

READERS Intervention Program for Readers-at-Risk

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Abstract- *This single-subject experimental study combined with group analysis for comparison of gains on performance developed and implemented a 10-week reading intervention program called Restructured Approach in Developing Early Reading Skills (READERS). For Grade One readers-at-risk. Case studies were incorporated with single-factor experiment results. Mean scores of the small group setup were compared with those of the individual subject in the one-on-one setup to determine which subjects made more gains after the intervention. The study found that READERS improved the reading proficiency of the four Grade One readers-at-risk in terms of book and print awareness; mastery of the alphabet; phonemic awareness; textual read aloud; journal writing; and comprehension. It was further found that in general, READERS improved the proficiency of both setups in the six components of the program, with no significant difference between the two setups. Contrary to the conventional belief that one-on-one is the most effective instructional arrangement, this study found no advantage of one-on-one intervention over the group instruction. Findings of the study revealed that group-oriented early intervention, including some based on the RR procedures, appear to be promising and that a student grouping of 1:3 works as well as a grouping of 1:1.*

Key words: reading intervention, readers-at-risk, early reading, early childhood

INTRODUCTION

Living in the information age poses a lot of challenges for educators in using technology to enhance reading instruction and reshape reading habits. However, even as the reading teacher learns to meet this challenge, the principal concern today still has to do with how reading instruction can be improved using tested strategies and techniques and translating teaching theories into practice (Hidalgo, 2001). In short, the main challenge to educators is to focus on effective classroom work and to help the readers-at-risk.

Reading is the basic tool for learning in all subject

areas. To be successful in school, a child must have skills in reading. Because of this, reading has always been regarded as the primary key to learning in the total educational process. A child who learns this skill quickly and easily is often considered as superior and is likely to experience academic success (Otaiba & Fuchs, 2002). On the other hand, poor reading skills lead to a lower overall academic achievement and first grade seems to be a critical development period (Haager & Windmueller, 2002).

It is possible that some children are falling behind their peers and they could be at risk of failure. The population of students considered at high risk of reading failure is increasing. Stanovich, (in Otaiba & Fuchs, 2002) stated that the gap between poor readers and their progressing peers widens over the elementary years. This is the reason why most schools organize remedial reading programs to fill the gap between children reading within the grade level and those who are reading below grade level.

Reading gap is a term used to describe the difference between the target level of proficiency and the actual level of proficiency. With proper instruction, about 85% to 90% of students in any classroom should be able to read text for a particular grade level. However, few classrooms attain this goal.

The Department of Education Region I implements the Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) and administers a region-wide Oral Reading Diagnosis which is usually done in July. Another oral reading test is conducted before the school year ends. In July 2002, an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) was given to Grades II-VI pupils in all schools in the Region. Out of 346,625 pupils tested, 31,695 or 9.14 percent were found to be non-readers (most are from Grade II); 100,091 or 28.87% were on frustration level; 160,840 or 46.40 percent were on instructional level; and 53,999 or 15.58 percent were on independent level. This shows that some children are still reading below grade level. This even shows that by the end of Grade I, there are still non-readers.

Remedial reading programs have been imple-

mented in schools but lack a specific format that caters to the needs of readers-at-risk and a regular monitoring scheme on each child's performance in every reading component. The current emphasis on first-grade reading intervention draws its impetus from New Zealand's Reading Recovery Program after which other early reading interventions have patterned their formats. Reading Recovery (RR), an intervention program designed to reduce reading failures for Grade I readers-at-risk, is based on the premise that intensive high-quality help during the early years of schooling will result in better performance in reading.

On the other hand, Catch Them Early (CTE) Intervention program is a modification of Reading Recovery for Filipino readers-at-risk. The program drew features from five early intervention programs namely: Early Reading Intervention, Reading Recovery, Boulder Project, Winston-Salem, and Success For All. It aims to enable Filipino readers-at-risk to develop phonemic awareness, strategies of word identification, oral reading fluency, and eventually the ability to read independently and monitor their own reading. Such a program shall be the focus of the present study.

This research specifically had a two-fold purpose. First, it attempted to help readers-at-risk approach the limit of their ability to achieve and catch up with their classmates. Second, it sought to determine if the implementation of a small group intervention using the modified 'Catch Them Early' (CTE) strategies will improve the reading proficiency of Grade I readers-at-risk.

The study aimed to find out if there would be gains in the reading performance of Grade I readers-at-risk who are given a small group and one-on-one intervention program using the modified CTE strategies. Specifically the research attempted to answer these questions: Are there differences in the reading proficiency of Grade I readers-at-risk before and after the reading intervention program, in terms of: Book and print awareness, Mastery of the alphabet, Phonemic awareness, Textual read aloud, Comprehension and Journal writing? and Are there differences between the gains made by the Grade I readers-at-risk in a group intervention setup and one-on-one setup?

