

## **Enhancing the pupils' reading performance using the contextualized intervention materials**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to utilize validated contextualized intervention material to enhance the pupils' reading performance guided by the Marungko Approach in Grade 2 Mango at Pigdaulan Elementary School. The study determined the level of reading performance of the learners before and after the utilization of the intervention materials as the basis for a localized intervention plan. In this study, a descriptive research method was employed. The pre-test results showed that participants were very proficient in letter level (70%), paragraph level (43.33%), and story reading (53.33%), while their proficiency in word level was evenly distributed among not proficient, proficient, and very proficient (33.33% each). However, they had low proficiency in reading comprehension (0%). Post-test results indicated improvements across all areas: letter level (99.33%) with very proficient, word level (46.67%) with very proficient, paragraph reading (76.67%), with very proficient, and story reading (76.67%) with very proficient, while reading comprehension is increasing to (6.67%) very proficient. Despite this, there was a noticeable improvement in overall reading performance after the intervention, affirming the effectiveness of contextualized intervention materials across various criteria, even though there was room for improvement in reading comprehension. The study acclaims the development of contextualized intervention material using the Marungko Approach, recognizing its substantial contribution to pupils' reading progress.

**Keywords:** contextualized reading intervention materials, Marungko Approach, reading performance

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental process of learning that enables individuals to move from recognizing simple letter sounds to forming words and sentences, making it a lifelong skill essential for knowledge acquisition and communication. As Dorado and Medina (2022) highlighted, reading is not merely a mechanical activity but a complex process involving decoding, comprehension, word recognition, participation, and fluency. It requires dynamic interaction between identifying written symbols and understanding their meaning. However, despite its importance, reading remains a major challenge in many parts of the world. In Boston, for example, children from low-income households, learners with disabilities, and those who are not fluent in English are particularly vulnerable to reading difficulties (Sparks, 2021). Experts point to the shortage of teachers trained in phonics and phonemic awareness as a critical factor, as these foundational skills are vital for bridging the gap between spoken sounds and written language (Goldstein, 2022).

The Philippines faces even greater challenges in this regard. Results from the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that the Philippines ranked lowest in reading comprehension among 79 participating countries and economies, and also performed poorly in mathematics and science. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2019) further noted that the Philippines recorded the highest percentage of low-performing readers among socio-economically disadvantaged students. Supporting these findings, Risonar et al. (2020) found that the majority of Filipino learners exhibited frustration-level reading skills in both Filipino and English. These results mirrored poor performance in the National Achievement Test, compelling the Department of Education (DepEd) to recognize the urgent need to address systemic gaps in basic education delivery (San Juan, 2019).

At the regional level, similar concerns are evident. In the Caraga Region, the 2019 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) reported a basic literacy rate of 93.6 percent—slightly lower than the national average of 93.8 percent. Access to electricity and urban residency were found to positively correlate with higher literacy rates, whereas rural populations and those without electricity lagged significantly behind (Canlas, 2019). Such findings underscore the persistent disparities in literacy linked to socioeconomic conditions and access to resources.

The urgency of the problem is further emphasized by recent local assessments. The 2022 Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT) evaluation in Butuan City revealed alarming results: of the 77 Grade 2 learners at Pigdaulan Elementary School, 30 were classified as “frustration readers,” many unable to read even a single word. The situation was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced many learners to rely on modular learning and parental support during their kindergarten and Grade 1 years. While some benefitted from active parental involvement, many did not receive adequate training, leading to severe gaps in reading proficiency upon entry to Grade 2. In the current school year, 11 out of 30 newly enrolled learners still could not reliably read a word or a simple sentence, with many repeaters and transferees among them. Even those considered “readers” often struggled with comprehension, paragraph reading, and short story engagement.

These realities highlight the pressing need for targeted and contextually responsive reading interventions. To address this, the present study was undertaken with the aim of

developing and implementing intervention materials tailored to the learners' context using the Marungko Approach. By doing so, the study seeks to improve the reading proficiency of Grade 2 learners, bridging gaps created by systemic shortcomings, socioeconomic conditions, and pandemic-related disruptions. Through such efforts, it aspires to not only enhance reading outcomes but also contribute to the broader goal of improving literacy and educational quality in the Philippines.

