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THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY
(ENGLISH) OF THE GRADE III CHILDREN IN
FRANCISCO B. BARZAGA MEMORIAL SCHOOL:
A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

Abstract

Summary

The primary focus of this investigation is to determine the effectiveness of the dimensional reading approach as an individualized instructional program for Grade III pupils in the teaching of Reading (English).

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the profiles of Grade III Reading teachers as to a) educational attainment, b) years of teaching experience in Reading in the elementary grades, c) teaching practices in Reading of the Grade three teachers?
2. What are the a) socio-economic status, b) levels of academic performance, c) reading interests, and d) causes of difficulties in Reading comprehension of the Grade III pupils?
3. What is the status of the Grade III children



in Reading Comprehension?

4. Between male and female Grade III children, is there a significant difference in their reading comprehension abilities?

5. How effective is the dimensional reading approach upon the reading achievement of the three sectional subgroups namely: a) independent, b) instructional and c) frustration levels?

6. Is there a significant difference between the pre and post test mean scores in reading comprehension by levels?

The Research Technique. The present study utilized the descriptive nonreactive survey technique of research, with pre and post test data in reading comprehension as the major data.

As a secondary technique of research, the quasi-experimental technique was also used. This technique of research allowed the use of the natural classroom setting for the study, without the control of the variables in the classroom.

The 120 pupils were considered the input. These pupils' reading ability levels were classified as independent, instructional and frustration. These categories of reading ability levels were termed as entry behavior.



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On the basis of the entry behaviors of the grade three children, the dimensional approach in teaching reading was applied. The use of the dimensional approach was considered the independent variable. The dependent variable or output, refers to the improved reading comprehension abilities of the pupils, at the end of the experiment. This is also referred to as terminal behavior.

Findings. The following are the findings of the study:

Specific Question No. 1. What are the profiles of Grade III Reading teachers as to a) educational attainment, b) years of teaching experience in reading in the elementary grades, b) teaching practices in reading of the Grade three teachers?

There were 4 teachers who participated in the study. Out of the four, there were 2 who are B.S.Ed. degree holders with M.A. units. One is a M.S.Ed. degree holder without M.A. unit and one B.S.Ed. or Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education graduate. The four teachers who are all degree holders but only three are educationally qualified since the other one is a major of agricultural education.

The distribution of teacher-participants by their



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years of teaching Reading are as follows: There was one teacher who had 16 years to 20 years teaching Reading, one teacher had 11 to 15 years experience, and another one had 6 to 10 years experience. The last one had 1 to 5 years experience or the four teachers are all experienced teachers of Reading.

The teaching practices in reading applied by Grade III teachers in their respective classes are as follows: "Activities and assignments given within the grade levels of the children" ranked first with a weighted average of 2 or "always," "Variety of materials provided to the pupils' ability levels" ranked second with a weighted average of 1.75 or "always," "Appropriate materials used in teaching and individual instruction given to poor readers" both ranked third with a weighted average of 1.5. "Encourages pupils to tell their own stories" ranked last or fourth with a weighted average of 1.25.

Specific Question No. 2. What are the a) socio-economic status, b) levels of academic performance, c) reading interests, and d) causes of difficulties in reading comprehension of the Grade III pupils?

A. Socio-Economic Background. The data obtained for socio-economic conditions yielded the following results as follows:



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There were 20 or 16 percent of the respondents who belonged to the high socio-economic level; 27 or 21 percent who belonged to the above average level; 45 or 36 percent and 22 or 17 percent are in the average and below average levels respectively; and 12 or 10 percent in the low level. From the total respondents, 47 or 37 percent belonged to the upper bracket while 34 or 27 percent belonged to the lower bracket. These figures indicated that there are more pupils who belong to the average socio-economic level.

B. Academic Performance of the Subjects. The rating of the three subjects, English, Mathematics and Science were averaged into three rating periods and the three averages were in turn totalled and the general average was computed. These were categorized into: high, above average, average and below average and low, as follows:

Among the Grade III subjects of the study 18 or 14 percent belong to the high level; 29 or 23 percent belong to the above average level; 48 or 38 percent are average; 23 or 16 percent below average and 8 or 7 percent are in the low level. It is evident that 47 or 37 percent belong to the upper bracket while 31 or 25 percent are in the lower bracket.