In most schools, one of the predominant problems aside from pupils' misbehavior is how to lessen the number of remedial readers and what kind of Remedial Program to be implemented. This study would hopefully help schools bridge the reading gap of those who are achieving and those who are left behind particularly in reading performance. In highlighting the implications of the findings for helping children to

learn to read in English, teachers and school administrators may perceive the importance of early detection of readers-at-risk and the need for an early reading intervention program.

The study also provides schools a model for structuring early reading intervention programs as well as a point of reference on intervention setup, procedures, materials, and assessment procedures particularly for readers-at-risk. Furthermore, the results of the study could help school administrators improve the remedial reading programs already being implemented. Results of this study can contribute to the development of teachers' awareness of the reading intervention strategies for readers-at-risk. It can also serve as additional input on early reading intervention research.

READERS, the intervention program developed in this study, is not intended to replace good remedial reading programs. Rather, it is designed to supplement remedial instruction primarily to help Grade One pupils who are in danger of failing and to bridge the gap between those children who are progressing and those who are lagging behind in reading. Furthermore, the program is not designed to cater to the needs of special children and children with severe reading disability.

The intervention was done exclusively by four low-achieving Grade One pupils of Pangasinan State University KD-Elementary Laboratory School, Bayambang Campus, who were recommended by their former Grade One teachers to be in the intervention on the basis of their reading performance in their respective classes. The four subjects belonged to the lowest rank, particularly in Reading subject.

One limitation of the study was the small sample from which subjects who were deemed readers-at-risk could be drawn from. Furthermore, though randomly assigned, the subjects in the group setup had higher baseline scores than the one-on-one setup.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a single-subject experimental design combined with group mean analysis of score to validate the effectiveness of the modified CTE procedures called READERS. Case studies were incorporated with single-factor experiment results to strengthen and build the consistency of the general design of the study followed by the comparison between the small group setup with the one-on-one setup. The READERS program served as the treatment for the four Grade One readers-at-risk of Pangasinan State University KD-Elementary Laboratory School. For ethical considerations, permission/consent of parents of the four subjects was

sought.

Before the start of the experiment, each subject was given a pretest on the different components covered by the READERS program. At the end of the program, all subjects were given a parallel form of the pretest to serve as posttest. The scores of the learners in the pretest and posttest were compared to determine the effectiveness of READERS program in both setups and the subjects' proficiency in the different components.

The study was conducted using a small group consisting of three readers-at-risk and a one-on-one intervention program. The group intervention was composed of two boys and a girl. One boy was placed in the one-on-one setup. Selection of pupils for either setup was done at random using the attendance sheet. The first three who came were placed in the group setup and the last to come was put in the one-on-one setup.

Their former Grade One teachers recommended all the four subjects. They all came from the Laboratory School of Pangasinan State University, Bayambang Campus. The school was chosen in particular for convenience because the researcher teaches in the said school.

The same set of pupils was used in pilot testing. A one-week run with the subjects was done to try out procedures and see the level of materials appropriate for the samples.

Figure 1 in the next section shows the conceptual framework of the study. The intervention program developed for the study is called Restructured Approach in Developing Early Reading Skills (READERS). The figure shows the major elements of the program and the expected result, which is improved reading ability of the at-risk child. The independent variables are the program components: book and print awareness, mastery of the alphabet, phonemic awareness activities, read aloud, writing activities, and comprehension activities, as elements of early intervention that are expected to cause significant development on the dependent variables – improved reading ability of the child who undergoes intervention.

Many children need extra help in reading but not require individual tutoring. First grade teachers in public elementary schools handle an average of 45 pupils in a classroom and with the increasing number of readers-at-risk in the class, individual tutoring may not be applicable.

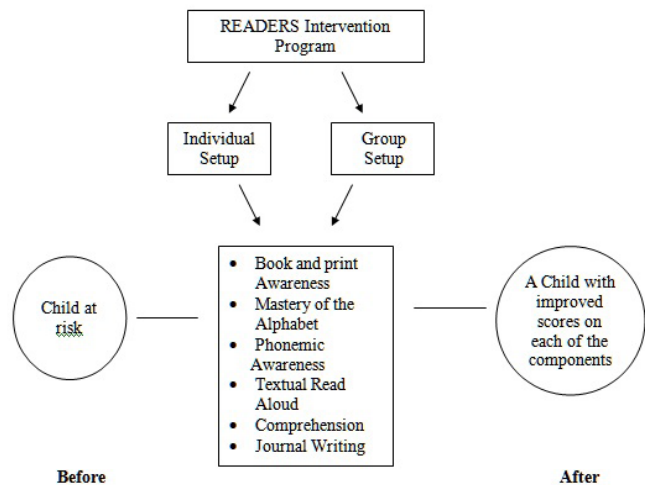


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Restructured Approach in Developing Early Reading Skills (READERS) was primarily developed for individual and small groups of learners who are having difficulty in learning to read. It is intended to improve the learners' proficiency in six areas, namely: book and print awareness, mastery of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, textual read-aloud, comprehension, and writing. The primary goal was to develop a model reading intervention program for Grade I readers-at-risk.

