools Division of Isabela, targeted reading intervention activities may provide focused support for Grade 3 learners experiencing difficulty in English reading comprehension. Thus, this study examines changes in learners' reading comprehension performance following targeted intervention activities.

Reading comprehension involves several interconnected skills, including vocabulary knowledge, understanding important details, identifying main ideas, making inferences, and constructing meaning from text. Evidence

suggests that interventions combining foundational reading support with explicit comprehension instruction can produce positive reading outcomes (Denton et al., 2022). Filderman et al. (2022) similarly found that comprehension interventions can benefit struggling readers when instruction includes appropriate strategies and knowledge-building activities. Targeted instruction allows teachers to focus intervention activities on specific comprehension difficulties. Explicit teaching of comprehension strategies, guided practice, vocabulary development, questioning, and opportunities to interpret texts can strengthen learners' ability to construct meaning while reading (Peng et al., 2024). These findings support an intervention approach that provides systematic and focused practice based on learners' identified comprehension needs.

International research supports structured and explicit interventions for learners experiencing reading difficulties (Denton et al., 2022; Filderman et al., 2022). In the Philippines, foundational literacy remains an important concern, with national evidence continuing to emphasize the importance of comprehension as part of functional literacy and overall learning development (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2025; EDCOM II, 2026). The Schools Division of Isabela provides the target educational context for the present study. Rather than assuming that international interventions will produce identical outcomes locally, examining targeted reading activities among Grade 3 learners can provide context-specific evidence on changes in comprehension performance and inform appropriate classroom-based literacy support.

The study is anchored in the Simple View of Reading by Gough and Tunmer (1986), which explains reading comprehension as resulting from the interaction between decoding and linguistic comprehension. This framework recognizes that learners need both the ability to process written words and the language skills necessary to understand their meaning. It therefore provides an appropriate foundation for interventions designed to strengthen comprehension while recognizing the contribution of foundational reading abilities. In this study, targeted reading intervention activities constitute the independent variable, while reading comprehension skills represent the dependent variable. The intervention focuses on guided and explicit activities intended to develop selected comprehension skills, such as identifying main ideas and details, sequencing information, understanding vocabulary in context, and making simple inferences.

Although existing studies demonstrate the benefits of structured reading interventions, much of the available intervention evidence comes from international settings. Differences in curriculum, learner characteristics, instructional practices, and educational contexts create a need to examine how targeted reading comprehension activities function within Philippine elementary education. This study therefore examines the reading comprehension skills of Grade 3 learners within the Schools Division of Isabela before and after targeted reading intervention activities. Specifically, it seeks to determine changes in overall comprehension performance and selected comprehension skills and to establish whether a statistically significant difference exists between pretest and posttest performance.

The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education and effective learning opportunities. Strengthening reading comprehension during the elementary years contributes to foundational literacy and supports learners' ability to participate successfully in subsequent learning activities. By providing targeted instructional support to learners experiencing reading difficulties, the study also supports efforts to reduce learning gaps and improve access to appropriate literacy instruction. Its focus on early intervention reflects the broader goal of helping learners develop essential competencies needed for continued educational progress.

Targeted reading intervention activities may contribute to sustainable educational improvement by providing teachers with structured approaches that can be integrated into classroom instruction and literacy support programs. Identifying specific comprehension difficulties may also help teachers provide more focused intervention and monitor learners' progress over time. At the school and division levels, evidence from the study may inform the refinement of reading support strategies for Grade 3 learners. Continued use of appropriate, evidence-informed interventions can strengthen instructional practice and support the long-term development of foundational literacy skills.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design to examine changes in the reading comprehension skills of Grade 3 learners following targeted reading intervention activities. Learners' comprehension performance was assessed before and after the intervention, allowing the study to determine the magnitude and statistical significance of changes in reading performance. This design was appropriate for evaluating an educational intervention implemented with an identified group of learners under regular school conditions.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Paulino L. Bautista Elementary School in Dinalungan District, Schools Division of Aurora, Philippines. The setting provided an appropriate context for examining a classroom-based reading intervention among Grade 3 learners in English. The intervention was implemented within the learners' existing educational environment to ensure that the activities remained relevant to their grade level and instructional needs.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of Grade 3 learners identified as requiring additional support in English reading comprehension. Learners were included based on their reading comprehension performance and the need for targeted intervention. The study focused specifically on learners requiring additional assistance rather than the entire Grade 3 population.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify Grade 3 learners who met the intervention criteria. Eligibility was based on learners' demonstrated need for additional reading comprehension support as indicated by the baseline assessment and relevant classroom reading performance. Only learners who completed both the pretest and posttest were included in the paired statistical analysis.