C. Reading Interests. To determine the reading interests of the subjects, weighted average was computed,



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interpreted and ranked as follows: The respondents liked very much stories having the highest weighted average of 2.67. This means that inspite of the reading handicaps they had, they preferred to read stories if they are well motivated and difficulties are properly unlocked by the teachers. However, they liked also reading news, poems and rhymes and legends or folktales.

Books were much liked by the respondents with a weighted average of 2.62. They preferred to read books than magazine, newspapers and comics.

The respondents preferred reading than the other activities like watching television, playing or helping at home. Reading ranked number 3 with a weighted average at 2.61.

The results of this interest-questionnaire indicated that pupils' skills in reading could be very well developed since they are more interested in reading books and in stories with the proper guidance of the reading teachers.

W. Reading Comprehension Difficulties of Grade III Pupils. The causes related to the reading comprehension difficulties of the Grade III pupils are as follows: The weighted average was computed, interpreted and ranked. The data show that the respondents had difficulty under psychological factors having the highest weighted average of 14.61.



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This means that they had difficulty in the following: nervousness, timidity, irritability, lack of concentration, class disturbance, etc.

Physiological factors ranked third in reading comprehension difficulty. The weighted average is 3.07. There are some pupils who found difficulty because of defective vision, defective hearing, defective speech, sickly appearance and left handedness.

The results of the questionnaire indicated that pupils' skills in reading is affected by psychological factors, environmental and physiological factors in the order of their weighted averages.

Specific question no. 1. What is the status of the Grade III children in Reading Comprehension?

The results of the pre test given to the Grade III-1 pupils revealed that there were 27 pupil or 75 percent who belonged to the independent level in reading comprehension ability. There were 9 pupils or 25 percent who belonged to the instructional level and there is no pupil who belonged to the frustration level.

In section 2, there were only 11 pupils or 3 percent who belonged to the independent level; 20 pupils or 55 percent who belonged to the instructional level and 5 pupils or 14 percent who belonged to the frustration level.



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In section 3, 9 pupils or 25 percent belonged to the independent level; 23 pupils or 64 percent belonged to the instructional level, and 4 pupils or 1 percent belonged to the frustration level.

In section 4, 5 pupils or 20 percent belonged to the independent level, 8 pupils or 44 percent belonged to the instructional level and 5 pupils or 20 percent belonged to the frustration level.

After one semester of using dimensional approach, the pupils were given the same test (post test) and the results in terms of levels of reading comprehension ability are as follows:

There were 32 pupils or 97 percent of the grade III-1 class who belonged to the independent level and 1 pupil or 3 percent belonged to the instructional level. No grade III-1 pupil was classified under frustration level.

In section 2, there were 19 pupils or 28 percent who belonged to the independent level, 15 pupils or 24 percent belonged to the instructional level and 1 pupils or 5 percent belonged to the frustration level.

In section 3, 23 pupils or 64 percent belonged to the independent level; 10 pupils or 28 percent belonged to the instructional level and 3 pupils or 8 percent belonged to the frustration level.



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In section 4, 7 pupils or 39 percent belonged to the independent level; 10 pupils or 28 percent belonged to the instructional level and 4 pupils or 22 percent belonged to the frustration level.

From the total Grade III pupils, 84 pupils or 67 percent belonged to the independent level; 33 pupils or 26 percent belonged to the instructional level and 9 pupils or 7 percent belonged to the frustration level.

From the outcome of the pre test and post test it can be seen that the independent level pupils increased from 52 to 84 which mean that there is a great improvement in reading comprehension ability, as a result of the Dimensional Reading approach. Since the independent level or the higher level increased, the instructional and frustration levels decreased by 27 pupils and 5 pupils, respectively.

