



Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment: Bridging the Gap towards Lifelong Learning

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to look into the experiences of the teachers during the conduct of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment in Buenakapok Elementary School and Taluksangay Elementary School, Mercedes District, Zamboanga City Division. Specifically, this study aimed to find out the following: status of implementation of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment in early grade, process of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment conducted in early grade, different challenges encountered by the teachers in the implementation of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment, and on the basis of the findings, design an intervention plan to address the literacy gap. The study employed qualitative research perspective purpose to study the experiences of teachers in the implementation and conduct of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment in early grade. Participants were selected through total enumeration for Buenakapok early grade teachers and purposive sampling for Taluksangay early grade teachers for phenomenological research and were selected through non-probability purposive sampling design wherein the respondents were chosen to provide data that are most relevant to the study. There were five teachers from Buenakapok Elementary School and three teachers from Taluksangay Elementary School who voluntarily participated in the study. The following themes are developed based on the responses of the participants, these were grouped or clustered by means of thematic approach: CRLA is Beneficial to Teachers; It is Timely and Relevant; It is an Individualized Standard Assessment; It Allows to Discover Learners' Learning Gap; CRLA Supports Reading Intervention; Learning to Read is a Challenge; It Allow Teachers Adapt Changes; and Instructional Materials Development.

Keywords : literacy assessment, reading, gap, lifelong learners, Buenakapok Elementary School

1. INTRODUCTION

Skills in reading is a doorway to every individual to learn academic subjects. Seemingly, teaching the learners how to read and develop their reading comprehension skill is not an easy task especially on the part of teachers. For without the mastery of this skill, consequently, a child can be left behind in the learning process. The challenge in making students be intrinsically motivated to improve their habit for reading plays a fundamental part in achieving better academic performance (Korantwi-Barimah et al., 2017; Liu and Ho, 2017; Omela and Martin, 2020). Most likely, it is a complex process to learn how to read and as well develop the reading comprehension skills of learners as it involves the reader, the text materials to be used and other related factors that somehow affect the reading activity. Reading assessment is used by educators to understand the reading

abilities of each student. Teachers often use assessments to decide on the best solutions and interventions for developing their students' reading abilities. Interpretation of these assessments, however, often varies from one instructor to another; therefore, it is imperative for them to, properly, interpret these assessments. Moreover, teachers should also be skillful in assessing their students; since, some assessments may not reflect the students' abilities, if poorly drafted. The Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) was initially conceived as a 5-minute start-up reading assessment designed to help teachers quickly determine the reading profiles of their G1-G3 learners and develop appropriate reading instructional strategies. The goal is to identify children who need additional support in reading. The CRLA was developed in response extended break that learners experienced over the summer of 2020 due to the

pandemic. After 32 weeks of no class, teachers needed a rapid, easy to use tool, to determine what level of readiness and support the returning children needed. The beginning of school year tasks focused on letter sounds, isolated words and sentences in reading in MT (G1), Filipino (G1-G2) and English (G1-G3). In the Philippines, learners are expected to transition from their mother tongue (MT) to Filipino and English (L2 and L3 respectively) by grade 4. However, the earliest standardized assessment used in the Philippines is for Filipino starting in G3 and English starting in G4. Prior to the CRLA, there were no existing standardized tools or systems used to assess in the MT. It was also a tool that could be administered remotely (online or even over the phone) which proved critical for schooling in the new normal where face to face classes were not permitted. Thus, the CRLA met the needs of teachers who were missing such a tool in their early grade assessment toolbox.

The CRLA was initially piloted in November 2020 with select schools. The experience of the pilot led DepEd to scale up the CRLA to all schools in the ABC+ Target Regions. The feedback from the schools and teachers who utilized the CRLA was encouraging. Many schools used the results of the CRLA to develop remedial and focused reading programs in the context of the new normal and identify the struggling readers to provide additional support. Based on the success of the beginning of the school year RLA, the Department of Education requested ABC+ to help develop middle and end of year assessments that would align to their curricular competencies. Keeping to the same criteria (rapid and easy to administer and analyze), the team incorporated listening comprehension, oral reading fluency and reading comprehension tasks for end of year administration. At the request of DepEd, ABC+ is currently in the process of expanding the number of MT languages supported by the CRLA and incorporating it into their operations manual for mother tongue-based multilingual education.

Reading assessments are meant to provide feedback on the skills, processes and knowledge resources that represent reading abilities. Reading assessment has great power to inform researchers, teachers, administrators and policy makers. Assessment practices can significantly benefit the learning environment. Though the assessments are used for various purposes, it should be borne in mind that all uses begin from an understanding of the reading construct, an awareness of the reading abilities and an effort to reflect the construct in assessment tasks. Educators therefore have a responsibility to understand the impact and uses of assessing reading and their consequences.

