

Effectiveness of Jolly Phonics Program towards Strengthening of Language Literacy: Experimental Case in the Philippines

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Abstract

The Programme for International Student Assessment result of being the lowest in reading comprehension is the main reason that compelled the researcher to conduct the study with the use of the Jolly Phonics program in strengthening language literacy. In addition, at the Division of Cabuyao, there is an issue regarding reading difficulties among Grades 1 to 3 of selected public elementary schools. Despite many strategies being applied, they still find it difficult to read and comprehend. The purpose of this paper is to determine the effectiveness of the Jolly Phonics program in strengthening language literacy and test the hypotheses that there is no significant relationship between the performance of the two groups considering the results of the post-test in language literacy. There were two groups of participants in the study, the experimental group, who utilized the Jolly phonics program, and the comparison group, who were subjected to the Marungko approach. Each approaches utilized thirty (30) pupils from Grades 1 to 3, combining the sum total of 540 participating pupils for three selected elementary schools. The instrument used was the pretest and post-test validated by experts from the City School Division Office. A quasi-experiment research design guided the conduct of the study. A frequency percentage distribution, t-test for independent means, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were among the statistical tools employed in the study. Findings revealed that there was a significant difference in the performance between and among the participating public elementary schools (ES) for Grades 1 to 3. For instance, in Grade 1, it was noted that the performance of Banay – Banay ES was a bit higher than Butong ES and was considerably higher than that of San Isidro ES; In Grade 2, Banay – Banay ES topped in their reading performance compared to other two elementary schools; and In Grade 3, San Isidro ES at this time showed better performance, running over in reading proficiency the other two elementary schools. The action plan was proposed by the researcher of the study to strengthen the language literacy of the learners in the Division of Cabuyao.

Keywords: *Effectiveness; Language Literacy; Jolly Phonics*



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INTRODUCTION

The future success of children lies in the ability to read fluently and understand what is read. Studies show that at least one out of five students significantly have difficulty in reading acquisition (Therrien, 2004). It can now be inferred that difficulty and the child's struggle in reading, to some extent, is an indication of an underlying learning disability. Basically, the problems are related to several varying factors exclusively related to reading. Usually, learners are not phonemically aware, failing to grasp the alphabetic principle and then applying these skills in a rapid and fluent manner and somehow relate reading to their own simple experiences.

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Learners' difficulties in any of these identified areas will prevent reading development. In the usual Filipino family setup, learning to read begins before children enter formal schooling. Children who have stimulating literacy experiences from birth onward practically have an edge in vocabulary development, understanding the purpose of reading, and later developing an awareness of print and literacy concepts.

According to Martin-Chang (2011) a classroom teacher observed that families of her students wanted to help their children academically at home but was often frustrated due to a lack of skills and understanding to help. From this observation, Martin-Chang conducted a study to determine how to remove the barriers that inhibit parental support of a child's reading development at home. She determined that for home reading to be effective, giving parents easy-to-understand directives, academic support, and the necessary tools are essential. Giving parents specific guidance for homework removes the barrier that inhibits parental support.

When a teacher uses a variety of strategies within classroom programming, meets individual learning needs, accesses extra support when needed, and works in partnership with parents to support struggling readers, success is more likely to be achieved. Learning to read cannot be forced, but each step along the way must be celebrated and seen as growth toward developing a lifelong reader.

To address the issues about reading difficulties in the Division of Cabuyao, the Marungko approach and the full implementation and monitoring of Early Language Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) were completed, and learning materials were provided. There were a series of formative tests given to the pupils. Teachers were trained on how to use the implemented strategy. Everything was properly documented. As a result of monitoring (evaluation), the number of struggling and non-readers remains to be higher.

Reading is not just an important tool for learning, but it is the basis for all aspects of learning (Oyetunde, 1997). It is very difficult to achieve academic success without being able to read. Consequently, pupils need to learn in order to achieve academic excellence. This highlights the close relationship between reading ability and academic achievement as well as the critical role of reading as a tool for a pupil's successful living and functioning in today's complex society.

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Oyetunde (2002) stated that teachers need to know the teaching strategies for teaching beginning reading and comprehension skills. There is in need for certain reading programs that will help teachers to be equipped with the reading objectives, lessons, contents, strategies, and assessment techniques. It will help the teachers to inculcate and develop beginning and appropriate reading skills in pupils. The nature of the reading process should understand by the teachers because instructional activities are usually influenced by the nature of what is taught.