To summarize, the status of Grade III children in reading comprehension ability are as follows:

In section 1, 44 percent got above the mean of 22.49 in the pre test and 55 percent got above its mean 25.84 in the post test.

In section 2, 53 percent got above the pre test mean 16.74 and 53 percent got above the post test mean 10.1.

In section 3, 53 percent got above the pre test mean



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16.53 and also 53 percent got above the post test mean 21.06.

In section 4, 61 percent got above the pretest mean 14.06 and 57 percent got above the post test mean of 17.87.

Among the total Grade III pupils only 55 percent got above the pre test mean 18.11 and 60 percent got above the post test mean 21.57.

The total mean score of Grade III Reading Comprehension is 18.11 (pre-test) and 21.57 (post test). It was surpassed by section 1 in the pre test and post test respectively. From the total pre test mean was surpassed by the mean of 3 sections in the post test.

Section 1 got the highest reading mean (pretest, 22.49 and post test, 25.84). Ranked according to the magnitude of achieved means section 1 was first, followed by section 2, 3 and 4 in the pre test but in the post test the ranking was section 1 first, section 3 second, section 2 third and section 4 fourth. This rank achievement indicated that the 4 sections were not grouped in accordance with certain grouping schemes, such as ability or social maturity. They were naturally assembled classes, a quasi-experimental approach.

Specific question No. 4. Between male and female Grade III children, is there a significant difference in their Reading Comprehension abilities?



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The male and female Grade III children's reading comprehension abilities differ in their reading levels, as follows:

The comparisons in the pre test show that there are 20 males and 20 females or a total of 50 pupils who belong to the independent level; 25 males and 35 females or a total of 60 pupils who belong to the instructional level, and 10 males and 4 females or a total of 14 pupils who belong to the frustration level.

In the independent level, the males are more than the females by 4 pupils. In the instructional level, the males are less than the females by 10 pupils and in the frustration level, the males are more than the females by 6 pupils. The females have better reading comprehension abilities. In effect, there is a difference.

The comparisons in the post test data indicated that the number of male and female are the same in the independent level; the instructional level and in the frustration level, the male and the female have a difference of only 1 pupil.

It maybe safe to state that after utilizing the Dimensional Reading Approach the males and females are almost the same in their reading achievement in the 3 levels.



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Further, the results of the post test showed that the male and female members of the independent level in both the pre test and post test had a reading achievement greater than either the instructional and frustration levels. It is also noted that the male and female members of the instructional level group had a reading achievement greater than the frustration level. Frustration level, being the lowest reading level had a very low reading achievement among the three levels.

It is also noted that the male and female independent ability levels as well as the instructional ability levels are almost the same in reading ability in the pre test and post test.

In the frustration level, the male is a little bit greater in reading comprehension ability than the female.

The results of the averages of the number of boys who have improved their reading abilities is 14 or a total of 4 boys, while 10 girls have improved their reading abilities or a total of 42. For both boys and girls, there are 32 pupils who have improved their reading abilities to independent level or a total of 64. On the other hand, 2 boys and 17 girls have improved their reading abilities from instructional level to independent level, and 5 boys have also improved their reading abilities



from frustration to independent levels.

Specific question No. 5. How effective is the dimensional reading approach upon the reading achievement of the three section subgroups, namely: a) independent, b) instructional and c) frustration levels?

The data show that the independent level had a mean above the mean total for all Grade III pupils in both the pre test and post test. The pre test mean total is 18.11 and the post test mean total is 21.57 with a mean difference of 1.62 and critical ratio of 4.94, significant beyond the .01 level.

The mean score of instructional level (16.30 pretest and 17.62 post test) with mean difference of 1.32 and critical ratio of 2.54 is significant beyond the .05 level, and the frustration level (7.78 pretest and 8.16 post test) with a mean difference of .38 and critical ratio of .49 is not significant.

The data also indicated that the reading achievement of independent level was greater than the reading achievement of both instructional and frustration levels. The mean difference between independent level and instructional and frustration levels was statistically significant. The dimensional reading approach succeeded in bridging the gap



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between reading achievements among the Grade III pupils, notwithstanding the fact that nine (9) pupils remained to be under the frustration level, which was originally fourteen (14) as revealed by the pre test data.