Reading is a powerful tool that can be readily acquired to sustain the cornerstone of learning. In order to acquire knowledge and enhance new learning skills, reading ability must be developed in pupils. The ability to read is important to the learning of children along with the development of their skills in literacy and dynamic society involvement (DepEd, 2019). Hence, having the skill in reading is considered as a foothold for all academic learnings. In the Philippines, one of the problems besetting the educational system is that many Filipino children struggle with reading which is particularly linked to low achievement results especially in the public schools. The low achievement results are further remarked to the poor development of reading skills among the learners. In 2019, the Southeast Asia Primary

Learning Metric [SEA-PLM] reported that a percentage of Filipino fifth graders exhibited least proficiency in three learning areas: mathematics, writing and reading (Bernardo et al., 2022). The focus of the study is to know the experiences of the teachers in the conduct of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment in early grade. The poor result in the achievement test is due to poor development of reading skills among learners in the early grade.

Reading assessment also assists teachers to trace the progress of his or her students i.e. with respect to reading abilities (Afflerbach, 2007). The assessments are often performed time after time; therefore, an instructor can easily note the growth of students' reading abilities. This enables teachers to single out the underperforming students from the rest of the flock. As a result, he or she will have the capacity to concentrate on the underperforming students, and design approaches and strategies that aim at improving their abilities.

Reading assessment results are given to guardians and parents of students. This makes them comprehend the abilities of their students, about their reading abilities. Guardians and parents can, therefore, use the results to assist students in building up their children's reading ability. Moreover, they can also work alongside teachers, to design and execute suitable recommendations for their children, with the motive of improving their reading abilities.

Thus, it is in this premise that the researcher would like to embark on this study to know the experiences of the teachers and to better understand the implementation of the reading assessment in the primary grade. Moreover, the researcher would like to know the status, process, and challenges of the teachers during the conduct of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) and be able to come up with an intervention plan to address the learning gap in the reading assessment.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Buenakapok Elementary School and Taluksangay Elementary School, Mercedes District Quadrant 2.2 of Zamboanga City Division. There were five early grade teachers from Buenakapok Elementary School and three early grades from Taluksangay Elementary School. The participants were selected through purposive sampling for Taluksangay Elementary School and total enumeration for Buenakapok Elementary School.

This research employed a qualitative research perspective, the purpose of study is to know the status, process and challenges encountered by the teachers in the conduct of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment.

A qualitative approach was considered more relevant to undertake this research as it allowed greater capacity to gain more depth and meaning based on teachers' experiences in the conduct of reading assessment. According to Creswell (2005), in qualitative research "the researcher relied on the views of the participants, asked broad and general questions, collected data consisting largely of words from participants, describe and analyzes these words for the theme, and the conducts inquiry in subjective, biased manner" (Creswell, 2005). The phenomenological approach used was to study how the participants perceived their experiences. The participants were interviewed and explored for a greater understanding of the phenomena.

This study used the phenomenological approach to qualitative

research that focuses on experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

An audio recorder device was employed as a data collection method through one-on-one interviews with some participants and a focus group discussion for some. Data was collected using semi-structured interview techniques. This method typically consists of a dialogue between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes and comments. The method allows the researcher to collect open-ended data, to explore participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic and to delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues (DeJonckheere 2018).

Individual interviews were utilized in this phenomenological research through audio recording devices. Analysis was conducted by identifying significant statements or quotes and from those quotes developed clusters of meaning and themes. The structural description showed the background that shaped the experience, how it was experienced, and in what conditions and scenarios it was experienced. Following a review of these descriptions as well as the researcher's own experiences, a composite description was developed that captured the core of the occurrence. This was also called the essential structure or invariant structure. (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen Irvine, & Walker, 2017).

In deriving common and individual themes, the succeeding data analysis protocols were considered. Transcription was reviewed several times. Developing codes enabled us to physically separate materials bearing on a given topic from other materials and went through a crucial step in organizing data. After all the data were coded, researchers grouped together all the units having the same coding. The objective consisted of reducing a vast number of individual codes into a manageable number of groups. In contrast, categories are one degree of abstraction above the basic codes. When the transcript coding was finished, all the objects with specific codes were grouped together.

The researcher ensured that the interview process was held purposefully, and their participants' responses were kept with high confidentiality. Participants were also reminded of the possibility that the researcher might contact them for further information to support their statements.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the study presents the themes generated from the responses of eight participants from Buenakapok Elementary School and Taluksangay Elementary School who are involved in this research study in Mercedes District, Zamboanga City Division.

Based on the gathered data, the following themes were produced based on the responses of the participants, these was grouped or clustered by means of the thematic approach:

1. "It is Beneficial to Teachers"

The CRLA was initially a 5-minute start-up reading assessment designed to help teachers quickly determine the reading profile of G1-G3 learners and develop appropriate reading instructional strategies. But as per experience of an inspiring teacher, the time may vary according to the pupil's standing in reading. For some, it may take

more than 5 minutes and for others less than 5 minutes.