This is supported by DepEd Order No. 12, series of 2015, which provides that the foundation of learning is in a child's early language literacy and numeracy skills. According to DepEd, these skills do not develop naturally and, thus, require careful planning and instruction. In order for children to develop the

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habits of reading, speaking, writing, and counting, there should be access to age-appropriate and culturally – sensitive materials.

According to DepEd, these skills do not develop naturally and, thus, require careful planning and instruction. In order for children to develop the habits of reading, speaking, writing, and counting, there should be access to age-appropriate and culturally – sensitive materials.

Guided by the aforementioned information, the study aimed to know the effectiveness of the Jolly Phonics program in strengthening language literacy and finding out other strategies on how to enhance teaching reading. The effectiveness of the Jolly Phonics program was attained and clearly observed among learners. It is just a matter of constant practice every day with the proper guidance of a knowledgeable teacher.

Formal education's most important outcome is to produce learners who can read and understand the texts being read. In a similar vein, it pointed out that making learners proficient in reading is one of the essential goals of the educational system. Also noted is that it plays a key role in the teaching of not several but all academic skills. Because of its importance, reading comprehension has become a subject of research conducted in the field of language learning and teaching.

However, it must be noted that reading comprehension is not an easy process. Hence, not an easy skill to teach on the part of the teachers and acquire in the case of students. A similar contention was claimed by when they maintained that reading comprehension is one of the most complex behaviors that pupils engage in daily. This assertion resonates with previous authors' view that nothing is plain and simple about reading comprehension as a skill and ability that learners must possess to succeed in their personal and academic lives. In the same light, researchers have claimed that reading comprehension is noted to be a result of not a few but several linguistic and cognitive processes. Moreover, it explained that reading comprehension, apart from involving a complex process, is as well influenced by various factors.

Great dire consequences await learners who have not attained reading proficiency; contended that if students fail to master reading and effectively comprehend, social and economic progress would not come easy. Concerning this, researchers claimed that those young learners who have not attained proficiency in reading according to their level by Grade 3 are most likely the ones who would experience academic problems in high school and college. At this juncture, it is noted that problems relative to reading comprehension among young learners are a perennial concern. For the reason that reading comprehension is closely related to achievement, the achievement gap among students can be addressed when a gap in reading proficiency is resolved.

Considering the importance of reading and comprehension, educators have been called to ascertain that support must be given to children to develop functional literacy as determined by the country's standards. However, it is contended that the goal of making students proficient readers must not be seen as a load carried alone by educators. It is a concern of the learners themselves, parents, teachers, school administrators, and practically every citizen. The task of making students read and not just read but proficiently read should not be left to the teachers alone. Each teacher must decide on his/her own and make his/her approach – not sustainable. It has been claimed that ordinary teaching is insufficient when the case of failing readers is accounted for. Moreover, the same authors maintained that the need for a reading specialist comes to rise. This implied that at-risk students could be helped through an intervention program that is structured and focused.

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According to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2018), the Philippines scored the lowest in reading comprehension. This is the main reason that compelled the researcher to conduct the study with the use of the Jolly Phonics program in strengthening language literacy.

Besides, at the Division of Cabuyao, there is an issue regarding reading difficulties among Grades 1 to Grade 3 of selected public elementary schools. Despite many strategies being applied, they still find it difficult to read and comprehend. For this reason, the Curriculum and Implementation Division Chief, Dr. Edna F. Hemedez, has implemented Project Alert. Under the aforesaid project, the English Team of Cabuyao, headed by its Education Program Supervisor in English, Mr. Jonathan H. Marquez, and the Public Schools District Supervisor In – charge of reading, Dr. Belen G. Gimutao, have been spearheading campaigns to resolve reading issues. The Division English Team came up with the decision to craft an assessment tool for the beginning reader. Its Division Reading Coordinator and Reading Specialist Mrs. Alona M. Raton, has crafted the reading assessment tool for the beginning reader (2019).

During teaching reading, teachers need a method that is suitable for the students so they can catch the learning goal. Fauziati (2009) defines the method as "an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach". Based on the explanation, selecting the teaching method is very important because it must be suitable to the characters of students. Besides viewing the reading ability of each student, the teacher must monitor the student's progress. Progress of the students can be seen after taking the assessment; here, the teacher gives feedback on the student's assessment. From the assessment, the teacher understands the ability of each student so that the teacher knows the problems during the teaching-learning process of reading, and the teacher can choose problems solving as soon as possible.

