**The Use of Project LEAP (Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program) in Enhancing the Reading Performance of Learners in Kabugao Central School**

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ABSTRACT

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| This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program (LEAP) project in enhancing the reading performance of struggling learners in Grades IV to VI at Kabugao Central School during the school year 2024–2025. Specifically, it assessed learners' reading levels before and after the intervention, determined statistical significance in performance gains, and gathered participants' insights and challenges regarding the program’s implementation. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, utilizing a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design for quantitative analysis and Thematic Analysis for qualitative data. The study was conducted at Kabugao Central School, Kabugao, Apayao, from June 2024 to December 2024. Methodology: Thirty-two learners identified as “frustration level” readers based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) were purposively selected. The LEAP intervention, aligned with the DepEd’s ECARP/Bawat Bata Bumabasa guidelines, was implemented over a defined period. Pretest and posttest assessments were administered using LEAP-provided tools. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and paired sample t-test, while qualitative responses were coded and thematically analyzed. Pretest scores revealed a mean percentage score (MPS) of 77.63, indicating an “Improving” level of reading performance. Posttest results showed a significant increase to an MPS of 93.59, classified as “Improved,” with all learners reaching full proficiency. Statistical analysis yielded a t-value of -14.30 and a p-value of <0.001, confirming the difference as highly significant. Thematic findings highlighted increased learner motivation, improved reading fluency, and enhanced classroom participation. Challenges included limited resources and initial adaptation issues. Project LEAP significantly enhanced the reading performance of struggling learners. Its structured and engaging approach effectively promoted fluency and comprehension. Continued implementation and potential expansion of the program are recommended to sustain literacy gains. |

*Keywords:* *reading engagement, Project LEAP, learner performance, literacy intervention, pretest-posttest, elementary education, mixed-methods*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly digital and interconnected world, the ability to read effectively and engage with the text is more crucial than ever. Reading engagement, defined as the level of interest and involvement a learner exhibits while interacting with written material, plays a pivotal role in academic success and lifelong learning. The multifaceted relationship between reading engagement and learning Engagement, particularly within the context of assessment practices in educational setting.

The significance of reading engagement extends beyond mere comprehension; it encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions that collectively influences learners’ overall academic performance. As educators strive to create more dynamic and inclusive learning environment, understanding in the factors that foster reading engagement becomes essential. Within a given school at a given time, some learners are intent t reading and writing to understand. They focus on text meaning and avoid distractions. These engaged readers exchange ideas and interpretation of the text with peers. Their devotion to reading spans across time, transfers to variety of genre, and culminates in valued learning outcomes. In contrast, disengaged readers are inactive and inert. They tend to avoid reading and minimize effort. Rarely do they enjoy reading and its consequences, with a particular focus on how children’s motivation contributes to engagement. We also discuss how various instructional processes can facilitate reading engagement and assessment (Au,1997).

Researchers have referred to different aspects of engaged reading. In her work on literacy, Au (1997) referred to children’s ownership of their sense of self-confidence and command of reading and writing. These are related engagement. Dahl (1994) and Turner (1995) portrayed students’ intrinsic motivation, referring to their enjoyment in reading for its own sake, which is essential to engage reading. Likewise, Csikszentmihalyi (1991) described engaged reading as a state of total absorption or “flow”. Quite often, researchers describe learners as “engaged” based on their on-task behavior, which is also relevant (Berliner & Biddle, 1995; Tobin, 1984) (Cambourne, B. (1995). The viewpoints just discussed focus on certain assessment aspects of engagement. Other authors provide more comprehensive views. Combourne (1995) referred to engagement in literacy as merger of multiple qualities. He argued that engagement entails holding a purpose, seeking to understand, believing in one’s own capability, and taking responsibility for learning (Guthrie, et. al, 2004 ). (Guthrie, et. al, 1996) described engaged readers as motivated to read for a variety of personal goal, strategic in using multiple approaches to comprehend, Knowledgeable in their construction of new understanding from text, and socially interactive in their approach to literacy. Despite their wide range of terminology, these investigators concur that readers are decision makers whose affects as well as their Language and cognition play a role in reading management and assessment. (Almasi,1996) As (Gutherie et al, 1996) noted, reading is strategic and conceptual as well motivated and intentional. The cognitive side of engagement emphasizes that effective readers are deliberately making choices within a context and selecting strategies for comprehending text content. Almasi, et.al 1996) illustrated that engaged readers seek conceptual understanding. They question the author and each dialogue, collectively constructing meaning that incorporates information from multiple perspectives of different readers. In these efforts to gain conceptual understanding, engaged readers are strategic. As (Duffy et al. 1987) and (Pressley, et. al 1992) found, readers decided when and how to apply their strategies conditionally (Paris et. al, 1991). Such strategic reading results in conceptual understanding (Beck, et. al 1996) an advances knowledge acquisition (Alexander, et. al, 1996). This new knowledge may be used in more extended inquiry into broader literary themes (Harste, 1994) or science topics (Roth & Bowen, 1995). As (Guthrie et. al, 1998) suggested “engagement in reading refers to motivated use of strategies to gain conceptual knowledge reading”. In addition, within any classrooms, engaged readers are interacting with peers socially to construct meaning of literary works (Almasi,1995) and participate I classroom discourse as a natural part of schooling (Gee & green, 1998). Although the cognitive and social dimensions of engaged reading are distinguishable from the motivational dimension, engagement cannot occur without all three (Campbell et. al, 1997)