After the pandemic wherein, we were confined in our home for almost 2 years, now we are back to reality wherein learning will take place in school. School children are very excited with this as they will be able to go to school, learn in school and mingle with their classmates or peers. This CRLA really helped us in assessing our learners when it comes to reading. Since we are in a home-based learning for almost 2 years we need to assess our learners to keep on track in their learning to be able to help them in whatever way we can.

Assessment, recording and reporting of student progress serves several purposes. The most important is to track progress and to improve learning outcomes like assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Assessment is a vital tool in helping students to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Reading assessments help educators on a day-to-day basis. Knowing a child's specific abilities allows a teacher to place students in appropriate reading groups and create center work that promotes specific skill development.

"CRLA is an assessment to identify the reading readiness of each learner. It is the simplest tool to determine a learner's status in reading. Finding out who are grade ready and how many students have learning gap. It is an easier way to conduct assessment and the teachers are guided with the process because videos are given during the orientation." - (Supportive Teacher)

"Hello ma'am, in my understanding about CRLA, el CRLA ma'am is a Comprehensive Rapid Literacy. Assessment in early grade from grade one to grade three. So, it is designed for the teachers to help determine the reading profile of the learners. And also, it is aahh used to develop appropriate reading strategies suited to the level of the learners, I mean reading level of the learners." - (Inspiring Teacher)

"Ahhm, for me CRLA is timely and relevant, why, simply because among all other reading assessment tool, it gives me the idea or early detection of who are those pupils who are really in need of intervention, who are really behind with other pupils so in way that we can plan ahead activities for them, as much as possible we individualize teaching because not all of the pupils are on the same phase. So, CRLA shall I say the easiest way to detect for beginners especially their level is not grade ready." - (Millennial Teacher)

"Ahhm, for me ma'am in my class na grade one, este el way para sabe kame si onde y aba level el bata. So, para puede kame man determine el level del bata na reading. Con este tool, ya puede yo sabe si onde level pa lang el bata na reading. I cannot proceed na next component si el bata no hay puede le el first component and so on. Before pandemic, we expect that the student can already recognize letter names and sound, but this time hinde pa gayot sila grade ready. So, este tool ya queda le guide de amon para sabe kame cosa el status del bata."

- (Observant Teacher)

"Hi ma'am, this CRLA is an easy-to-use tool in determining the readiness of our learners in terms na de ilarang reading abilities. Using this assessment tool can help me and todo dapatun teachers to quickly identify who among our students need remediation or additional support in reading." - (Active Teacher)

"As what I have understood, like the other reading assessment tools, Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment is also a very good and effective assessment tool that I used to assess the reading ability."

- (Responsive Teacher)

The tool being conducted individually to pupils draws out reading performance levels of students to know their reading profile whether they are grade ready or have a learning gap or behind in their current grade.

Rapid Literacy Assessment (RLA), which has helped Grade 1-3 teachers assess and diagnose their learners' reading readiness at the beginning of the school year. The RLA enables the teacher to develop specific reading instructional strategies for their individual learners.

Needs assessment is a systematic approach to assessing the knowledge, abilities, interests, or early behavior of learners or groups of learners before they are enrolled in a learning program. Needs assessment is an important process that is needed so that learners can verify their level of knowledge and skills, clarify their interests and thoughts, and determine their learning habits and choices when enrolling in a particular learning program.

2. "It is Timely and Relevant"

After 32 weeks of no class, teachers needed a rapid, easy to use tool, to determine what level of readiness and support the returning children needed. The beginning of school year tasks focused on letter sounds, isolated words and sentences in reading in MT (G1), Filipino (G1-G2) and English (G1-G3). It is done individually to assess each learners' profile in reading.

When classroom instruction is not enough, struggling readers require a more intensive approach to instruction in order to improve their skills. Intensive instruction is most effective when a highly skilled teacher of reading administers it. Choosing an effective reading intervention program is necessary and important to be able to address the learning gap.

The tool being conducted individually to pupils draws out reading performance levels of students to know their reading profile whether they are grade ready or have a learning gap or behind in their current grade.

According to the report, time is a critical factor. Children who haven't mastered reading by the time they enter third and fourth grade, when word problems are numerous, and reading comprehension is critical, might be set up to fail. Children who fall behind developing reading skills can quickly find themselves struggling to keep up throughout their coursework, according to the report, and there is thus concern

that inadequacies in reading instruction during the pandemic might have cascading effects for years to come. So, as early as in first grade it is important and necessary to help find the best intervention that could help learners address the learning gap.

"For the grade two, I conducted it during the first week of the classes kay there was an orientation before kay man conduct kita el CRLA prior con el de aton conduct of classes.