The principles that guided the conceptualization of the program are those of Marie Clay's Reading Recovery program and Santos' CTE.

READERS was designed to improve the reading proficiency of Grade I pupils who are identified as readers-at-risk. It hoped to achieve the goal in 10 weeks, with two one-and-a-half-hours sessions a week, targeting a total of 30 intervention hours.

Assessment tools, forms, and intervention session activities used were adapted with slight modifications from the CTE program except for the additional components such as writing activities, comprehension test and pre-reading activities. The READERS used the CTE model primarily; modification is only made in the organization and additional components/activities. Individual tutoring and a small group intervention were done. The group session allowed the children to interact with their peers who were also experiencing the same difficulties in learning to read.

Small group interaction provides intimacy. Interactions within the group, between the children and between the teacher and children, help reduce the children's fear of failure since they see other children as having difficulties, too, and that to have difficulty is

not abnormal. One-on-one intervention has also been successfully noted for its effectiveness, thus, this study used both types of intervention.

One significant point in learning to read is to understand how written language and oral language correspond. The writing system in English is based on the alphabetic principle that written words are made up of letters that have approximate matches with the sounds heard in spoken words. In order to understand the alphabetic principle, one must recognize that spoken words consist of a sequence of sounds and the understanding of it is called phonemic awareness. Oral language skill is in harmony with the written language skills.

Learning to comprehend should also be emphasized while teaching the children how to decode. A child should answer comprehension questions right after reading a text to determine how they understood and perceived meaning from the text.

DISCUSSION

The three low-achieving Grade One children in the group setup were given intervention sessions of one hour and a half per session, twice a week for ten weeks, for a total of 30 training hours. The child in the one-on-one setup was given 45 minutes per session, twice a week for ten weeks or 15 training hours. The inclusion of waiting activities in the form of engagement activities made the time of the group set up longer than the individual setup. That of the group setup had a difference of 45 minutes with the one-on-one setup. The additional time for the waiting activities in the group setup did not include teacher interaction with the subjects. The activities were prepared beforehand. Children who worked on the waiting activity were just given instructions and they worked on their own and at times worked in pairs.

Each session included the following activities: free-choice reading of familiar books simultaneously done with second reading of a new book, word identification activities, journal writing, pre-reading activities, first reading of a new book, and comprehension test. Engagement activities were done as a waiting activity. Waiting activities are needed to facilitate journal writing and first reading of a new book. While the teacher worked with one child in a group setup the two other children worked on the waiting activity. The child in the one-on-one setup followed the same session format with the exception of the writing activities.

The study did not test the difficulty level of stories. Patterned stories, which were a personal choice of the researcher and the books recommended by Santos

(CTE proponent) were used. Below is a detailed discussion of the experimentation results.

The Group Setup

1. Aiko (7 y/o, female): G1

Aiko (pseudo name) has attended kindergarten class. She is the only child in the family. She stays with her grandparents and with her mom. Her father works in Tarlac City and he comes home during weekends only.

She is shy in the classroom and seldom participates during classroom discussions especially during English class. She shows interest in storybooks but does not have time to read. Her reading is confined to textbooks used in school. According to her Grade I teacher, by the end of Grade I, she was still slow in reading when compared to the majority of her classmates. Oftentimes, she reads words interchangeably.

She speaks quite fluently in Filipino. Sometimes she could not be heard while reading although she uses a louder voice when conversing with her friends and classmates. She shows good motor control, good vision and good hearing. She expresses herself well in Filipino but has a hard time expressing ideas in English.

2. Jan (7 y/o, male) : G2

Jan (pseudo name) is the oldest of three siblings. He has attended kindergarten class. According to his Grade I teacher, Jan was poor in reading and had limited reading skills. He had not developed a good reading habit and attitude.

He is good in drawing and he really loves to do it more than reading. When he reads, he seems in a hurry all the time. He likes to read storybooks but he does not have enough storybooks at home. During the intervention, Jan enjoys the colorful pages of the storybooks and oftentimes copy the illustrations in the books.