Relative to the above statements, there was really a need to conduct this study in order to determine the effectiveness of the Jolly Phonics program in strengthening language literacy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading

Reading is not a unitary phenomenon but rather a complex task that draws on many knowledge sources, including print awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary knowledge, and semantic and conceptual knowledge (Wilkinson & Son, 2011). To date, two broad sets of skills have been identified as essential for later reading ability: code-related skills (inside-out process) and oral language skills (outside-in the process) (Scarborough, 2001). Code-related skills are involved in decoding (i.e., translating the written system into meaningful language units), oral language skills involved in comprehension (i.e., combining language units), and oral language skills involved in comprehension (i.e., combining language units into coherent mental representations) (Van Den Broek, 2005).

Earlier research on reading development in preschool and early elementary children has focused mostly on the role of code-related skills such as phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and print awareness (Whitehurst & Storch, 2002). However, recent research suggests that although code-related skills are essential for reading comprehension, they do not necessarily ensure comprehension. For instance, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that although approximately 67% of fourth graders in public schools could read at a basic level, only 7% of them draw conclusions and make evaluations by integrating and interpreting information across texts. Similarly, another study that involved a representative sample of 1,324 UK primary-school children showed that

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10.3% of children showed about one standard deviation deficit in reading comprehension despite their adequate reading accuracy and decoding skills (Hulme and Snowling, 2011).

Fluent Reading and Comprehension

Reading fluency, according to Rasinski (2003), is the capacity to read quickly, easily, and expressively. Fluent readers can read with appropriate stress and intonation, ease, and accuracy. They may focus on comprehending the passage rather than trying to decode the words because they can recognize words instantly. According to Akyol (2006), fluent reading is defined as reading that is done with attention to punctuation, stress, and intonation, without backtracking or repetition, without syllabification or pointless pauses, and with attention to units of meaning. Since this definition emphasizes the importance of conducting reading as if one were speaking, doing so is crucial for facilitating the development of meaning.

Starting in the initial years of elementary school, reading fluency intervention and attempts to solve these problems should be made. In this regard, it is crucial to identify the underlying causes of children's reading challenges and to implement appropriate strategies. The goal of reading is to make sense of the text. Therefore, the inability to infer meaning from the text is the foundation of the reading comprehension problem. Only when the reader makes an effort to use her existing knowledge to comprehend the information supplied in the text will this challenge be resolved (Brassel & Rasinski, 2008).

Pretest and Post-test

Evaluating intervention programs is at the core of many educational and clinical psychologists' research agendas (Achenbach, 2017). From a methodological perspective, collecting data from several points in time is important to test the long-term strength of intervention effects once the treatment is completed, such as in classic designs including the pretest, post-test, and follow-up assessments (Robert and Elardi, 2003). However, several factors could hinder the researcher's capacity to collect data at follow-up assessments, in particular, the lack of funds, participants' poor level of monitoring compliance, and participants' relocation to different areas. Accordingly, the use of the less advantageous pretest-post-test design (before and after intervention) often represents a widely used methodological choice in the psychological intervention field.

Jolly Phonics Program

Morag Stuart (2021) carried out a study in London's Docklands, where almost all the children speak a dialect of Bengali called Sylhet. (The families were recent immigrants from Bangladesh). While the experimental group was taught Jolly phonics, the control group was taught with big storybooks, a popular method based on word memorization. The results show a large average difference from the teaching method used. They also show a major difference in underachievement. Moreover, finally, they show that this kind of phonics teaching is highly suitable for children with English as a second language.

In addition Daniela Caserta (2018) examines the implementation of Jolly phonics in two schools in Milan, Italy, where the children are learning English as a second language; one private international school and one Italian school. Writing in Italian, she makes recommendations concerning the training of Italian teachers to deliver the program and proposes that an early introduction of English through Jolly phonics in Kindergarten would yield the best results.

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Wyse and Goswami (2013) maintained that the strategies employed by the Jolly Phonics program provide concrete experiences that link print to objects, sounds, and actions. The outcome of this interaction determines the development of literacy of young children or struggling readers. A teacher's pedagogical delivery is the instructional strategies associated with activities linked to the development of phonetic awareness. The synthetic phonics method involves a variety of printed materials related to the teaching of letters, sounds, and syllables.

Marungko Approach

Laud and Reyno (2014) pointed out that children are taught to know the letter sound of the Filipino alphabet. Hence, this was embraced as a Philippine program for phonics instruction intended to improve the comprehension skills of beginning readers through the needed materials, according to Talley (2017).

