



## ASSESSING READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES IN AN ELEMENTARY LEARNERS

CATALINA B. REBAMONTE <sup>1</sup> | VENUS M. ALVAREZ <sup>2</sup> | LEA GRACE T. VILLA <sup>3</sup> | MICHAEL DONAIRE <sup>4</sup> | MARILYN M. MIRANDA <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MA.ED, CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, DEPED, CEBU PROVINCE, CEBU PHILIPPINES.

<sup>2</sup> MA.ED, CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, DEPED, CEBU PROVINCE, CEBU PHILIPPINES.

<sup>3</sup> MA.ED, CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, DEPED, CEBU PROVINCE, CEBU PHILIPPINES.

<sup>4</sup> MA.ED, CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, DEPED, CEBU PROVINCE, CEBU PHILIPPINES.

<sup>5</sup> EDD, DPA, CEBU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY, DEPED, CEBU PROVINCE, CEBU PHILIPPINES.

### ABSTRACT:

Assessing reading comprehension difficulties in elementary learners involves identifying specific areas of struggle in decoding, vocabulary, background knowledge, inference, and critical thinking. This process utilizes formal and informal assessments, such as standardized tests, teacher-created activities, observations, and running records, to gain insights into a child's reading comprehension abilities. By pinpointing specific difficulties, educators can address the underlying causes through tailored interventions, including explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, vocabulary building, decoding skill development, and opportunities for repeated reading and practice. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and specialists is crucial to ensuring a supportive learning environment and helping struggling readers achieve success.

### KEYWORDS:

READING DIFFICULTY, READING FLUENCY, VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE, READING LEVELS, PAIRED READING, REPETITIVE READING.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes that reading comprehension difficulties are a significant challenge for many elementary learners in the Philippines. They recognize that while some students may struggle with basic literacy skills, the more prevalent issue is a lack of reading comprehension, meaning students can decode words but struggle to understand the meaning of the text.

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DepEd's view is that reading comprehension difficulties are a complex issue with multiple contributing factors. They are committed to addressing these challenges through a combination of curriculum review, professional development, and the implementation of evidence-based strategies to ensure all students can develop strong reading skills and achieve academic success.

Understanding the basic needs of learners, employing

appropriate tools and techniques, and identifying specific difficulties are crucial steps in assessing reading comprehension in elementary learners. This process requires educators to research or investigate into the intricate web of skills that strengthen reading comprehension, including decoding, vocabulary, background knowledge, inference, and critical thinking. By recognizing the diverse needs of learners, educators can select the most effective tools and techniques to accurately gauge comprehension abilities and pinpoint specific areas of struggle. This comprehensive approach lays the foundation for targeted interventions that address the root cause of reading comprehension difficulties, ultimately empowering learners to become confident and successful readers.

## II. OBJECTIVE

The objectives of assessing reading comprehension difficulties in elementary learners are multifaceted and crucial for supporting their academic success.

### 1. IDENTIFICATION AND DIAGNOSIS:

- Identify struggling readers: Pinpoint students who are experiencing significant comprehension challenges.

- Diagnose specific difficulties: Determine the underlying causes of comprehension problems, such as:
- Decoding issues: Difficulty with sounding out words or recognizing sight words.
- Vocabulary limitations: Lack of understanding of key words and concepts.
- Working memory constraints: Challenges in holding information in mind while processing text.
- Inferencing and comprehension strategies: Difficulty making connections, drawing conclusions, or using strategies like summarizing or asking questions.
- Prior knowledge gaps: Lack of background knowledge about the topic being read.
- Attention and focus: Difficulty concentrating on the text.
- Language differences: Challenges with understanding the nuances of English or the specific language of instruction.

## 2. INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT:

- Develop individualized intervention plans: Create targeted strategies and activities based on each student's specific needs.
- Guide instructional decisions: Inform teachers about appropriate teaching methods, materials, and accommodations to address identified difficulties.
- Monitor progress and adjust interventions: Track students' growth in reading comprehension and modify interventions as needed to ensure effectiveness.

## 3. DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION:

- Inform classroom instruction: Use assessment data to adjust teaching practices and ensure that lessons are aligned with students' comprehension levels.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions: Determine whether implemented strategies are helping students improve their reading comprehension skills.
- Share information with parents/guardians: Communicate assessment findings and collaborate on supporting the student's reading development at home.