He has good oral language skills but he prefers to express his ideas in Filipino. He loves to play and be with his classmates and enjoys talking about his experiences. During the sessions, he showed carelessness and playfulness.

3. Guille (7.5 y/o, male) : G3

Guille (pseudo name) is the youngest in the family. He has attended kindergarten class. According to his Grade I teacher, he was behind his fast-achieving classmates especially in reading. He was still poor in reading when the year was about to end. He is soft-spoken, shy and oftentimes silent. He likes to read books with colorful pictures.

Guille could express himself well in Filipino and

also tries to speak English often. He is attending a Taekwon-Do class every Saturday. He also loves to play basketball and watches TV most of the time.

One-on-One Setup

1. Lander (7 y/o, male) : O

Lander was assigned to the one-on-one intervention program. According to his Grade I teacher, he was reading below grade level and still poor in reading. He has a twin brother. They are both playful. Lander loves to play all the time. He does not want to read and study. All he wants to do was to play with classmates and playmates. This attitude changed when he was placed in the intervention program. Instead of playing, he reads books during his free time.

Lander has a good penmanship. He loves to draw. He has good control of left-to-right directionality. Though thin, he loves sports and wants to be an athlete like his father.

The tests used in the study measured the subjects' proficiency in the areas described in the next section.

1. Book and Print Awareness

This refers to concepts and literacy experiences such as book handling, identifying the book cover and the pages of it, understanding that words are read from left to right on a page, and understanding that lines of text are read from top to bottom. The teacher assesses the students' knowledge of several concepts about printed language by asking questions such as Where's the front of the book? Where to begin reading the page? Etc.

The test includes the following components: book knowledge which includes the front, back, top, bottom, where the story begins, where the story ends; directional rules which includes left to right, and return sweep; letter identification which includes upper case and lower case; concept of words as carrier of message which includes first letter, last letter, and the words read; and punctuation marks such as period, question mark, and exclamation point.

2. Mastery of the Alphabet Test

This test measured the knowledge of letter name, which is an important prerequisite information since letter recognition is critical for word recognition and word identification strategies. This includes recognizing/naming, sounding, matching, and writing the letters both in their upper case and lower case forms.

Three sub-tests were given during pretest and posttest. Test I is Naming and Sounding Letters, Test II is Matching Upper and Lower Case Letters; and Test

III is Writing Upper Case and Lower Case Letters. These tests measured the proficiency of the subjects in matching lower case with upper case, in naming the alphabet, sounding the alphabet and in writing upper and lower case letters.

3. Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to focus on and manipulate the individual sounds or phonemes in spoken words (Haager & Windmueller, 2002). This test determines if a child can give the single phonemic units, blend them into a word or isolate sounds from whole words. Measures of phonemic awareness strongly predict young children's future success in learning to read.

4. Textual Read-Aloud Inventory and Comprehension Level

The Textual Read-Aloud Inventory measures the oral reading proficiency of the subjects. It looks into the errors and self-correction rates of each child. As the child reads a story aloud, a running record is taken to note the number of errors and self-correction strategies the learner makes. Error rate is calculated by dividing the total number of errors made by the total number of words. The frequency of self-correction is counted. Errors and self-corrections made are further analyzed and evaluated on the following cues used in reading difficult words: meaning cues, syntactic cues or visual or graphophonic cues.

5. Comprehension Test

A comprehension test was given to check if the children understood what they read. In the pretest, six comprehension questions totaling 10 points from Level I passage in the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) were asked. Children wrote down their answers on the activity sheet. The same questions are used for the posttest. This activity was also given as a daily monitoring activity during the intervention sessions. A five-item comprehension test was given after the first reading of a new book.

6. Journal Writing

This measures the proficiency of the subjects in writing down their own stories/journals. Their stories were evaluated on a five-point scale on the following features: mechanics, message quality, and organization.

Table 1 in the next section summarizes the instruments used in the pretest and posttest. It shows the materials to be used, the number of minutes each component is allotted, and the organization of subjects as the component is administered.

Table 1. Diagnostic Test/Posttest Used In The Readers Program

Component	Organization	Number of Minutes	Materials
I. Book & Print Orientation	Individual	15 min.	Storybook Book & Print Orientation Record Form
II. Mastery of the Alphabet Test			
A. Naming and Sounding Letters	Individual	20 min.	
B. Matching Upper & Lower Case Letters	Group	10 min.	Letter cards Mastery of the Alphabet Test Form for naming and sounding the letters and in matching the upper case and lower case letters
C. Writing Uper & Lower Case Letters	Group	10 min.	Unruled paper Mastery of the Alphabet Test form for writing upper and lower case letters
III. Phonemic Awareness Test	Group	5 min.	Unruled paper Phonemic Awareness Test form and scoring sheet
IV. Textual Read Aloud Inventory	Individual	20 min.	IRI Level 1 story Textual Read Aloud Inventory & Comprehension form
V. Comprehension	Individual	5 min.	Answer sheet Textual Read Aloud Inventory & Comprehension form
VI. Journal Writing	Individual	15 min.	Unruled paper Journal writing form
		100 min.	