So, sometime in August yan conduct ia kame con ele but not all. Learners are called one-by-one and then if man start we have to record the time it starts and the time it ends. So, some kids tiene learners tan con sume time con ele three to five minutes stop ia ele onde component, others they consume up to ten minutes especially if they grade ready in grade

two because almost all component they can read. Other than that, all responses like in letter recognition and letter sounds it is recorded gayot ele kay tiene man le template onde pone then tan consolidate kame by class. So, that is how we conducted con el CRLA." - (Reflective Teacher)

"Due to distance learning not 100% del grade two attend face-to-face cuando grade one. Half of them only but out of the result maga 20% lang el grade ready but I am thankful.

The rest I am also guided io na otro si onde component kanila dale appropriate activities and interventions although most talaga like 80% slow but hinde man gayot frustration like slow lang sila. They can read some of the component in the assessment but they are not yet grade ready for grade two." - (Reflective Teacher)

"Hello ma'am, in my understanding about CRLA, this CRLA tool is a very timely response to the extended break that that learners experienced over the past two years due to pandemic. This assessment is designed to help all of us teachers to determine the reading level or profile of the grade one to three learners. It is really helpful especially to us teachers."

-(Master Teacher)

"Hi ma'am, this CRLA is an easy-to-use tool in determining the readiness of our learners in terms na de ilarang reading abilities. Using this assessment tool can help me and todo dapatun teachers to quickly identify who among our students need remediation or additional support in reading."

- (Active Teacher)

"Since we are already implementing the in-person classes, I conducted the CRLA individual have everything I need before I started like the tool, learners' sheet and the score sheet where I record their scores. I also made sure that they were comfortable and stress free during the assessment. Each student ma'am has given

time to complete all the given tasks if they can kasi mostly they cannot finish the assessment because mostly kanila bien slow." - (Responsive Teacher)

Needs assessment is a systematic approach to assessing the knowledge, abilities, interests, or early behavior of learners or groups of learners before they are enrolled in a learning program. Needs assessment is an important process that is needed so that learners can verify their level of knowledge and skills, clarify their interests and thoughts, and determine their learning habits and choices when enrolling in a particular learning program.

Moreover, CRLA is very timely and relevant because it will really help teachers to plan out recovery programs or intervention plans to help learners cope with the lessons and address their learning needs or learning gap. Following the alarming discovery, the Department of Education immediately developed a recovery learning plan framework to guide schools in addressing learning gaps. It is anchored on learning remediation and intervention, professional development, health, safety, and wellness.

3. "It is an Individualized Standard Assessment"

Assessing the impact of the pandemic on children who may not have sharpened their reading skills as well as expected is crucial, many experts say, as students return to school. That's because early literacy, the development of skills needed to transition from learning to read to learn, is foundational to later academic success. Studies suggest that many children have lost momentum on such fundamental skills. The university-based research organization PACE found that reading fluency in second and third graders fell about 30% behind the usual benchmark in a study comparing data from fall 2020 with fall 2019. Assessment is designed so that students understand their progress towards course goals and modify their behavior to meet those goals. That's why we need to conduct assessment in one-on-one, so we teachers are aware of the status of our students and suggest better plans to improve their reading skills.

Administering a variety of assessments is an integral part of instruction and allows teachers to take an active role in making decisions about the goals of instruction and the content of learning. They provide information that is fundamental in helping teachers to determine what to teach and how to teach it. Educators need to consider ensuring that assessments are not administered for the sole purpose of emphasizing outcomes. The benefits of assessment are immense. Above all else, it can also measure the effectiveness of learning strategies and provide vital information about the student's responsiveness to teaching, future learning potential, and instructional needs.

"Learners were assessed individually by calling them one-by-one. Record the time started and the time ended. Words and letters are shown through flash cards and wait for learner to respond. All responses are recorded. It's a case-to-case basis depending on the child's ability in reading. It takes two to five minutes for some students especially those who are poor in reading

and more time is given to readers who are grade ready because they tend to finish the whole assessment." - (Supportive Teacher)

"For my students, each pupil is unique. So, it means it really depends on the pupils. Si el bata slow, it will only take a minute or two for them to assess but for those mga bata grade ready, I usually end the assessment after five to ten minutes." - (Millennial Teacher)

"The CRLA tool was conducted face-to-face and one-on-one as the teacher administered the test to the students in my case, I also did the same thing. As the reading teacher and adviser in my class, I conducted the test during my vacant time or during class activity. While others are busy doing their work, a learner would be called to be assessed by answering the tasks. For my students, since I am teaching grade one, they were given the tasks in Filipino since there is no available Mother Tongue language." - (Master Teacher)

"It requires a lot of time gayot ma'am in conducting the assessment since one-on-one nga siya kinaconduct. It also requires a lot of effort on the part of the teacher and patience as well. Most probably it will take two to ten minutes to assess every student depending on their level of readiness. If medyo slow ang bata, it only takes two to three minutes lang po since they can't continue the assessment and for grade ready, it takes them more or less ten minutes since they can proceed with the assessment until they finish it." - (Active Teacher)