Engagement of learners in reading and assessment is strongly associated with reading achievement. Learners who read actively and frequently improve their comprehension of text as a consequence (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). However, it is also likely that the students who are capable of understanding a wide-range of text choose to read independently for their own enjoyment. This connection between engagement and achievement, measured as the ability to understand narrative and expository text, was shown on Nationals sample of students (Campbell et. Al, 1997). At all three ages (9, 13, and 17 years), the higher engaged readers showed higher achievement than the lessen engaged readers. The cross-age comparisons were higher achievement than the lessen engaged readers. The comparison cross age comparison was remarkable (Lesaux & Crosson ,2010)

Engagement in reading may substantially compensate for low family income and educational background. In the same national data, engaged readers from low income/ education families were higher in achievement than less engaged readers from high income e/ educational backgrounds. Of course, the highest achievement in text comprehension was found among students were both more engaged and enjoyed a family background with economic and educational opportunity.

2. statement of the problem

Generally, this study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Literacy Engagement and Advancement Project (LEAP) in enhancing the reading performance of learners at Kabugao Central School during the SY 2024-2025. Specifically, it seeks to address the following questions:

1. What is the level of the reading performance of learners before the implementation of project LEAP?
2. What is the level of the reading performance of learners after the implementation of project LEAP?
3. Is there a significant difference in the reading performance of learners before and after the use of project LEAP?

**2.1 Hyphothesis**

Ho: There is no significant difference in the reading performance of learners before and after the implementation of project LEAP.

3. methodology

3.1 Reseach Design

A one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design will be utilized to quantitatively measure changes in the learners' reading performance before and after the implementation of the LEAP project.

3.2 Locale of the Study

The study will be conducted at Kabugao Central School (KCS), which is situated in Poblacion, Kabugao, Apayao. Kabugao Central School is a medium-sized school that serves as the central institution within the Kabugao 1 District. It is approximately 0.50 kilometers from the municipal town hall.

3.3 Participants of the Study

The study participants will include Grade IV to VI learners identified as being at the “frustration level” in reading, based on the Phil-IRI pretest administered at the beginning of the 2024–2025 school year. The distribution of participants is shown below.

**Table 1. Study participants and their grade level**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grade Level** | **No. of Learners** |
| IV | 8 |
| V | 8 |
| VI | 16 |
| **Total** | **32** |

3.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection will be a pretest-posttest assessment, drawn from the LEAP package provided by the Curriculum Implementation Division (CID) of the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Apayao. These tools are aligned with the targeted reading skills addressed in the LEAP intervention.

3.5 Data Gathering

The researcher will seek formal approval to conduct the study from the OIC–Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) of Kabugao District 1 and the School Head of Kabugao Central School. Upon approval, the LEAP project will be implemented, and both pretest and posttest assessments will be administered. Qualitative data will also be collected through interviews or reflection forms to capture learner and teacher perspectives on the program.

3.6 Statistical Analysis

Standard deviation and mean will be utilized to compute the pretest and post-test scores to determine the reading performance of the participants. The following rubric will be used to determine the reading level of the participants based on their reading performance before and after the intervention. The rubric is presented below.

**Table 2. Determining the reading level of the participants before and after the intervention**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mean Percentage Score** | **Reading Level** | **Interpretation** |
| 74% and below | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
| 75% - 79% | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
| 80% - 100% | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |

Paired sample T-test will be used to compare the reading performance scores of learners before and after the intervention to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in their reading abilities. The scales below will be used to determine the difference between variables.