A summary of the results of all the components during the pretest and posttest were recorded in the Evaluation Report.

Each session has seven major activities. In the group setup, waiting activities such as engagement activities were also incorporated during the session. This activity was done while one of the subjects did the first reading of a new book and the journal writing. There was no teacher interaction during the waiting activities only instructions were given and they worked independently. The one-on-one setup followed the same set of activities. Waiting activities were not done; thus, the time in this setup was shorter than the group setup.

Free-Choice Reading. Teachers have discovered the importance of letting students independently explore materials previously introduced in large and small group settings (Ford & Opitz, 2002). Reading previously read books provide a natural opportunity for learners to look at print more independently. In this activity, children chose a familiar story or books previously read. It did not include teacher interaction. Children were encouraged to choose books that they liked to read or which they think they could read with confidence. In the group setup, this activity is done simultaneously with the second activity.

Table 2**Readers Intervention Framework**

Component	Number of Minutes		Materials
	Group	Individual	
I. * free-choice reading			
II. Second Reading of New Book	20	10	Storybook
III. Word Identification Activities	15	5	Magnetic letters Magnetic board White board marker Art papers
IV. Journal Writing *Waiting activity	25	10	Unruled paper
V. Pre-reading Activities	10	5	Manila paper Markers
VI. First Reading of a New Book *Waiting activity	15	10	Storybook
VII. Comprehension	5	5	Worksheet
	90	45	

Second Reading of a New Book. This is done simultaneously with the first activity in the group set-up. In this activity, the child was asked to read aloud the book he attempted to read the previous day. Every error is analyzed because each error may yield additional information not seen in an earlier error. Errors are analyzed first because information about the error may explain the self-correction. The number of errors and self-corrections are counted as well as the number of times the child used meaning, syntactic, and visual cues in reading the selection. Learners self-correct when they fix an error made during reading. This means that they monitor their reading responses and read for meaning in order to self-correct errors. Consistent self-correction during reading allows students to gain understanding from the text and comprehend what they read. Other observations made relevant to the child's oral reading behaviors are also recorded.

Word Identification Activities. This activity provided subjects with practice in segmenting and writing key words. It also gave them an opportunity to lock key words in memory in a fully analyzed way. Word identification activities included phonemic awareness, rhyming word segmentation, spelling pattern, sound-

symbol matching, manipulating movable letters, and writing them down.

Journal Writing. This served as an assessment device and intervention component that encouraged the child to write one or two sentences about a topic in answer to a given question. It helped the learners to organize ideas and use specific words to express thoughts that were meaningful to them. It was a way for the subjects to apply all known print conventions. The teacher used unruled paper turned horizontally. The child wrote his story on the upper half portion of the unruled paper. Figure 2 in the next section shows how the paper looked like.

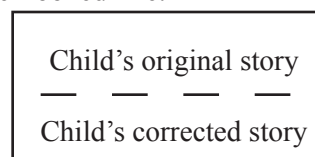


Figure 2. Journal Writing Paper

In this activity the subjects were expected to do the work by themselves. However when the children encountered some difficulties in composing their stories, the teacher provided some help, although limited.

The teacher helped the subjects give the word, which he/she could not express.

After the ideas had been written down, while one is with the teacher, the two in the group setup waited. While waiting they did an engagement activity. The teacher assisted each subject with the incorrectly written words through boxes for hearing sounds. Hearing sounds in words is a technique adapted from Elkonin, a Russian psychologist who developed it in order to assist children in hearing the sounds in words, thus, the hearing sound boxes is called Elkonin Boxes. The purpose is to help the child hear sounds in words (Sipe, 2001). The procedures employed were as follows:

1. Teacher slowly and deliberately articulates the word for the child. The child should hear the sounds separated but in a natural way.
2. Teacher asks the child to articulate the word slowly aloud.
3. Teacher asks the child to watch her lips while saying the word then asks the child to copy her.
4. Teacher draws a rectangle with boxes each corresponding to a phoneme the word has (e.g. three squares or boxes for the word f-o-x).