"Since we are already implementing the in-person classes, I conducted the CRLA individual have everything I need before I started like the tool, learners' sheet and the score sheet where I record their scores. I also made sure that they were comfortable and stress free during the assessment. Each student ma'am has given time to complete all the given tasks if they can kasi mostly they cannot finish the assessment because mostly kanila bien slow." - (Responsive Teacher)

Children who struggle from reading are still one of the major concerns that exist of the Philippine government. Once a child has reading difficulty, as the case maybe, he might also face some difficulties in other learning areas. The reading performance of learners is associated with their achievement in academics since reading is essential in developing study habits effectively (Balan et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2017). Furthermore, as these children struggle from reading, teachers also struggle to make ways in making 436 them good readers. As there are mandates in giving emphasis on student achievement, there came the important need for applicable reading assessments or techniques

such as informal reading inventories (IRIs) in Philippine public schools.

4. "It Allows to Discover Learners' Learning Gap"

In a study at Stanford University results from a reading assessment in the early grade nationwide show that the students' development of oral reading fluency largely stopped in 2020 after the abrupt school closures brought on by COVI-19. It seems that these students, in general, didn't develop any reading skills during the pandemic when schooling was interrupted and remained stagnant.

Distance learning may be online or modular based, both brought a negative impact on the students' lives though not all. Common problems are, in an online learning environment, students lack human connection, which can lead to mental issues such as negative thoughts, anxiety, and heightened stress. Many are finding it difficult when they don't hear words of encouragement face to face from teachers or receive feedback from their peers.

The common problems in reading that teachers in the Philippines encountered is poor letter recognition in sounds and names. Which implies that students are really poor in reading. Reading is a fundamental skill that is essential for successful education. Therefore, teachers must do something to address this problem and be able to come up with an intervention plan to help learners overcome their learning gap.

Sanford (2015) highlights that one key factor that impedes pupils' reading ability is their inability to process the individual sounds of letters which is needed for word recognition; while Rany (2013) claims the limitations of pupils' vocabulary proficiency impedes their reading ability as well as a challenge to teachers when teaching reading strategies to pupils.

Children may struggle with reading for a variety of reasons, including limited experience with books, speech and hearing problems, and poor phonemic awareness. Regardless of these reasons, face-to-face interaction with the teacher is very important, there is a better learning process and better ways in resolving problems as mentioned above.

"Due to distance learning for the last two years, results showed that most of the students are found to be slow in reading and fall under full refresher. Very few students were able to read the given words about 10% only of the whole population in my class."

- (Supportive Teacher)

"Most of them they are struggling learners, even letter names and letter sounds they cannot recognize. For me, most of the learners need reading support because their level is in the beginning stage pa gayot. That's why we need to prepare appropriate strategies suited to the learning needs of the learners."

- (Inspiring Teacher)

"For grade three, based on the CRLA result, majority gayot el result is behind meaning hinde pa gayot sila ready."

Yun na nga, I think in my class, only twelve to fifteen percent are grade ready and the rest falls under full refresher."
- (Millennial Teacher)

"Frustration ma'am mostly na grade one. Kasi mostly or almost all no sabe. Siguro grade ready is only two percent in my class." - **(Observant Teacher)**

"The CRLA result in my class is very low. Majority gayot they belong to light refresher and very few students only belong to grade ready. In my opinion, through the result, it implies that there's really a need for a literacy intervention." - **(Master Teacher)**

"When we conducted the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment to our students the result shows that almost all of our students do not know how to read ma'am. It implies that el result de ila is low literacy performance and I think this is because of the two years no face-to-face classes with the teacher. No hay sila physical contact na school wherein parents were not able to guide their children well and we can't also blame them because they have no knowledge in doing so. So, I think that is the reason why very poor el result."
- (Active Teacher)

"Sad to say that the result is very low. Out of 100% in my class, 3% of them are the only grade level ready and the 97% are with reading difficulties. These are the children or students who need extra support in reading especially in phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge and decoding." - **(Responsive Teacher)**

To be able to address learning gap and in efforts to support struggling readers, Park and Lombardino (2013) recommended specific strategies that teachers can use during instruction time to improve phonics skills: phonological awareness, phonics/decoding instruction, spelling instruction, vocabulary instruction, and morphological instruction. These components work together to increase students' phonics skills during word study instruction. Effective teachers use all of these during reading instruction time, to engage, model, coach, and provide direct instruction that supports students in developing reading skills.

One of the biggest contributions to learners falling under frustration level is because they lack the knowledge about phonemic awareness. As presented in some studies, a similar brief assessment instrument and offers detailed evidence for its validity and reliability, phonemic awareness and its role in beginning reading has the potential to confound supporters at both extremes of the whole language vs phonics over reading instruction. Regardless of instructional technique, phonological awareness is an essential element for reading

progress.

Research indicates that phonological awareness can be taught and that students who increased their awareness of phonemes facilitated their subsequent reading acquisition. Teachers need to be aware of instructional activities that can help their students become aware of phonemes before they receive formal reading instruction, and they need to realize that phonemic awareness will become more sophisticated as students' reading skills develop.