On the whole, the dimensional reading approach proved to be effective in improving the reading abilities of 117 Grade III pupils.

Specific question No. 6. Is there any significant difference between the pre and post test mean scores in reading comprehension by levels?

The results of the t-test of significance between pre and post test mean scores in reading comprehension for each level are as follows:

The magnitude of the critical ratio between the pre and post test mean scores indicated that the subject grade three pupils improved and/or failed to be improved in reading comprehension by the dimensional approach in the teaching of reading.

For the pupils under the independent level, the critical ratio between the pre and post test mean scores 4.91. This is significant beyond the .01 level. This means that the pupils have improved their reading comprehension.



Similarly, the mean score difference between pre and post tests is 1.32. This difference yielded a critical ratio of 2.54, which is significant at the .05 level. This is an evidence that these pupils improved.

Of the pupils under the frustration level, the mean difference between their pre and post test mean scores is only .38. This gave a critical ratio of .47, which is too meagre to warrant a significant difference. This means that these pupils failed to improve.

Summing up, there was a significant difference between the pre and post test mean scores for the independent and instructional levels, and no significant difference between the pre and post test mean scores in the frustration level was established.

Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions were derived:

1. The status of the Grade III children in Reading Comprehension had great improvement from the pre test to the post test.
2. Reading Comprehension abilities differed significantly between males and females under independent, instructional and frustration levels both in the pretest



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and post test.

3. The Dimensional Reading approach proved to be effective for splitting a section into three levels. It bridged the initial difference among the subjects in reading performance. These results further showed that the approach "homogenized" rather than "heterogenized" the population.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions reached in this study, there seems to be a need for further study along this line as the present study for validating its findings.

1. A similar study involving other grade levels and other subject areas should be undertaken.
2. In-service training on reading especially for the new teachers should be provided.
3. A remedial reading program should be established for bringing all these pupils up to the standard reading levels. The reading guidelines for teachers should be followed and integrated into this reading program.
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5. A special reading teacher should be assigned



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in every school. While it is true that all teachers are reading teachers their competency to diagnose the reading comprehension abilities and to select the appropriate remedial measures for a particular difficulty is still inadequate to produce the desired result.

6. The school library should be enriched with the collection of interesting reading materials.

7. There must be available in each classroom a wide variety of books and other reading materials so that the major reading needs of each group can be met.

8. More researches should be conducted on the factors related to reading comprehension.

9. If a small group instruction in reading within a classroom is to be effective, the groups must be flexible and composed of different children at different times for differences in purposes. Schemes of flexible grouping within a class—dividing the pupils of the class into four or five working groups of each of many different daily purposes—is of great value when skillfully managed.

10. Children organized into one group for instruction in particular reading skills, may move over into other reading groups when other purposes are to be served. For every type of group work, except that for the purpose of training in specific skills and knowledge, each group should



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have its share of children with special talents and well developed abilities as well as those who are developing more slowly.

11. There is probably no one perfect method of teaching reading in the elementary schools today. The best method, no doubt, is a combination of a number of good methods, each applied where it functions best for a particular child. Likewise, there is no one best method of organizing a reading program. Sometimes whole class instruction is in order. Sometimes whole class instruction functions best. Making best use of various organizing devices may contribute to highly successful reading programs.

Implications. Grouping for instruction has been a standard operation in any classroom. It is believed that grouping facilitates learning. Such learning is facilitated or is not facilitated according to the scene or type of grouping adopted.

The age-old belief in ability grouping is refuted by the results of this study. The results indicated that relative to reading performance, the independent level pupils by sample or b population performed significantly different from that of the instructional level and frustration level pupils.

This study implies that dimensional approach suits



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well with the philosophy and procedure of teaching reading. This study further indicates that a quasi-experimental research method holds some promise especially to those self-contained classrooms found in remote barrios. Self-contained classrooms tally well with the description of a requirement in a quasi-experimental design, "naturally assembled collectives as classrooms."