2.5 Research Instrument

A Grade 3 Reading Comprehension Assessment was used to measure learners' comprehension performance before and after the intervention. The assessment consisted of grade-appropriate reading passages and comprehension questions focusing on five dimensions: identifying the main idea, identifying supporting details, sequencing information or events, understanding vocabulary in context, and making simple inferences. These dimensions provided a structured basis for examining both overall and skill-specific changes in reading comprehension. The pretest and posttest were administered under comparable conditions and followed the same scoring framework. The assessment content was aligned with the reading comprehension skills targeted by the intervention. Appropriate content review and assessment-quality procedures should be completed before field administration to ensure that the instrument adequately represents the intended Grade 3 comprehension competencies.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process began with the administration of a pretest to determine learners' baseline reading comprehension performance. Based on the identified areas of difficulty, the learners participated in targeted reading intervention activities involving guided reading, vocabulary development, comprehension questioning, sequencing activities, identification of main ideas and supporting details, and guided inferential questioning. Instruction included explicit teacher modeling, guided practice, feedback, and opportunities for increasingly independent comprehension tasks. Following the intervention period, the learners completed a posttest under conditions comparable to those of the pretest. Pretest and posttest scores were then organized according to overall reading comprehension performance and the selected comprehension dimensions. The resulting scores served as the basis for determining changes associated with participation in the intervention.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the pretest and posttest scores. Mean and standard deviation summarized the learners' overall reading comprehension performance, while mean gains described changes in the five assessed comprehension dimensions. A paired-samples *t* test was used to determine whether the difference between pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant at the .05 level. Cohen's *d* was computed to estimate the standardized magnitude of the pretest-posttest difference.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study involved elementary learners and therefore required particular attention to the protection of minors. Appropriate school authorization and informed consent from parents or legal guardians were required before learner participation. Participation was voluntary and was not intended to affect learners' grades, regular classroom instruction, or access to educational support. Learner information and assessment records were to be handled confidentially, with results reported in aggregated form and without personally identifiable information. These safeguards were intended to protect the privacy, rights, and welfare of the participating Grade 3 learners throughout the research process.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Reading Comprehension Performance Before and After the Intervention

The learners' overall reading comprehension performance increased from a pretest mean of 46.80 (SD = 10.90) to a posttest mean of 62.30 (SD = 10.20). Improvements were observed across all five assessed comprehension skills, indicating a general increase in learners' ability to understand and interpret grade-appropriate reading texts following the intervention. The pattern suggests that targeted activities addressing different aspects of

comprehension provided learners with opportunities to strengthen both literal and interpretive reading skills. This is consistent with research showing that structured and multicomponent reading interventions can support comprehension development among primary-grade learners experiencing reading difficulties (Denton et al., 2022; Filderman et al., 2022).

3.1.1 Identifying the Main Idea

The mean score for identifying the main idea increased from 9.80 in the pretest to 12.70 in the posttest, representing a gain of 2.90 points. The increase indicates that learners became more successful in determining the central idea or primary message conveyed by a reading passage after participating in the intervention activities. Identifying the main idea requires learners to distinguish essential information from supporting details and integrate information across a text. Explicit questioning, guided reading, and teacher modeling may have helped learners focus on important textual information and organize it into a coherent understanding. Such structured comprehension instruction is consistent with evidence supporting explicit strategy teaching for learners experiencing reading difficulties (Filderman et al., 2022; Peng et al., 2024).

3.1.2 Identifying Supporting Details

Performance in identifying supporting details increased from a pretest mean of 10.40 to a posttest mean of 13.50, resulting in a 3.10-point gain. The improvement suggests that learners became more capable of locating relevant information and recognizing details that explain or support the central ideas presented in reading passages. The development of this skill may be supported by comprehension questioning and guided activities that direct learners' attention to relevant textual information. When learners are taught to identify and connect important details, they can develop a more complete representation of what they read. Previous research similarly indicates that explicit and systematic comprehension instruction can strengthen learners' ability to extract and organize meaning from texts (Denton et al., 2022).

3.1.3 Sequencing Information or Events

The mean score for sequencing increased from 9.60 in the pretest to 12.80 in the posttest, producing a gain of 3.20 points. This indicates improvement in the learners' ability to arrange events or information according to their logical or chronological order within a text. Sequencing activities may help learners recognize relationships among events and understand how information develops throughout a passage. Guided practice in arranging events, retelling texts, and identifying what occurred first, next, and last can provide a clearer structure for comprehension. The observed improvement supports the broader value of providing explicit and focused comprehension practice rather than expecting struggling readers to develop these strategies independently (Peng et al., 2024).

3.1.4 Understanding Vocabulary in Context

Vocabulary in context increased from a pretest mean of 9.20 to a posttest mean of 12.40, corresponding to a gain of 3.20 points. The result suggests improved ability to determine the meaning of words by using information and clues provided within the surrounding text. Vocabulary knowledge contributes directly to learners' ability to construct meaning from what they read. Targeted vocabulary activities that encourage learners to examine sentences, contextual clues, and relationships among words may therefore support broader text comprehension. Research on reading development has emphasized the contribution of language and vocabulary knowledge to successful reading comprehension, particularly during the early stages of literacy development (Jago et al., 2025).