## 4. ADVOCACY AND RESOURCES:

- Advocate for appropriate resources: Identify students who may need specialized support, such as tutoring, assistive technology, or referral to a reading specialist.
- Promote a positive learning environment: Encourage a growth mindset and create a supportive classroom where students feel comfortable asking for help.

Overall, the objectives of assessing reading comprehension difficulties are to identify, diagnose, and support struggling readers, ultimately leading to improved comprehension skills and a love of reading.

## III. METHODOLOGY

Assessing reading comprehension difficulties in elementary learners is crucial for identifying students who need extra support and tailoring instruction to their individual needs. Educators use a variety of methodologies

to understand a student's comprehension abilities. These methods can be broadly categorized into formal and informal assessments.

### FORMAL ASSESSMENTS

Formal assessments are standardized tests designed to measure a student's reading comprehension skills against a set of predetermined criteria. These assessments are often used to track progress over time, identify struggling students, and make decisions about interventions. Here are some common examples of formal assessments:

- **Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI):** This assessment involves students reading passages aloud and then answering comprehension questions. The QRI helps teachers identify specific strengths and weaknesses in students' comprehension, such as difficulties with specific text types or comprehension strategies.

- **Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS):** The ITBS includes comprehensive reading sections that assess students' understanding of various types of texts, from fiction to informational passages. The test measures how well students can recall details, understand main ideas, draw conclusions, and interpret information.

- **Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (GMRT):** The GMRT includes comprehension subtests that focus on evaluating how well students understand what they read. During these tests, students read passages and answer asking students to draw a picture of what questions that assess their ability to grasp main ideas, make inferences, and understand vocabulary in context.

### INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS

Informal assessments are less structured and more flexible than formal assessments. They can be used to gather information about a student's reading comprehension in a more natural setting, such as during classroom activities or one-on-one interactions. Here are some common examples of informal assessments:

- **Retellings:** This involves asking students to recall and summarize texts they have read in their own words. Teachers can assess students' understanding of the main idea and details of the text, as well as their ability to organize and express their thoughts.

- **Cloze Procedure:** This involves removing every nth word from a passage and asking the student to fill in the missing words. The cloze procedure allows teachers to assess students' ability to use context to determine the meaning of new words and infer the meaning of implicit ideas [[LINK\\_ICON](#)].

- **Running Records:** This involves the teacher listening to a student read a selected text and recording the errors, self-corrections, and word substitutions made by the student. The teacher can then analyze the running record to determine the student's reading level and identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement.

- **Think-Pair-Share:** This strategy involves posing a question about the text and giving students time to "think"

about it independently. Next, students "pair" up to discuss the question. Finally, students "share" their thinking with their partner.

- **Making Connections:** This strategy involves asking students to make connections between the text and their own lives (text-to-self), other texts (text-to-text), or the world around them (text-to-world). This helps assess their ability to relate the text to their existing knowledge and experiences.

- **Graphic Organizers:** These visual tools can help students organize and summarize information from a text. They can be used to assess students' understanding of the main idea, supporting details, and relationships between ideas.

- **Drawing the Story:** This strategy involves importance of considering both formal and they visualize while reading a passage. This helps assess their ability to create mental images and understand the text on a deeper level.

- **Making Predictions:** This strategy involves asking students to predict what will happen next in a story. This helps assess their ability to use clues from the text and their prior knowledge to make inferences and anticipate events.

Key Considerations for Assessing Reading Comprehension

- **Multifaceted Approach:** It's crucial to use a variety of assessment methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of a student's reading comprehension abilities. Combining formal and informal assessments provides a more complete picture of a student's strengths and weaknesses.

- **Focus on Individual Needs:** Assessments should be tailored to the individual needs of each student. Teachers should consider the student's age, reading level, and learning style when selecting assessment methods.

- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Reading comprehension assessments should be conducted regularly to track student progress and identify areas where additional support is needed. This ongoing monitoring allows teachers to adjust instruction and interventions as needed.

- **Collaboration with Parents:** Teachers should work closely with parents to discuss assessment results and develop strategies to support their child's reading comprehension development.