In the study of Bustos – Orosa and Ferrer (2013), they discovered that in several public schools in the Philippines, such as the case of Mananao ES in San Manuel, Isabela, Philippines, the beginning reading teachers used the Marungko approach being considered as an alternative approach in teaching reading for beginning readers, instead of following the La Cartilla de Gretel approach which is a completely phonetic approach to reading and writing that takes the learners from the simple to the complex stage of competencies. In other words, the student will learn to read and write by first learning the letter sounds, then syllable sounds, and then forming words.

Moreover, according to Bustos – Orosa and Ferrer (2013), traditionally, the phonics instruction program used in Philippine schools is the La Cartilla de Gretel approach. This has its roots in the country's colonial past with Spain and in both languages having a regular autography. The new Filipino alphabet is composed of the following 28 letter – sounds: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, ñ, ng, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z. Of these letters, 20 letters are from the traditional Filipino alphabet, called abakada, and 8 letters are from the Spanish alphabet (c, f, j, ñ, q, v, x, z). Spanish instruction in letter-sound correspondence has traditionally been syllabic.

Synthesis

The cited literature and study for teaching reading among primary pupils should be followed in order to avoid struggling and non-readers, especially in District 2A, Division of Cabuyao. Being open-minded to the different teaching reading strategies will help a lot towards the attainment of zero non-readers, which is covered in the ECARP (Every Child a Reader). In addition, pupil engagement, parent's assistance, and the teacher's role can do.

Many strategies, as revealed in the cited literature, can play an important role in teaching reading among primary pupils. It was also proven that pupils learn in different ways. They are unique from one another. It was observed that pupils who are a reader could easily understand the other subject taught by the teacher. It is a foundation for learning different skills. It is noted that learning to read begins with learning the different sounds of the alphabet. Thus, the teacher should have the expertise to pronounce the sounds correctly, clearly, and fluently.

In addition, the cited literature and studies also cited that the Jolly Phonics program was appropriate for pupils for whom English is a second language. There was a collaboration towards the teaching-learning process.

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Moreover, the presented facts, data, and information contributed not only to building support for the findings of the study but also to broadening the knowledge of the researcher, particularly in the different strategies for teaching reading. The researcher believed that the knowledge formed in the course of the study would be useful in her professional path in administration and supervision.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study was a quantitative type of research study and adopted the quasi-experimental research design. A common type of experimental study, called a quasi-experimental study, lacks randomization. To ensure that the groups are similar, the researcher administered a pretest to both groups (experimental group and comparison group). A pretest basically measures whether the experimental and control groups are starting out equal (Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle, 2006). According to Mangal & Mangal (2013), a quasi-experimental type of research design studied the capacity to yield findings that are seemingly more or less true and typically calls for comparisons of score performance.

In single group pretest–post-test research designs, or pretest–post-test designs, the dependent variable or variables were measured before the intervention (i.e., the pretest) and after the intervention (i.e., the post-test). Typically, measures used in the pretest and the post-test were the same, and changes in the dependent variable from the pretest to the post-test were interpreted to reflect the effectiveness of the intervention (the independent variable). This entry describes the pretest–post-test design compared with classical experimental designs, the roles of the pretest–post-test design in human services and education evaluation, possible threats to the internal validity, issues related to the external validity, and ways to strengthen the design.

Specifically, the pretest-post-test non-equivalent group design is the specific type of quasi-experimental design to be used in this study. This design involves two different groups – the experimental group and the comparison group. The experimental group has a pretest, the treatment, and a post-test, while the comparison group has a pretest and post-test only (Yazon, Callo, and Buenvenida, 2019).

In this study, the experimental group was taught using the Jolly Phonics program, while the comparison group was exposed to Marungko reading approach.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were pupils from Grades 1 to 3 of three selected public elementary schools in the Division of Cabuyao. There were sixty (60) participants per grade level, and they were divided into two groups. Thirty pupils were subjected to the Jolly phonics (experimental group) approach, and the remaining 30 pupils utilized the Marungko approach (comparison group). Following the complete distribution of the pupils between two approaches for the three (3) selected elementary schools, a total of 540 pupils were identified and participated in the study. From these numbers, 230 pupils distributed among Grades 1 to 3 were identified and still belong to the struggling non-readers group, as indicated in the PHI-IRI documents of the SDO of Cabuyao City.