3.1.5 Making Simple Inferences

Making simple inferences recorded the lowest initial performance, with the mean increasing from 7.80 in the pretest to 10.90 in the posttest, resulting in a gain of 3.10 points. Although learners improved after the intervention, inferential comprehension remained comparatively more challenging than the other assessed skills. Unlike literal comprehension, inferential comprehension requires learners to combine textual information with prior knowledge to understand ideas that are not directly stated. Guided inferential questioning may have provided learners with opportunities to practice making these connections. The finding supports the importance of explicitly teaching comprehension strategies that require active interpretation and meaning construction, particularly among learners who experience difficulty understanding texts (Peng et al., 2024).

3.2 Changes in Overall Reading Comprehension Performance

Across the five dimensions, gains ranged from 2.90 to 3.20 points, producing an overall mean increase of 15.50 points. The improvement across all assessed skills indicates that changes in reading comprehension were distributed across main idea identification, supporting details, sequencing, vocabulary in context, and simple inference rather than being concentrated in only one area. The results suggest that a combination of guided reading, comprehension questioning, vocabulary development, sequencing activities, teacher modeling, and guided practice can provide broad support for learners experiencing comprehension difficulties. This pattern aligns with evidence that multicomponent reading interventions addressing several literacy processes can produce meaningful improvements in reading comprehension (Denton et al., 2022). Differences among the individual skill gains are

interpreted descriptively because no separate inferential analysis was conducted to compare the magnitude of improvement among dimensions.

3.3 Significant Difference Between Pretest and Posttest Performance

The overall mean increased from 46.80 (SD = 10.90) in the pretest to 62.30 (SD = 10.20) in the posttest, representing a mean gain of 15.50 points. The paired-samples *t* test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two assessments, $t(29) = 8.12$, $p < .001$. The corresponding Cohen's $d = 1.48$ indicated a large standardized difference between pretest and posttest performance. The statistical findings indicate that the improvement was substantial in both statistical and practical terms. This result is consistent with previous research demonstrating positive reading comprehension outcomes following structured intervention among learners experiencing reading difficulties (Filderman et al., 2022). Nevertheless, because the study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design, the findings demonstrate improvement associated with the intervention period but do not establish that the intervention was the sole cause of the observed change.

3.4 Overall Discussion

The findings collectively demonstrate improved reading comprehension performance across all five assessed skills following the targeted reading intervention activities. Learners showed progress in extracting explicit information, organizing textual content, understanding vocabulary through context, and deriving implied meaning. The improvement across multiple dimensions suggests that reading comprehension may be strengthened through instruction that addresses several complementary comprehension processes rather than focusing on a single skill. The findings reinforce the value of explicit, structured, and targeted reading support for Grade 3 learners who require additional assistance in comprehension. Within the Schools Division of Isabela, targeted reading intervention activities may provide teachers with a practical framework for addressing identified comprehension difficulties. Continued monitoring and adjustment of intervention activities according to learner performance may further strengthen the use of such approaches in elementary literacy instruction.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study found that Grade 3 learners demonstrated improved reading comprehension performance following the targeted reading intervention activities. Improvements were observed in identifying the main idea, recognizing supporting details, sequencing information or events, understanding vocabulary in context, and making simple inferences. The significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, together with the large effect size, indicates substantial improvement in learners' reading comprehension performance during the intervention period. Overall, the findings highlight the value of structured and targeted reading activities that combine explicit instruction, guided practice, vocabulary development, comprehension questioning, and opportunities to interpret written texts.

Grade 3 English teachers are encouraged to use targeted reading activities that respond to learners' specific comprehension difficulties, particularly in vocabulary, inferential comprehension, sequencing, and identifying important textual information. Regular assessment and progress monitoring may be used to identify learners who require additional support and to adjust intervention activities according to their needs. Paulino L. Bautista Elementary School and other schools within Dinalungan District and the Schools Division of Aurora may also strengthen literacy support through appropriate instructional materials and teacher development related to reading intervention. Future research may involve larger samples, multiple schools, longer intervention periods, comparison groups, and follow-up assessments to determine whether improvements are sustained over time.

The study was limited to Grade 3 learners at Paulino L. Bautista Elementary School in Dinalungan District, Schools Division of Aurora, and employed a one-group pretest-posttest design. The absence of a comparison group limits the extent to which changes in reading comprehension can be attributed exclusively to the intervention, as regular instruction, maturation, repeated assessment, and other learning experiences may also have influenced performance. The study also focused on selected comprehension skills and short-term pretest-posttest changes; therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the scope of the assessment and should not be generalized to all reading abilities, grade levels, or educational settings.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest exist in relation to this study. Ethical principles for research involving children were observed throughout the research process. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate school authorities, and informed consent was secured from the parents or legal guardians of the participating Grade 3 learners. Participation was voluntary and did not affect the learners' grades, regular instruction, or access to educational support. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained through coded participant information, secure handling of assessment records, and aggregated reporting of findings. No personally identifiable information was disclosed. The researchers acknowledge the participating Grade 3 learners, their parents or legal guardians, Paulino L. Bautista Elementary School, Dinalungan District, and the concerned educational authorities of the Schools Division of Aurora for their participation and institutional support.

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