### Statement of the problem

This study aimed to enhance pupil's reading performance by using the contextualized intervention materials. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of reading performance of the learners before the utilization of the Contextualized Intervention Material in terms of letter level, word level, paragraph level, story reading level, and story reading comprehension level?
2. What is the level of reading performance of the learners after the utilization of the Contextualized Intervention Material in terms of letter level, word level, paragraph level, story reading level, and story reading comprehension level?
3. Is there a significant difference between the reading performance of the pupils before and after the utilization of the Contextualized Intervention Material?
4. On the basis of the findings, how may the contextualized reading intervention program be improved?

### METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design to assess the effectiveness of contextualized intervention materials in improving learners' reading proficiency. The approach combined descriptive and evaluative elements, providing a comprehensive understanding of the participants' performance while examining the impact of the intervention. A pre-test and post-test were conducted to measure progress in reading skills before and after the implementation of the contextualized materials, ensuring that changes in learners' proficiency could be systematically observed and analyzed.

The research was conducted at Pigdaulan Elementary School, located at P-3A, Pigdaulan, Butuan City, which is part of the Southeast I Butuan District. The school, situated approximately ten kilometers from the city proper, employs seventeen teaching personnel, of which fourteen are female and three are male, and has an enrollment of 504 learners during the school year 2023–2024. The specific participants in this study were thirty Grade 2 pupils from the Mango section who were identified as underperforming in reading through the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT). Of these learners, ten were male and twenty were female. Their selection as participants was purposive, as they represented the group most in need of targeted reading interventions.

To measure the learners' reading proficiency, the researcher utilized the revised FLAT Learning Tool, which was adapted from Regional Memorandum No. 674, s. 2021. This tool assessed performance across five domains: letter level, word level, paragraph level, story reading

level, and story reading comprehension level. The instrument had previously been subjected to validation and reliability testing. Experts, including a reading coordinator, a master teacher, and a quality assurance team member from the Division of Butuan City, reviewed the tool to confirm its validity. A pilot test with thirty Grade 2 learners from the same school was then carried out, and the results underwent statistical analysis to establish reliability. In addition to this standardized tool, contextualized reading intervention materials were developed, validated, and implemented, with learners' improvement measured through a pre-test and post-test design.

The data gathering process was conducted in compliance with established ethical standards. Prior approval was sought from the Schools Division Superintendent, the Public Schools District Supervisor, and the school principal. Learners and their parents were oriented about the nature and purpose of the study before participation. Validators confirmed the accuracy and appropriateness of the contextualized intervention materials prior to their use. After four weeks of delivering the intervention, the revised FLAT tool was administered again as a post-test. All data collected during the process were treated with strict confidentiality and analyzed responsibly to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

Scoring and quantification of data were carried out using performance criteria with specific score ranges and descriptive interpretations. At the letter and word recognition levels, learners were rated as very proficient if they confidently and accurately recognized letters or words with ease, proficient if they made limited errors, and not proficient if they struggled significantly. Similar performance scales were applied to paragraph reading, story reading, and comprehension levels, with distinctions based on fluency, accuracy, and the number of errors committed. For comprehension, the number of correctly answered questions determined proficiency levels, ranging from very proficient to not proficient.

The statistical treatment of the data employed frequency counts, percentages, and paired t-tests. Frequency distributions described how often specific performance levels were observed among participants, while percentages were used to profile the demographic distribution of the learners. The paired t-test was central to the analysis, as it determined whether there was a significant difference between learners' pre-test and post-test performance, thereby establishing the effectiveness of the contextualized reading intervention materials. Through these methods, the study ensured both descriptive accuracy and evaluative rigor in assessing the intervention's impact on reading proficiency.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved thirty Grade 2 learners from Pigdaulan Elementary School, specifically those identified as struggling readers through the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT). As outlined in the methodology, the research employed a pre-test and post-test design using validated contextualized intervention materials anchored on the Marungko Approach. These materials were systematically implemented over a set period, after which learners' performance in letter recognition, word reading, paragraph reading, story reading, and story comprehension was reassessed. The following sections present and discuss the results in relation to the research problems, supported by relevant literature and theoretical insights.

Before the intervention, the results indicated that the learners exhibited varying levels of proficiency across the different reading domains. At the letter level, a significant proportion of

the learners, 70%, were classified as very proficient, indicating strong familiarity with letter sounds. Meanwhile, 23.3% demonstrated proficiency, while only 6.7% were categorized as not proficient, signifying the presence of a small group that had yet to master basic letter recognition. This distribution suggests that although most learners had a strong foundation, continued support remained necessary for those lagging behind. These findings align with Sanders et al. (2019), who emphasized decoding and phonemic awareness as critical foundations of reading.