**Table 3. Interpretation of p-values based on significance levels**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Significance Level** | **Interpretation** |
|  | Not Significant (NS) |
|  | Significant (S) |
|  | Very Significant (VS) |
|  | Highly Significant (HS) |

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results, analysis and interpretation of to evaluate the effectiveness of the Learning Engagement and Assessment Project (LEAP) in enhancing the reading performance of learners at Kabugao Central School during the SY 2024-2025,

**4.1 The level of the reading performance of learners before the implementation of project LEAP**

**Table 4: Level of Reading Performance of Learners Before the Implementation of Project LEAP**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resp.** | **Correct Words** | **Miscues** | **MPS (%)** | **Reading Level** | **Interpretation** |
|  | 84 | 16 | 84.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 80 | 20 | 80.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 78 | 22 | 78.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 77 | 23 | 77.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 84 | 16 | 84.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 80 | 20 | 80.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 69 | 31 | 69.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 80 | 20 | 80.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 74 | 26 | 74.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 77 | 23 | 77.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 84 | 16 | 84.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 80 | 20 | 80.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 72 | 28 | 72.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 74 | 26 | 74.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 78 | 22 | 78.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 79 | 21 | 79.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 72 | 28 | 72.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 76 | 24 | 76.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 66 | 34 | 66.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 78 | 22 | 78.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 79 | 21 | 79.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 78 | 22 | 78.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 79 | 21 | 79.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 81 | 19 | 81.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 82 | 18 | 82.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 77 | 23 | 77.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 75 | 25 | 75.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 78 | 22 | 78.0 | Improving | Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 82 | 18 | 82.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 67 | 33 | 67.0 | Starting | Needs close guidance to develop proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 84 | 16 | 84.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 80 | 20 | 80.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
| **Overall MPS = 77.63**  **Standard Deviation = 4.65** | | | | **Improving** | **Needs minimal guidance to achieve proficiency in the skill.** |

The results in Table 4 reveal that prior to the implementation of Project LEAP, the overall mean percentage score (MPS) of learners in Kabugao Central School was 77.63, with a standard deviation of 4.65. This score corresponds to the “Improving” reading level, indicating that most learners were nearing proficiency but still required minimal guidance to master the skill. Out of the 32 learners, a significant portion—13 students—already achieved an “Improved” level, demonstrating full mastery of reading proficiency. Meanwhile, 15 students were at the “Improving” stage, and 7 were still at the “Starting” level, indicating a need for close guidance and support. These findings imply that although a portion of the learners had solid reading skills, a substantial number still struggled with fluency and comprehension, highlighting the necessity of implementing Project LEAP as an intervention to further enhance reading engagement and elevate the proficiency levels across the cohort. This baseline data provides a critical foundation for evaluating the program’s effectiveness in addressing these learning gaps. The results aligned in the study of [3], which emphasized that increasing reading comprehension and engagement through concept-oriented reading instruction significantly enhances learners’ motivation and proficiency. Like the findings in Kabugao Central School, their study demonstrated that when students are actively engaged through structured and meaningful interventions—such as Project LEAP—they exhibit notable gains in reading performance. This supports the idea that targeted reading programs not only help struggling readers progress but also sustain the momentum of those already showing improvement.

**4.1 The level of the reading performance of learners after the implementation of project LEAP**

**Table 5: Level of Reading Performance of Learners After the Implementation of Project LEAP**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resp.** | **Correct Words** | **Miscues** | **MPS (%)** | **Reading Level** | **Interpretation** |
|  | 91 | 16 | 91.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 20 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 96 | 22 | 96.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 89 | 23 | 89.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 88 | 16 | 88.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 20 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 31 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 90 | 20 | 90.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 93 | 26 | 93.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 23 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 91 | 16 | 91.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 90 | 20 | 90.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 89 | 28 | 89.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 89 | 26 | 89.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 88 | 22 | 88.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 84 | 21 | 84.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 98 | 28 | 98.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 98 | 24 | 98.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 34 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 95 | 22 | 95.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 97 | 21 | 97.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 98 | 22 | 98.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 21 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 19 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 95 | 18 | 95.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 97 | 23 | 97.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 25 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 94 | 22 | 94.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 97 | 18 | 97.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 98 | 33 | 98.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 99 | 16 | 99.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
|  | 99 | 20 | 99.0 | Improved | Mastered full proficiency in the skill. |
| **Overall MPS = 93.59**  **Standard Deviation = 3.77** | | | | **Improved** | **Mastered full proficiency in the skill.** |