Sampling Technique

The researcher initially used cluster sampling in the selection of three (3) elementary schools. Stratified random sampling was then employed to reduce the number of would-be participants from

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grades 1 to 3. In the process, the SDO records of the current 230 identified struggling non-readers were considered in the selection of the participants. The selection of the remaining participants for the completion of an exclusive 30 pupils per approach was realized through the assistance of the advisers of participating schools.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was in the form of a pretest and post-test. The pretest and post-test that were used were the same for each group of participants. Constructed reading materials for Grade 1 to 3 was based on the competencies in K to 12 programs and the Jolly Phonics approach.

Specifically, the instruments that facilitated the conduct of the study conform to the prescribed reading tools by the City Schools Division of Cabuyao. A ten-page memorandum of the SDO signed by the Division Superintendent, where a complete attachment of the so-called Reading Assessment Tools for Beginning Reader (RATBer), stipulated the complete policies and guidelines in the implementation of the reading tools for primary graders. Since the said RATBer was the officially prescribed instrument for the whole School Division as promulgated in the SDO Memorandum dated December 2019, it was safe to assume the premise that the reading materials, along with their complete enclosures, were officially validated.

Research Procedure

The researcher sought the approval of the school's division superintendent and school principal of the three participating selected public elementary schools in the Division of Cabuyao.

Upon approval, the researcher asked for the actual number of struggling and non-readers for the reproduction of pretest and post-test reading materials and for the computation of the possible sample size. Random sampling was used in the selection of the participants. The sample size was replicated to get a more accurate result. Consequently, the researcher asked for the schedule of providing technical assistance among reading teachers of Grades 1 to 3. The study was for one grading period. There was pilot testing before the conduct of the pretest to test the validity. In the conduct of the Jolly Phonics program, the researcher provided the learning materials to be used. Once it is proven that using the Jolly phonics program became an effective and easiest way to teach reading and reading comprehension, it will be recommended to use in the Division of Cabuyao with the permission and approval of the superintendent and other higher authorities. There was an assessment every two weeks to monitor the progress of the pupils in terms of reading fluency and comprehension.

Upon collection of data, a statistical undertaking was made with the supervision of an external statistician to determine if the hypotheses were accepted or rejected. The result of the study was used as a basis in the preparation of the enhanced teaching reading.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following are the statistical tools applied in the study: (1) The reading status of participating pupils was listed through the number of pupils who have identified accordingly as Non-Reader/Struggling, Frustration, Instructional, and Independent. The reported mean grade of individual students was used and compared with the standard equivalent reading category of pupils. (2) The performance of the two groups using the result of the pretest and post-test was considered and summarized using the mean value and standard deviation. (3) The significant difference between the

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post-test of the two groups was treated using a t-test for the independent mean. To determine the significant difference in the performance between and among participating schools, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the conduct of the study, the following results have been revealed. Table 1 shows the summary of the reading status of Grade 1 pupils from the selected public elementary schools in the Division of Cabuyao before the application of the intervention.

Table 1. Reading Status of Grade I Pupils Before the Treatment

Elementary School	Group	Reading Status				Total
		Non-Reader/Struggling	Frustration	Instructional	Independent	
Buton	JollyPhonics	30	0	0	0	30
	Marungko	30	0	0	0	30
San Isidro	JollyPhonics	30	0	0	0	30
	Marungko	30	0	0	0	30
Banay-Banay	JollyPhonics	30	0	0	0	30
	Marungko	30	0	0	0	30

The similarity of value reflected in the table described the struggling and non-readers' status of the group of Grade I. Such a condition explains that the pupils have no mastery of activities relating to letter recognition and identifying letter-sound relations. At this stage, it is expected that at this age of learners, the majority of them can easily identify letters in the alphabet and send forth an initial, middle and final sound of the given word. Possessing such simple knowledge relating to phonics would be the usual starting point for them to gain proficiency in basic reading and later progress into an enthusiastic child reader. For beginning readers in a public school system to meet the reading demands of their social environment, teachers must develop in them reading readiness concepts and skills such as oral language foundation, print awareness, letter recognition skills, phono-phonemic awareness skills, sight word recognition skills as well as comprehension skills. These concepts and skills serve as a gradual development from non-reading to beginning reading (Davis 2000).

Table 2 provides the average summary information regarding the reading status of two groups of Grade II pupils from the three selected public elementary schools before the carrying out of the planned experimental activity.