At the word level, the results revealed an equal distribution among the three categories. Ten learners, or 33.33%, were classified as very proficient, another ten as proficient, and the remaining ten as not proficient. This balanced distribution highlights a wide range of word-level reading abilities within the group, underscoring the need for individualized instructional support. Chamba and Avila (2021) argued that motivation and intrinsic needs are crucial for vocabulary acquisition, which underscores the importance of contextualized interventions to sustain learners' engagement in building word recognition skills.

Paragraph-level reading proficiency showed that 43.33% of learners were very proficient, 33.33% were proficient, and 23.33% were not proficient. This distribution indicated that while a majority could read and comprehend short paragraphs with fluency, nearly a quarter still struggled significantly. Best (2018) pointed out that paragraph reading requires not only decoding but also fluency in phrasing, expression, and pacing to simulate natural speech, which reflects the gaps found among those learners categorized as not proficient.

Story reading skills prior to the intervention displayed more encouraging results, with 53.33% of learners categorized as very proficient and 26.67% as proficient. However, 20% still fell under the not proficient category, struggling with fluency and confidence in oral reading. Observations noted that six learners frequently paused, hesitated with pronunciation, and demonstrated limited confidence. Studies such as Adriani (2021) and Wheeler (2017) affirm the role of stories in stimulating interest and emotional engagement, suggesting that well-designed story-based interventions could address these observed gaps.

The most critical challenge appeared at the story reading comprehension level. While 27.7% of learners were proficient, a striking 72.3% were categorized as not proficient, and none were rated very proficient. Many learners displayed fear of pronunciation, frequent halting, and an inability to answer comprehension questions even when capable of oral reading. These findings underscore the challenge of moving beyond word and sentence recognition to deeper comprehension. Chamba and Avila (2020) highlighted that comprehension strategies—such as using visuals, synonyms, and interest-based passages—are essential to help learners make meaningful connections with the text, a gap clearly visible in this group of learners.

After the intervention, significant improvements were observed across all domains of reading performance. At the letter level, 93.33% of learners achieved very proficient status, while 2.67% were proficient, and none were not proficient. This near-universal mastery demonstrates the effectiveness of the contextualized materials in reinforcing foundational reading skills.

Word-level performance also showed marked improvement, with 46.67% attaining very proficient status and 33.33% rated as proficient. Although 20% remained in the not proficient category, the increase in higher performance levels reflects notable gains compared to the pre-test. These results support Murray's (2020) and Best's (2018) assertions on the multifaceted

nature of word recognition, highlighting the importance of repeated exposure and practice in achieving fluency.

In paragraph-level reading, 76.67% of learners were classified as very proficient, 13.33% as proficient, and only 10% as not proficient. This sharp improvement demonstrates the effectiveness of intervention materials in enhancing fluency, accuracy, and comprehension at this stage. As Best (2018) explained, the four essential components of fluent reading—accuracy, pace, expression, and volume—were likely reinforced through guided practice and repeated reading activities.

Story reading levels reflected similar progress, with 76.67% of learners now very proficient, 16.67% proficient, and only 6.67% not proficient. This improvement demonstrates how the use of meaningful and engaging story materials, as suggested by Buffo (2015), can connect learners' reading experiences with their personal lives, thereby increasing confidence and comprehension.

Despite these significant improvements, story reading comprehension remained the most challenging area. After the intervention, 6.67% achieved very proficient status, 23.33% were proficient, and 70% continued to fall under the not proficient category. Although this indicates some improvement compared to the pre-test results, comprehension remains a pressing challenge that requires more focused strategies. As Abdullah (2018) suggested, activities such as repeated and timed reading, along with scaffolded comprehension questions, may further strengthen learners' ability to construct meaning from texts.

Statistical analysis using paired t-tests confirmed the significance of these improvements. The results revealed highly significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores across all reading domains, with p-values of less than 0.05. This demonstrates that the contextualized intervention materials made a measurable and positive impact on learners' reading performance. Consistent with the findings of Boltron and Ramos (2021), who reported gains in beginning reading competencies through the Marungko approach, this study affirms the value of localized and structured intervention in addressing learners' specific needs. While acknowledging that reading acquisition is influenced by multiple factors such as literacy interest and self-concept (Esmer & Günes, 2019), the intervention nonetheless provided a substantial boost in learners' skills.