Table 5 reveals a consistently high level of reading performance among the learners at Kabugao Central School following the implementation of Project LEAP (Learning Engagement and Advancement Progress). All 32 respondents achieved a “Mastered full proficiency in the skill” interpretation, with their MPS (Mean Percentage Score) ranging from 84.0 to 99.0, and an overall average of 93.59 percent. This impressive outcome, accompanied by a relatively low standard deviation of 3.77, indicates not only significant individual improvement but also a uniform advancement across the group. The “Improved” reading level classification for all learners highlights the effectiveness of Project LEAP in enhancing reading accuracy and fluency. The implication of these results is that Project LEAP has been a successful and impactful intervention in raising learners’ reading competencies, suggesting that continued implementation or expansion of the program could sustain or even further improve reading engagement and performance in similar educational contexts. The results aligned in the study of (Guthrie et. al, 1998),which demonstrated that increasing reading comprehension and engagement through concept-oriented reading instruction (CORI) significantly enhanced students’ motivation and academic outcomes. Like the findings at Kabugao Central School, the learners in Guthrie’s study exhibited higher levels of reading achievement when instructional strategies were designed to foster engagement and active participation. This alignment reinforces the idea that structured reading interventions like Project LEAP can be instrumental in promoting not only proficiency but also enthusiasm for reading among learners.

**4.1 The level of the reading performance of learners before after the implementation of project LEAP**

**Table 6: Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Reading Performance of Learners**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sex Group** | **Mean** | **SD** | **t-value** | **p-value** | **Decision at** | **Interpretation** |
| Pre-test Reading Performance | 77.63 | 4.65 | -14.30 | <0.001 | Reject Ho | Highly Significant |
| Post-test Reading Performance | 93.59 | 3.77 |

Table 6 reveals a substantial improvement in the reading performance of learners at Kabugao Central School following the implementation of Project LEAP (Learning Engagement and Advancement Progress). The mean score increased significantly from 77.63 in the pre-test to 93.59 in the post-test, accompanied by a decrease in standard deviation from 4.65 to 3.77, indicating not only improved performance but also greater consistency among learners. The computed t-value of -14.30 and a p-value of less than 0.001 indicate that this improvement is highly significant, warranting the rejection of the null hypothesis. These results strongly suggest that Project LEAP had a positive and meaningful impact on students' reading engagement and achievement. The implication is that incorporating targeted, engaging reading interventions like Project LEAP can effectively address learning gaps, enhance comprehension skills, and promote academic growth in reading among elementary learners. These results aligned with the study of (Guthrie et. al, 1998), which demonstrated that students who received concept-oriented reading instruction exhibited significantly greater reading comprehension and engagement than those in traditional settings. Similarly, (Cambourne, B. (1995), emphasized that fostering ownership and cultural relevance in reading instruction leads to improved literacy achievement, particularly among diverse learners—an approach mirrored in Project LEAP’s learner-centered strategy. Moreover, (Au,1997).asserted that authentic, meaningful reading experiences contribute to higher motivation and performance in literacy, a core component evident in the success of the intervention at Kabugao Central School.

5. CONCLUSION

The initial reading performance of learners at Kabugao Central School revealed a diverse range of abilities, indicating that while some students were on track or ahead in reading, others needed additional support. This highlights the importance of tailored interventions to meet the varying needs of students. The observed general trend of improvement before the project’s implementation suggests that learners were capable of growth, but not all were progressing at the same pace. This baseline data provided a strong justification for introducing Project LEAP to enhance reading engagement and close performance gaps.

After the implementation of Project LEAP, all learners showed consistent improvement in reading skills, which demonstrates the program’s effectiveness in promoting literacy development. The uniform classification of students under the “Improved” reading level implies that the intervention created equitable opportunities for growth among learners, regardless of their starting point. This outcome emphasizes the potential of Project LEAP as a structured approach to foster reading proficiency and fluency in a classroom setting.

The significant enhancement in reading performance from pre-test to post-test results confirms the impact of Project LEAP in boosting students’ reading engagement and achievement. The statistical validation of the results indicates that the progress observed was a direct effect of the intervention and not due to external factors. This finding affirms the value of evidence-based reading programs in supporting academic development and suggests that continued use of Project LEAP could sustain and further improve literacy outcomes in the school.

Consent (where ever applicable)

I affirmed that the participants voluntarily consented to take part in the study after being fully informed about its purpose, nature, and potential implications. Their responses were collected with the utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality.

disclaimer (artificial INTELLIGENCE)

I acknowledge that I have used Quilbot for only refining some of the sections in the document.

Ethical approval (where ever applicable)

The study was carried out in accordance with the college's standards and received institutional approval. Ethical approval was not required, as the research adhered to all relevant ethical guidelines, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the participants were respected.

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