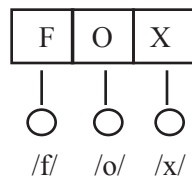


Figure 3. Elkonin Box

Story organization, message, and mechanics were used to interpret story writing of the subjects. Each story is analyzed if the sentence was correctly written, has complete message, self-generated sentence, if grammatically correct, and with punctuation.

Prereading Activity. Before beginning to read, the children were involved in schema activation or schema enhancement through pre-reading questions, concept mapping, vocabulary development, book introduction or making predictions about story content. The learners were also encouraged to ask questions about the story that they will read.

First Reading of a New Book. In this activity, the child was asked to read a book aloud independently. In the group setup, while one was reading, the other subjects did waiting activity.

Most of the books used in the story were predictable in nature, have repetitious words and lines, rich in illustrations and are colorful. *Boots for Toots* and *I Can Read* were the two books used in the pilot sessions. The following books of increasing level of difficulty were used throughout the program: *Kites*, *Clever Happy Monkey*, *Frogs*, *Jackets*, *The See-Saw*, *Jumping Shoes*, *Where is Happy Monkey*, *The Giant's Pizza*, *Fireworks*, *Where's Taniwha*, *What is a Zanda?* The

Longest Noodle in the World, *Mr. Squirrel's Hiding Place*, *The Noisy Green Engine*, *The Most Beautiful House in the Forest*, *The King's Birthday Gift*, *Up the Mountain*, and *Caterpillar Goes to the Carnival*.

Comprehension Test. Learning to comprehend was emphasized while teaching the children how to decode. Decoding does not simply mean learning to read; it is both learning to read and to understand what is read. A learner's understanding about print can be assessed through questions about what he has read following the first reading of a new book. This component assessed how learners constructed meaning from the story read. The learners were asked to answer a five-item teacher-made test based on the story read. Most of the questions were on the literal level that focused on accurate recall of text-based information.

Intervention session plan was used by the researcher as an outline of each day's lesson. Table 3 in the next section shows the READERS program's general framework, which includes the organization, teaching time, materials, teaching emphasis, and assessment procedures.

The Restructured Approach in Developing Early Reading Skills (READERS) was conducted from April 23 to August 22. The researcher served as the teacher of the subjects in this program. She also served as the sole data collector using the six instruments identified earlier. Qualitative data were also collected about each learner to be used for writing the case reports. The study consisted of three phases.

Phase I was the pre-assessment period, which identified the baseline data of the learners. The diagnostic tests on Book and Print Awareness, Naming and Sounding Letter, Textual Read Aloud Inventory, and Comprehension were administered individually while Writing and Matching Upper and Lower Case Letters, Phonemic Awareness, and Journal Writing were administered in group by the teacher with all the four subjects to determine each subjects' strengths and weaknesses.

Pretest was administered during the first week. Tutorial sessions were conducted twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays, with one and half-hours per session for group setup and 45 minutes for one-on-one setup. The program ran for ten weeks (excluding the pretest and posttest weeks) or 30 tutorial hours for the small group and 15 tutorial hours for the one-on-one setup. As mentioned earlier, the aim of this program is to improve the reading proficiency of Grade I readers-at-risk in six areas, namely: book and print awareness, mastery of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, journal writing, textual read aloud, and comprehension.

Table 3. Readers Intervention Program: General Framework

Program	Relation to Class Program	Organization	Teaching Time	Materials	Teaching Emphasis	Assessment Procedures
READERS Intervention Program	Pulled out from reading class	Small group of three	3 hrs/wk.	Variety of storybooks	Word Identification	Book and Print Orientation Record
			1 hr and half/session	Unruled papers	Textual Read-Aloud	Mastery of the Alphabet Test
			10 weeks	Pencils	Phonemic Awareness	Phonemic Awareness
		One-on-one	total of 30 hours	Charts	Writing	Textual Read-Aloud Inventory
			1 ½ hrs/wk	Letters printed on white cards	Comprehension	Comprehension
			45 min/session	Magnetic board and letters	Letter Identification	Journal Writing
	10 weeks					
	total of 15 hours					

Phase II was the Intervention session. The intervention sessions lasted for 10 weeks. The first week was used to pilot the test intervention activities to get the time allotment for each component.

Phase III was the post-assessment period, the posttest in the same format as the pretest was administered after the 10th week of intervention. The subjects' performance in the intervention session was considered and their everyday outputs were filed, recorded, and analyzed. Results from pretest and posttest were compared.

The number of subjects in the study was too small, neither parametric nor nonparametric tests were used on the data. Thus, a descriptive analysis was done. Decisions about outcomes were made through visual analysis of the graphed data. Graphed data allow an ongoing view of student's performance as the study progresses. The worth of the intervention was based on visual interpretation of the data displayed on the graph as maintained throughout the study, so the researcher can consider what has occurred in each component, and thus, variability can be assessed for each individual. Visual analysis was valued in a single-subject experimental research design. The researcher made de-

isions about the educational significance, rather than the statistically significant results.