Table 2. Reading Status of Grade II Pupils Before the Treatment

Elementary School	Group	Reading Status				Total
		NR/Struggling	Frustration	Instructional	Independent	
Butong	JollyPhonics	14	14	2	0	30
	Marungko	1	19	10	0	30
Sn Isidro	JollyPhonics	8	21	1	0	30
	Marungko	13	17	0	0	30
Banay-Banay	JollyPhonics	1	12	17	0	30
	Marungko	10	10	10	0	30

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Table 2 showed a varying figure describing the performance of ninety (90) primary learners, which are within the categories of non-reader/struggling, frustration, instructional and independent status. The thirty (30) pupils identified for each group subjected to the Jolly Phonics approach and traditional Marungko approach were unevenly distributed within the four (4) categories of the status of reader. However, it can be observed that there were a number of pupils falling into a category of weak readers for both groups, and such a condition is very much apparent for the three selected elementary schools.

Building a strong sight vocabulary is essential for analytical and critical thinking in many ways, as well as for reading, writing, and vocal communication (Davis, 2000). He stated that in order for students to be successful readers, they must be familiar with and at ease with the alphabet. Students who enter school with a lack of letter knowledge need organized instruction and practice to help them learn to recognize, name, and write letters (Rosenberg, 2006)

Table 3 provides a summary of information on the performance of Grade III pupils before subjecting to two important reading approaches.

Table 3. Reading Status of Grade III Pupils Before the Treatment

Elementary School	Group	Reading Status				Total
		NR/Struggling	Frustration	Instructional	Independent	
Butong	JollyPhonics	0	30	0	0	30
	Marungko	0	30	0	0	30
San Isidro	JollyPhonics	0	0	30	0	30
	Marungko	3	0	20	7	30
Banay-Banay	JollyPhonics	0	13	17	0	30
	Marungko	0	8	22	0	30

As expected, in the group of learners in Grade III, as manifested in Table 3, the average performance is comparably higher than that of Grade I and Grade II. It can be observed that a bigger number is posted in the category where the Grade III learners had already earned enough confidence in reading and understanding written statements in all their prescribed textbooks and references. Based on their distribution in the table, 95% of learners from San isidro ES were already identified between Instructional and Independent readers; 100% from Banay-Banay ES belonged between categories of Frustration and Instructional, and all learners from Butong ES were all identified as the category of Frustration.

Possessing a wide, all-encompassing understanding of the nature of print is one of the abilities that students need to develop before they can read books (Rosenberg, 2006). It is important for students to be exposed to various types of print in daily life, including book-reading customs. For beginner readers to learn reading comprehension, it is necessary to get them ready to hear a tale, read the story to them, and then have them answer questions to improve their reading comprehension ability (Torgesen & Matthews, 2000).

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Table 4. Reading Status of Grade I Pupils After the Treatment

Elementary School	Group	Reading Status				Total
		NR/Struggling	Frustration	Instructional	Independent	
Butong	JollyPhonics	11	14	4	1	30
	Marungko	1	19	10	0	30
San Isidro	JollyPhonics	11	14	4	1	30
	Marungko	16	2	8	4	30
Banay-Banay	JollyPhonics	0	18	12	0	30
	Marungko	0	22	8	0	30

Almost 75% of Grade I learners who were subjected to Jolly Phonics level up their reading status into Frustration, Instructional, and barely to Independent category of reader. Similarly, a little less than 77% of learners under the traditional Marungko approach were concentrated in the Frustration, Instructional, and Independent categories. The accompanying figure for Table 4 clearly still revealed a bunch of non-readers/struggling learners both in Jolly Phonics and Marungko approaches. In relation to this, interest is one of the important factors in order to increase the students' achievement in reading. Shahuddin (1990) stated that interest is a concern that contains elements of feeling. It can motivate the students to be active in their activities.

Table 5. Reading Status of Grade II Pupils After the Treatment

Elementary School	Group	Reading Status				Total
		NR/Struggling	Frustration	Instructional	Independent	
Butong	JollyPhonics	1	13	13	3	30
	Marungko	0	11	10	9	30
San Isidro	JollyPhonics	11	7	12	0	30
	Marungko	16	2	12	0	30
Banay-Banay	JollyPhonics	0	2	16	12	30
	Marungko	0	8	11	11	30

As can be gleaned from Table 5, the distribution of the Grade II pupils considerably does not change much compared to their distribution before the conduct of the reading approaches. Thirteen percent (13%) more of the pupils for Jolly Phonics and 18% for Marungko hovered in the Non-Reader/Struggling category, and 24% still lingered in the same Frustration category of reader where initially the group was identified. For both groups, almost 61% upgraded their reading performance into the next two higher reading categories.