On the basis of these findings, it is evident that while learners have achieved mastery at the letter, word, paragraph, and story reading levels, significant challenges persist in story comprehension. This underscores the need to further strengthen contextualized interventions focused specifically on comprehension skills. Developing localized materials under the Marungko Approach, particularly those that encourage meaning-making and engagement with stories, is recommended. Rivera et al. (2020) argued that contextualization helps link knowledge with learners' lived experiences, making comprehension more meaningful and accessible. Furthermore, aligned with DepEd's Learning Resource Management and Development System Framework and Order No. 76, s. 2011, teachers are encouraged to design resources that enhance learner engagement and achievement.

In conclusion, the results of this study clearly establish the effectiveness of contextualized reading intervention materials in significantly improving foundational skills such as letter recognition, word reading, and paragraph and story-level reading fluency. However, story comprehension remains a persistent area of weakness, requiring more targeted strategies.

Building on Lumapenet's (2023) findings that the Marungko Approach effectively reduces non-readers and improves multiple reading competencies, this study emphasizes the importance of sustained, localized interventions. By integrating teacher training, story-based activities, and ongoing monitoring, schools can establish long-term programs that not only address decoding and fluency but also nurture learners' ability to comprehend and critically engage with texts.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the reading performance of Grade 2 learners at Pigdaulan Elementary School, Southeast Butuan District I, before and after the implementation of contextualized intervention materials. Thirty purposefully selected participants underwent both pre-tests and post-tests, and the results were analyzed using t-test procedures to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. The findings revealed that learners initially demonstrated mastery in letter recognition, with 70% rated as very proficient. However, word recognition skills were widely distributed across very proficient, proficient, and not proficient categories, suggesting a need for vocabulary enrichment. Paragraph and story reading levels showed encouraging results, with many learners achieving proficiency, although a portion continued to struggle, particularly in fluency and confidence. The greatest challenge emerged in story reading comprehension, where 72.3% of the learners were classified as not proficient, underscoring the pressing need for targeted instructional support in this area.

Following the implementation of contextualized intervention materials using the Marungko Approach, significant improvements were observed across most performance criteria. At the letter level, 93.33% of learners achieved very proficient status, eliminating the not proficient category altogether. Word recognition also improved, with nearly half of the learners rated very proficient and only 20% remaining not proficient. Paragraph and story reading levels showed substantial gains, with over 76% of learners categorized as very proficient in both areas. While comprehension still posed difficulties, modest improvements were noted, with 6.67% achieving very proficient and 23.33% proficient, though the majority of 70% remained in the not proficient category. These results confirm that while the intervention successfully enhanced decoding, fluency, and story engagement, comprehension remains an area of concern requiring sustained attention.

Statistical analysis through paired t-tests confirmed highly significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores across all reading domains, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that the contextualized intervention materials had a measurable positive impact on learners' reading performance. The findings further validate the effectiveness of the Marungko Approach in addressing the needs of struggling readers, consistent with prior studies showing its capacity to reduce non-readers and improve competencies in phonetics, fluency, and vocabulary. The results also highlight the critical role of guided reading and teacher support in ensuring that learners benefit from contextualized materials.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that contextualized reading intervention materials, when combined with the guidance of teachers, significantly improve learners' reading performance at the letter, word, paragraph, and story levels. However, comprehension remains the most challenging area, underscoring the need for more targeted strategies that go beyond

decoding and fluency to include meaning-making and critical engagement with texts. The findings affirm the transformative potential of the Marungko Approach as an intervention when systematically and contextually applied, making it an effective tool to strengthen learners' overall reading competencies.

Moving forward, it is essential to prioritize guided reading as a central component of instructional practice, particularly in addressing comprehension gaps that were further widened by the lack of structured guidance during the pandemic. The integration of contextualized intervention materials should be consistently reinforced under teacher supervision, ensuring continuity and sustained progress. Moreover, the development of a well-organized course of action for the systematic application of the Marungko Approach is recommended. Establishing clear guidelines, strategies, and sustainability plans for its integration into the curriculum can maximize its effectiveness in enhancing learners' higher-order reading skills. Through these measures, schools can cultivate stronger, more confident readers capable of engaging not only with letters and words but also with the deeper meaning embedded within texts.

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