To make sense of the data gathered in this study a qualitative analysis was used. A case report for each subject was presented, together with some samples of each subject's work. Day to day data, such as those gathered from journal writing (including organizational level, mechanics, and message), textual read aloud (including error rate, self-correction rate, visual cues, meaning cues, and visual cues) phonemic awareness, and comprehension are presented graphically. Line graphs were employed to display the data.

To get differences in the reading proficiency of the four subjects, gains of each subject after the intervention program in terms of book and print awareness, mastery of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, textual read aloud, comprehension, and journal writing were determined by computing the difference in the posttest and pretest scores.

Summary of Tabulated Scores

	G1	G2	G3	G MEAN	I
Book and print Awareness					
Pretest Score	13	12	13	12.67	9
Posttest Score	15	15	15	15	10
Gains	2	3	2	2.33	1
Mastery of the Alphabet					
• Naming Alphabet					
Pretest Score	42	47	48	45.67	48
Posttest Score	52	52	52	52	52
Gains	10	5	4	6.33	4
• Sounding Alphabet					
Pretest Score	44	45	21	36.67	14
Posttest Score	52	52	52	52	30
Gains	8	7	31	15.33	16
• Matching Upper and Lower Case					
Pretest Score	19	24	26	23	22
Posttest Score	26	26	26	26	26
Gains	7	2	0	3	4
• Writing Upper and Lower Case					
Pretest Score	46	43	51	46.67	31
Posttest Score	51	50	52	51.33	50
Gains	5	7	1	4.33	19
Phonemic Awareness					
Pretest Score	21	23	20	21.33	8
Pilot Mean Score	23	23	22	22.67	4
Intervention Mean Score	19.22	21.33	22.11	20.89	13.78
Posttest Score	25	25	25	25	25
Gains	4	2	5	3.67	17
Pretest Score	3	3	8	4.67	2
Pilot Mean Score	5	5	5	5	2
Comprehension					
Pretest	3	3	8	4.67	2
Posttest	5	5	5	5	2
Intervention Mean Score	4	4.17	4.11	4.09	3.61
Posttest Score	8	8	8	8	6
Gains	5	5	0	3.33	4
Journal Writing (Organization)					
Pretest Score	3	1	3	3	1
Pilot Mean Score	3	1	3.50	3.50	1
Intervention Mean Score	2.89	2.33	3.33	3.33	2.06
Posttest Score	3	4	4	4	3
Gains	0	3	1	1	2
Journal Writing (Message)					
Pretest Score	2	2	2	2	1
Pilot Mean Score	2	2	2	2	2
Intervention Mean Score	3.44	4.44	4.22	4.22	2.94
Posttest Score	5	5	5	5	2
Gains	3	3	3	3	1
Journal Writing (Mechanics)					
Pretest Score	1	1	1	1	1

...continuation

	G1	G2	G3	G MEAN	I
Pilot Mean Score	1.5	1	1	1.17	1
Intervention Mean Score	1.17	1.28	2.5	1.65	1.22
Posttest Score	3	3	3	3	3
Gains	2	2	2	2	2
Textual Read Aloud (Error Rate)					
Pretest Score	21%	21%	21%	21%	97%
Pilot Mean Score	9%	4.5%	7%	6.83%	19.50%
Intervention Mean Score	8%	6.39%	6.61%	7%	10.33%
Posttest Score	0%	10%	4%	4.67%	38%
Gains	21%	11%	17%	16.33%	59%
Textual Read Aloud (Self-Correction Rate)					
Pretest Score	0	0	0	0	0
Pilot Mean Score	1	1	.5	.83	0
Intervention Mean Score	1	1.61	1.22	1.28	1.5
Posttest Score	0	0	0	0	3
Gains	0	0	0	0	3
Textual Read Aloud (Syntactic Cues)					
Pretest Score	1	4	0	1.67	0
Pilot Mean Score	0	2.5	1	1.17	8
Intervention Mean Score	2	1.44	1.94	1.79	2.56
Posttest Score	0	2	0	0.67	0
Gains	0	-2	0	0.67	0
Textual Read Aloud (Graphophonic Cues)					
Pretest Score	6	0	4	3.33	21
Pilot Mean Score	3	2	2.5	2.5	3.5
Intervention Mean Score	3	2.89	2.5	2.8	4.22
Posttest Score	0	0	0	0	9
Gains	-6	0	-3	-3	-12
Textual Read Aloud (Meaning Cues)					
Pretest Score	5	0	0	1.67	4
Pilot Mean Score	1	0	0	.33	7.5
Intervention Mean Score	2	1.28	.94	1.41	2.5
Posttest Score	0	0	0	0	0
Gains	-5	0	0	1.67	-4