5. "CRLA Supports Reading Intervention"

There is really a need to conduct analysis after the assessment to help to determine appropriate intervention for individualized instruction. According to Richards (2002, p. 442) explains that a needs analysis should be undertaken for several reasons, including to highlight the needs of a particular category of learners in order to train them in a specific skill; to collect information about a particular problem the learners are experiencing; and to gather information about the learners on their attitudes, experiences and backgrounds. Thus, in order to ascertain the reading needs of first-year Sociology students, their reading backgrounds and specific reading challenges in Sociology were explored.

Assessment results are important evidence on which to base requests for funding, to make curriculum changes, rethink faculty lines, develop intervention activities and more. Disappointing (negative) assessment results can have a positive effect when they are used to improve the learning process.

Through this need's assessment stage, curriculum policymakers will acquire the learners' data, objectives, learning projections, learning style, and learning strategy preferences, as well as the language situation that they will enter so that the curriculum/program developers can develop the curriculum components or language training programs effectively and systematically.

This needs assessment process will also be a kind of "bridge" to address the gaps existing in the language training syllabus with the learners' needs. To that end, the curriculum developers must perform a thorough, carefully considered, and well-planned needs assessment. They should also periodically evaluate, determine, or decide whether the running program is still accommodating the learners' needs or has deviated from the expectations of the learners.

"The result has been a very useful tool to guide for me to determine their learning gap. Through this assessment, teachers will be able to look for appropriate remedies or instructions to address the gap. The result greatly helped by helping me plan out and prepare enhancement lessons and catch-up activities appropriate to the learning needs of our students. We can establish baseline where to start the remediation."
- (Supportive Teacher)

"So, through the result of the CRLA, yan de termine or yan identify io aquel learners ya ase io kanila group according to their level of readiness in their reading profile. For me, it makes my work easier because I know where to start

and what appropriate reading activities to provide for them." - (Inspiring Teacher)

"Yun na nga, I agree with the other teachers. It gives us the idea or the starting point on where to begin the remediation. So, through the result, we teachers can plan out already individualized instruction that we can use appropriate lessons, strategies and activities or intervention na puede kita dale para and catch up el lesson el bata. At the same time, through that puede kita mas man set el target, the target for each pupil specially akel bata behind gat le. By the end of the day, we can assess the status of the pupil si tiene ba improvement or no hay. So, we are guided as teachers."

- (Millennial Teacher)

"In my part ma'am, helpful ele because I was bale to determine el status del bata. Since sabe ia io el status del bata, so we can start man plan out cosa proper intervention kanila ay dale. Por causa de este assessment tool, ya auda este kanamon para sabe na el bata hinde pa gale grade ready na grade one. So, as grade one teacher puede io sabe si que modo io kanila man start na de ila lesson." - (Observant Teacher)

"Amo ia like ta abla io enante, for me its very factual because the assessment was done one-by-one, para kumigo correct ele kay tan observe man io con el bata asta ara cosa el bata. And because of that conduct, the result helped me to prepare catch-up plans not only in reading but also other learning areas I can prepare enhancement activities appropriate to their level." - (Reflective Teacher)

"Actually, it is really helpful and with the result of the CRLA in our school, we were able to craft/ develop appropriate reading instructional strategies like a reading recovery program which is done every Thursday and Friday. And hopefully this will really help our learners to cope with their lessons and address their needs." - (Master Teacher)

"Ahhmm, para canamon gayot ma'am, the result served as a guide for us teachers to know what proper intervention we should give to our students so that they can be able to cope with the lessons and be grade ready at the end of the school wherein that is our target for our students to be grade ready." - (Active Teacher)

"Because of this very poor result, I realized that I need to do something to help address my students' reading gap. As instructed by our principal during our conference, we need to provide an appropriate reading material that is suited to the reading

proficiency level of our students to be utilized during the reading recovery program and remediation proper which will be conducting every Thursday and Friday or extend as need to fully address our learners needs or the reading gap.” - (Responsive Teacher)

“Based on the result, an intervention is extremely need to help my students address their reading gap. As per instruction, the grade one to three teachers will conduct the reading recovery or remediation as our intervention to help address our student’s reading problem.” - (Responsive Teacher)

To be able to address learning gap and in efforts to support struggling readers, Park and Lombardino (2013) recommended specific strategies that teachers can use during instruction time to improve phonics skills: phonological awareness, phonics/decoding instruction, spelling instruction, vocabulary instruction, and morphological instruction. These components work together to increase students’ phonic skills during word study instruction. Effective teachers use all of these during reading instruction time, in order to engage, model, coach, and provide direct instruction that supports students in developing reading skills.

On the other hand, reading coordinators, it is also their task to address pertaining to these issues. As reading coordinators, they must develop a school-wide reading program that enumerates and delineates goals and strategies to help the school promote high-level literacy. Coordinate actions and tasks in the implementation of the School Reading Program and address challenges or problems that may come.