Developing Child's Reading Readiness is the major emphasis of early elementary classroom instruction. When students fail to develop effective reading strategies, classroom teachers seek effective interventions to improve a student's ability to read. Research conducted by Bufalino and Wang (2010) suggested that effective remedial instruction occurs in a small homogeneous group or in a one-on-one setting.

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Table 6. Reading Status of Grade III Pupils After the Treatment

Elementary School	Group	Reading Status				Total
		NR/Struggling	Frustration	Instructional	Independent	
Butong	JollyPhonics	0	14	16	0	30
	Marungko	0	2	20	8	30
San Isidro	JollyPhonics	0	0	0	30	30
	Marungko	0	0	3	27	30
Banay-Banay	JollyPhonics	0	1	15	14	30
	Marungko	0	0	9	21	30

A close inspection of the distribution of the number of Grade III pupils in Table 6 indicated the improved reading condition of the two groups of learners. The sweeping statement confirming such perception is the absence of pupils in the non-reader/struggling category of reader. Such description is true to the two separate groups of pupils as well as to the three selected participating public elementary schools. Almost 49% of pupils subjected to the Jolly Phonics approach and 64% percent under the Marungko approach are now in the bracket of Independent reader; thirty-four percent of pupils attending the Jolly Phonics instruction and 35.5% for Marungko landed the spot of Instructional reader, and close to 17% of pupils in Jolly Phonics approach and barely 2% only from Marungko approach are identified under the Frustration reader.

Ferrer (2013) mentioned that reading might be a difficult and sophisticated process that needs many cognitive skills, as mentioned by Koyuncu & Firat (2020), from the study of Adams (1990), the very fact points to the thought that when simplified and this existing simple process is further atomized into an easier way which somehow the method meets the demand of the learners, during this context at the start of the early reading stage, then the approach will prove to be effective.

Table 7. Test of Significant Difference in the Performance of Two Groups of Grade I in Reading Before and After the Treatment (Cohen's $d = 0.23$; small effect)

Period	Group	Mean	Test of Difference			
			Mean Difference	df	t-value	p-value
Before the Treatment	Jolly Phonics	70.00	---	---	---	---
	Marungko	70.00	---	---	---	---
After the Treatment	Jolly Phonics	85.34	-1.578	178	1.603	.111
	Marungko	86.92				

The computed p-value of .111 turns out to be one of the essential indexes; whether a significant difference exists is not significant at all. Initially, it can be inferred at this point that the Jolly Phonics as the most preferred approach did not provide convincing means to bring satisfying results and glaring difference to shoving off the Marungko approach. However, referring to the computed effect size of 0.23, the practical significance as the effect size used to be interpreted brings a **small effect** which is practically suggested by an obvious increase in the average performance of the two groups. In other words, the small effect, as the changes in the grades showed, latently occurred in a certain phase of their learning which the learners feel and know by themselves.

According to Hammil (2004), children's familiarity with letter names and sounds is the best indicator of their future reading and spelling abilities. Therefore, their inability to name letters merely

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results in a series of failures in higher-level abilities, such as the case of combining these letters to make syllables and then words.

Table 8. Test of Significant Difference in the Performance of Two Groups of Grade II in Reading Before and After the Treatment

Period	Group	Mean	Test of Difference			
			Mean Difference	df	t-value	p-value
Before the Treatment	Jolly Phonics	85.37	.589	178	.616	.539
	Marungko	84.78				
After the Treatment	Jolly Phonics	90.80	.744	178	.861	.390
	Marungko	90.06				

As indicated in Table 8, encapsulating the significant difference between the performance of Grade II pupils before and after subjecting to different reading approaches, the computed mean difference of .744 was too small to draw out any significant difference. Even if the two groups of pupils placed through Jolly Phonics and Marungko reading approaches obtained an impressive mean performance of 90.80 and 90.06, respectively, their mean difference was not enough to infer that one approach is better than the other. Likewise, the computed effect size is very much below the lowest Cohen's threshold value of .20 in order to qualify and validate that, to some extent, the acquisition of essential competencies took place.