Scores of the subjects in the group setup were also totaled and then averaged to get the mean score in each of the different program components. These were compared with the scores of the pupils in the one-on-one setup to get the difference between the gains made by subjects in a group setup and one-on-one setup.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that READERS improved the proficiency of four Grade One readers-at-risk in terms of: (a) book and print awareness (b) mastery of the alphabet (c) phonemic awareness (d) textual read-aloud (e) journal writing and (f) comprehension. All four subjects have scored perfect in naming the alphabet and in matching upper and lower case. On the other hand, all group setup subjects scored perfect in

book and print awareness, sounding alphabet, matching upper and lower case, phonemic awareness, and in the message content of stories in the journal writing component.

All four subjects also made gains in writing upper and lower case, comprehension, mechanics of stories and the organizational level of stories though they did not get perfect scores. Decrease in errors was also noted from the four subjects. The one on-one subject had improved scores on phonemic awareness, sounding the alphabet, book and print awareness, and in the message content of his story for the journal writing component. Moreover, he was the only one who use self-correction strategies in the posttest.

No decrease in scores was registered; however, two subjects from the group setup did not register gains

in comprehension, self-correction strategies, and in the organizational quality of stories after the intervention.

Collectively from the gains made in most of the components, it can be concluded that READERS improved the reading proficiency of the four subjects, especially in book and print awareness, mastery of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, comprehension, textual read aloud, and journal writing.

The study had also found that READERS improved the scores of the subjects in both setups. The subjects in the group setup, taken collectively scored higher than the individual in most of the components but the subject in the one-on-one setup made higher gains in many of the components. The group subjects' score had increased in all the components, but some of the gains were slight due to the fact that they scored high already in the pretest.

In general, it was found that READERS increased the performance of both setups in terms of the six components. However, maybe because of the sample limitations, no clear-cut pattern could be gleaned that shows one-on-one setup performed better than the other. In cases where the individual subject showed the higher gains, the subjects in the group setup usually had high pretest scores. So, even if they got perfect scores on the posttest, their gains were less. Again, this is a limitation of the study.

Even with these limitations, however, what the study has shown is that intervention works. Though conventional belief points to one-on-one tutorial as a more effective instructional arrangement, this study seems to support Evans (1996) and Iversen (1997) that the one-on-one intervention has no advantage over the group instruction. Thus, the study refutes McCormick (1999) who claims that students who receive individualized instruction consistently outperform those receiving group instruction, but supports Moeller (2002) who believes that group oriented early intervention including some based on the RR procedures appear to be promising and that student grouping of 1:3 work as well as grouping of 1:1. Therefore, the study can recommend small group setup as a viable and more cost-effective model for implementing early reading programs.

The study also looked into possible modifications of READERS to make it more suitable to the needs of Grade I readers-at-risk. Possible modifications in the procedures of the journal writing may be done. The children should be given the chance to write what they want to write instead of asking them a question. More engagement activities should be prepared and

stories should be localized and within the range of the children's experiences for better understanding. Teacher-made stories with patterned language could also be used in the program.

To further improve the suitability of the READERS for readers-at-risk, it may be modified in terms of (a) the kind and level of difficulty of storybooks (b) extension of time beyond the suggested ten-week intervention period (d) time allotment for each component (e) improved procedures on how to conduct the journal writing including the use of rubrics and (f) inclusion of engagement activities in the one-on-one setup.

The findings of the study are the basis for the following recommendations. That it is recommended that similar studies should be conducted in other elementary schools to validate the effectiveness of READERS.

A question to be addressed in future research is the degree to which early intervention can serve as models of classroom instruction. How appropriate is a small group instruction and individualized instruction? Such studies can improve on the present one by increasing the sample size (that is, have several small groups and individualized setups), so that more valid conclusions on this question maybe arrived at; the research design can also be improved by making sure the subjects in both setups have comparable baseline performance; the feeling of enjoyment with the additional engagement activities contributed to the performance of the group subjects. The activity made the program interesting and fun. Therefore, the inclusion of engagement activities in the individual setup is highly recommended; and aside from being more cost-effective than the one-on-one setup, the group setup provided a social climate in which the subjects are stimulated to greater performance. Thus small group intervention is recommended in our schools, especially those with limited resources. For future studies, the consideration of teacher experience and educational background that would somehow affect the implementation of the intervention

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