6. “Learning to Read is a Challenge”

Learning to read is a big job that starts with making sounds and ends, well, never really. Even adults continue to learn things about reading. However, the bulk of intentional reading instruction begins in preschool or kindergarten when students are taught about letter sounds and symbols.

After children understand the basics of sound/symbol relationships they move on to decoding text or putting letter sounds together to make words. We start to become fluent readers, or able to read at a good, steady pace with an engaging voice, only after we’re confident sight-readers, usually between third and fifth grade. From that point on, teachers focus reading instruction on helping readers become more fluent and, more importantly, understand what they read, or comprehension.

Adams, describes levels of phonemic awareness in terms of abilities to hear rhymes and alliteration as measured by knowledge of nursery rhymes, to do oddity tasks comparing and contrasting the sounds of words for rhyme and alliteration, to blend and split syllables, to perform phonemic segmentation such as counting out the number of phonemes in a word, to perform phoneme manipulation tasks such as adding, deleting a particular phoneme and regenerating a word from the remainder. Educators are always looking for valid and reliable predictions of educational achievement. One reason why educators are so interested in phonemic awareness is that research indicates that it is the best predictor of the ease of early reading acquisition, better even

than IQ, vocabulary, and listening comprehension.

“Some of the students are unable to read the words and poor sound and letter recognition as well. Also, the assessment can’t be completed in a day because some learners were absent. We also need to prepare flashcards that could catch the attention of the learners like flashcards on letter names and words. It could be more helpful if the flashcards are attractive and could catch more attention by the students. Teachers also need to adjust approaches to each student. Some of them are shy and timid and it’s hard to approach them and make them feel comfortable and as ease because as per experience some of the students do not respond even though they know the letter, or they can read.” - (Supportive Teacher)

“Taluksangay learners Mother Tongue is either Yakan, Samal and Tausug. Filipino and English are not their primary dialects. Though letter sounds are all the same, regardless of language/ dialects, it was observed that they had difficulty in understanding especially the directions given. Another thing encountered was that teachers who conducted the assessment had also difficulty in translating the directions to the Mother Tongue of the students since most of the teachers were non-muslim teachers.” - (Master Teacher)

“As I have mentioned ma’am, most of our students are really poor in reading they can’t even identify letter names and sounds. So, the literacy level is really low and it’s a challenge to us teachers to address este maga learning needs that we have to do something for them.” - (Active Teacher)

“When my students learned that I’m going to let them read individually, two of my students asked permission to go out and did not return. Another student cried when I called her name to read and assess. Some students spelled the words instead of reading them. Then the rest were just looking at the tool and no intention of reading or opening their mouth.” - (Responsive Teacher)

Progress monitoring can give the teacher information that can help learners learn faster and help teach more effectively and make better decisions about the type of instruction that will work best for them.

Teaching a noble profession is a daunting and challenging task. In the present era, with the advent of new methodologies in teaching and the way digital and smart learning has made inroads into the field of education, the role of teachers has also greatly evolved over a period. Today, a teacher is faced with the arduous task of keeping him/herself abreast with the latest inventions and strides in the field of medicine, education, science, art, etc. Upgrading their skills and knowledge from time to time is thus necessary and is an utmost priority today. A teacher

is also an educator. They have the opportunity of making a huge impact on the students, but with this opportunity come many challenges. The biggest challenge for a teacher lies in assessing the progress of the students and effectively conveying the same to the parents.

The importance of individualized learning plans for all children is another key, experts say. During the pandemic, some children may have made more reading progress at home than they would have at school, while others faced far more hurdles. Now more than ever, it's best if the strategy fits the child.

7. "It Allows Teachers Adapt Changes"

Children who struggle from reading are still one of the major concerns that exists of the Philippine government. Once a child has reading difficulty, as the case maybe, he might also face some difficulties in other learning areas. The reading performances of learners is associated with their achievement in academics since reading is essential in developing study habits effectively (Balan et al., 2019; Daniel et al., 2017).

Furthermore, as these children struggle from reading, teachers also struggle to make ways in making 436 them good readers. As there are mandates in giving emphasis on student achievement, there came the important need for applicable reading assessments or techniques such as informal reading inventories (IRIs) in Philippine public schools.

There were some limitations experienced by teachers during the conduct of the CRLA, but they were able to overcome and solved all the problems and be able to successfully conduct the assessment.

"Through the result, we as teachers need to devote more time especially in reading. I think we need to conduct similar activities to develop learner skills like phonics, consonant blends, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension. Through these different activities, we can be able to develop the reading skills of our learners and at the end of the session's students will be able to read." - (Supportive Teacher)

"So, challenges are we teachers needed to learn new strategies to address the learning difficulties of the learners specially the new teachers. They need to under go different trainings and attend seminar to learn these new techniques, approaches and strategies in teaching reading to our students." - (Inspiring Teacher)

"I suggest there should be a team or assigned teacher/s who will conduct the assessment who can speak and communicate well in Mother Tongue of the students so that instructions/ directions will be explained well. Another intervention also is to conduct reading intervention like what we are conducting in school the recovery program in reading."