Assessing reading comprehension difficulties in elementary learners is an ongoing process that requires a multifaceted approach. By using a combination of formal and informal assessments, teachers can gain valuable insights into a student's comprehension abilities and provide targeted instruction and interventions to support their reading development.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This research underscores the critical need for comprehensive assessment of reading comprehension difficulties in elementary learners. The findings highlight the and intervention approaches for students informal

assessment methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of a student's comprehension abilities. While formal assessments provide standardized measures for comparison, informal assessments offer valuable insights into individual student strengths and weaknesses in a more naturalistic setting.

The study also emphasizes the importance of a multifaceted approach to assessment, considering the interplay of various factors that can contribute to reading comprehension difficulties. These factors include:

- **Word reading skills:** Students with significant difficulties in word reading often struggle with comprehension, as they may lack the necessary fluency and decoding skills to access the meaning of the text.

- **Linguistic comprehension:** Deficits in vocabulary, listening comprehension, and sentence-level language skills can hinder a student's ability to understand the meaning of what they read.

- **Cognitive factors:** Cognitive abilities such as working memory and attention play a crucial role in reading comprehension. Students with weaker cognitive skills may struggle to process and retain information from text.

- **Goal orientations:** Students' motivation and goals can impact their engagement and performance in reading comprehension tasks. Mastery-oriented goals, focused on learning and improvement, are associated with more adaptive learning strategies.

- **Classroom goal structures:** The classroom environment and the goals emphasized by teachers can influence students' motivation and learning. Mastery goal structures that focus on individual progress and knowledge acquisition are more conducive to effective learning.

The findings suggest that interventions should be tailored to address the specific needs of individual students, taking into account their reading profiles and cognitive strengths and weaknesses. A balanced approach that incorporates both word reading and linguistic comprehension strategies, along with targeted cognitive interventions, is likely to be most effective.

Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of different assessment phonics instruction, while students with varying levels of reading comprehension difficulties and cognitive profiles. Additionally, research on the role of motivation and goal orientations in reading comprehension development for elementary learners is warranted. By understanding the complex interplay of factors that contribute to reading comprehension difficulties, educators can develop more effective interventions to support all students in achieving reading success.

#### V. RECOMMENDATION

Here are some recommendations for assessing reading comprehension difficulties in elementary learners, drawing from the provided search results and best practices in the field:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Early Identification and Intervention:** The research consistently emphasizes the importance of early identification and intervention to prevent reading failure. Schools should implement systematic screening procedures for all students in kindergarten and first grade, using measures of phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, and early word reading skills. Early identification allows for timely interventions that can prevent reading difficulties from escalating.

**2. Multifaceted Assessment:** Utilize a combination of formal and informal assessments to gain a comprehensive understanding of a student's reading comprehension abilities. Formal assessments, such as the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), provide standardized measures for comparison. However, informal assessments, such as retellings, cloze procedures, and running records, offer valuable insights into individual student strengths and weaknesses in a more naturalistic setting.

**3. Focus on Individual Needs:** Tailor assessments and interventions to the specific needs of each student, considering their reading profiles and cognitive strengths and weaknesses. For example, students with significant difficulties in word reading may require more intensive school and beyond.

Linguistic comprehension challenges may benefit from vocabulary building activities and explicit instruction in comprehension strategies.

**4. Address Multiple Factors:** Recognize that reading comprehension is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including word reading skills, linguistic comprehension, cognitive abilities, and motivation. Assessment should consider all of these factors to develop a comprehensive picture of a student's reading challenges.

**5. Ongoing Monitoring and Adjustment:** Conduct regular assessments to track student progress and identify areas where additional support is needed. This ongoing monitoring allows for adjustments to instruction and interventions as students' needs evolve.

**6. Collaboration with Parents:** Work closely with parents to discuss assessment results, share strategies for supporting their child's reading development at home, and involve them in the development of individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with identified reading disabilities.

**7. Consider English Learners:** Recognize that English learners may face unique challenges in reading comprehension. Assessment should consider their language proficiency level and provide appropriate accommodations. Targeted interventions that focus on developing both word reading and linguistic comprehension skills are crucial for supporting English learners' reading development.

**8. Promote Motivation and Engagement:** Create a classroom environment that fosters a love of reading and

encourages students to view reading as a meaningful and enjoyable activity. Emphasize mastery goals that focus on individual progress and knowledge acquisition, rather than competitive goals that can create anxiety and discourage struggling readers.

By implementing these recommendations, schools can create a more supportive and effective learning environment for all elementary learners, helping them to develop the reading skills they need to succeed in

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