According to Ramos (2021), the teaching beginning reading approach can therefore assist the teacher in navigating the teaching-learning process along with the teacher's pedagogical skills, which can affect improving the learners' performance. In this situation, the development of foundational skills is

Table 9. Test of Significant Difference in the Performance of Two Groups of Grade 3 in Reading Before and After the Treatment (Cohen's $d = 0.63$, Medium Effect)

Period	Group	Mean	Test of Difference			
			Mean Difference	df	t-value	p-value
Before the Treatment	Jolly Phonics	89.89	.111	178	.200	.841
	Marungko	89.78				
After the Treatment	Jolly Phonics	93.78	-2.156	178	-4.223	.000
	Marungko	95.93				

It is clearly indicated in the table that no significant difference was noted in the two groups before the reading intervention was conducted. The post-test result explains that a significant difference in the mean performance of the two groups exists. The mean difference of 2.156 is enough to produce a p-value lower than the .05 level of significance. Cohen's d value of 0.63 clarifies the medium effect of every reading lesson and phonics brought into the personal being of individual Grade 3 pupils. It is safe to say that at this stage and for the Grade 3 pupils, the approaches were seriously imbibed and imposed positive changes toward improved language literacy.

According to McBride-Chang (1999), knowledge of the letter names and letter sounds alone predicts future literacy abilities, as opposed to other significant predictors like phonological awareness and oral language. Simply put, if these students continue to have a poor understanding of letter names and sounds, they are more likely to struggle with learning to read and be labeled as having reading

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disabilities. If nothing is done to help them, they will subsequently lag behind their peers in reading acquisition, which will result in gaps in their spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills, according to Torgesen (2002).

Table 10. Test of Significant Difference in the Performance of Grade 1 Between and Among ES

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-value	p-value
Between ES	656.93	2	328.47	8.06	.000
Within ES	7211.87	177	40.74		
Total	7868.80	179			

Table 10 provides the test of significant differences in the performance between and among the participating schools for Grade I pupils. The table shows the $F(2,177) = 8.06$; $p < .01$, which clarifies that there is a significant difference in the performance between and among the participating schools. Yayan (2018) mentioned that there is in need to support teaching reading to become successful. It is important to think about how beginning readers learn. The development of reading comprehension skills in beginning readers is significantly important because it is a foundation for learning other academic areas within the classroom. As added by Jeon (2012) that a child who learns to read well will very likely encounter less difficulty in all academic subjects. When a student has difficulty in reading, generally, all academic areas are influenced.

Table 11. Test of Significant Difference in the Performance of Grade II Between and Among ES

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-value	p-value
Between ES	1692.74	2	846.37	34.72	.000
Within ES	4315.32	177	24.38		
Total	6008.06	179			

For the group of Grade 2 pupils in three participating elementary schools, the performance of Banay- Banay ES ($\bar{x} = 93.57$) is considerably high compared to Butong ES ($\bar{x} = 91.45$) and greatly higher than the performance of San Isidro ES ($\bar{x} = 86.27$). Between and among the participating elementary schools, it was the posted mean performance of San Isidro ES that defined the significant difference.

Based on the findings of the study, the action plan proposed by the researcher of the study is to strengthen teaching reading in the selected public elementary schools in Cabuyao. The study was unique compared to the other study regarding reading because the medium of instruction is English and internationally used.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the performance of the experimental group and the comparison group for Grade 1 and 2 pupils in three selected elementary schools is partly accepted. Moreover, between groups of Grade pupils, a significant difference was very much evident in favor of the

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comparison group. Nonetheless, the Jolly Phonics approach, with its initial introduction to the primary learners, exerts a great deal of influence, captivating interest for beginning learners.

The hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between and among the participating elementary schools, is hereby rejected. A significant difference was noted where Banay - Banay and Butong ES spell the difference through their high performance in reading capability in both of Grade 1 and 2; in Grade 3 pupils, the significant difference was defined and made explicit with the superior reading performance showed by learners of San Isidro ES.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The participants of the study were Grades 1 to 3 struggling and non-readers of three selected public elementary schools in the Division of Cabuyao. The composition of participants was sixty (60) struggling and non-readers per grade level approximately that was divided into two Jolly Phonics (experimental group) and Marungko Approach (comparison group).

This study was limited to the use of the Jolly Phonics program and the Marungko approach in teaching reading using reading test materials as the main data-gathering tool. The pretest and post-test were the same. Jolly Phonics is a child-centered and entertaining technique for teaching synthetic phonics. With motions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is extremely engaging for children. The Marungko strategy is intended to provide first-grade students with the necessary reading abilities to increase their reading achievement. Similarly, it attempts to build a training program to improve teachers' reading instruction skills in the primary grades, particularly in Grade 1.

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