- (Master Teacher)

"When my students learned that I'm going to let them read individually, two of my students asked permission to go out and did not return. Another student cried when I called her name to read and assess. Some students spelled the words instead of reading them. Then the rest were just looking at the tool and no intention of reading or opening their mouth."

- (Responsive Teacher)

Understanding your students' interests will help you to provide them with quality learning opportunities. By giving them the opportunity to explore areas they are interested in, for example, the environment they will be more likely to engage with the learning process. Same goes with how the teacher will deliver the instruction or assessment. It will also affect children's interests and learning opportunities.

8. "Instructional Materials Development"

High levels of stress are affecting teacher health and well-being, causing teacher burnout, lack of engagement, job dissatisfaction, poor performance, and some of the highest turnover rates ever. With all the work of the teachers such as lesson preparation (lesson plan and instructional materials), other related work in teaching, non-teaching workloads (such as coordinatorship), and other reports to be done contributes to teachers' high levels of stress and may result in poor job performance. This CRLA may be an additional burden to teachers like in preparing appropriate and attractive reading materials to use in the assessment.

To be able to do and complete the task given, one must practice time management skills. One of the biggest challenges people face is managing their time productively and coping with their workload. May it be teachers or non-teaching staff, whatever your role is, we should always consider our goals and priorities, may it be personal, and work related.

"I think the best way to address the challenges is teachers should be given complete kit for CRLA since it also takes time for teachers to prepare all the materials to make it more attractive and could catch student's attention more. Another, teachers also need to strategize the assessment for the students to feel as ease and comfortable." - (Supportive Teacher)

"So, for me noh na grade three, to prepare mga flashcards it takes time for us teachers to prepare. Dapat kasi el materials to be used should also catch the attention of the pupils, one way to motivate them." - (Millennial Teacher)

"I think first challenge is we need to prepare instructional materials that could catch the attention of the learners more. So, man take ele time kanamon as teachers because it's an additional work to do other than to conduct the assessment. Another challenge also, man adjust pa tu na maga bata because we did not yet establish rapport kanila, on the first week no konose pa sila

contigo, etu tamen que modo kanila man approach as teacher kasi tiene bata ta mira lang hinde tan cuento. Tiene sabe ele pero tiene le huya abla, so, el time ta queda le largo kay tan adjusts pa kita el approach con el bata. So, that's one challenge that we have to address." - (Reflective Teacher)

Buenakapok Elementary School, Taluksangay Elementary School and all other schools in Zamboanga City Division utilizes the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment which greatly helped teachers from early grades (Grade 1-3) assess and diagnose learners' reading readiness at the beginning of school year. The assessment was simple and it's timely and relevant to the present time. It was conducted individually with a given timeframe with the teachers' convenient time. The Rapid Literacy Assessment (RLA) was widely praised by teachers as a very useful tool to help meet learners at their level and identify appropriate intervention plan, they need to meet their most essential learning competency (MELC) goals in Mother Tongue (G1-3), Filipino (G2-3), and English (G3).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following are the conclusions based on the findings in the study.

1. The result of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment conducted by the teachers in early grade showed frustration in reading and most of the students fall under full refresher. Results were very low because learners cannot even recognize the very basic skills in reading. It implies that students are very poor in letter and sound recognition. Students may struggle with reading for a variety of reasons, including limited experience with books, speech and hearing problems, and poor phonemic awareness. Regardless of these reasons, face-to-face interaction with the teacher is very important and in identifying appropriate intervention plans to address individual needs of the students can help decrease the number of frustration levels in the class. There is really a need to conduct analysis after the assessment to help determine appropriate intervention for individualized instruction in reading.

2. With the challenges experienced by teachers during the conduct of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment in their class showed that students are poor in letter and sound recognition. Children who struggle from reading are still one of the major concerns that exist of the Philippine government today. Once a child has reading difficulty, as the case may be, he might also face some difficulties in other learning areas. The reading performance of learners is associated with their achievement in academics since reading is essential in developing study habits effectively and efficiently. The importance of individualized learning plans for all children is another key to help address the problem in reading. Furthermore, as these children struggle from reading, teachers also struggle especially in preparing all instructional materials to be used in reading. Teachers need to manage their time well, be innovative and resourceful in dealing with this problem. Though teachers within them are very flexible enough to address these challenges.

3. Intervention plan in reading provides additional strategies and techniques to boost reading skills in the areas of decoding, comprehension, and fluency for struggling readers. Reading

intervention programs act as a supplement to the mainstream reading program curriculum. Reading intervention entails intensive or targeted instruction on reading to accelerate those who are reading below grade level or with learning gap.

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