The MMDA Program (Mmmm Makakabasa Din Ako): A Reading Intervention for the Primary Learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

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| This study assessed the effectiveness of the MMDA Reading Program in improving literacy skills among primary learners. The research employed a single pre-test and post-test design, using a paired sample t-test to measure the impact of the intervention.  Pre-reading assessments revealed that all 11 participants from Grades 1 to 3 were reading below their expected grade levels. Grade 1 learners were at the “Starting Level,” requiring intensive support in basic reading, while Grades 2 and 3 were at the “Letter Level,” struggling with blending consonant-vowel structures like CVC and CVCC. These findings highlighted critical gaps in awareness and decoding skills, underscoring the need for structured intervention.  Following the MMDA Program, post-assessments results showed notable improvements. Grade 1 learners, advanced to “Phrase Level,” reading 7 out of 10 phrases correctly, while Grades 2 and 3 reached “Sentence Level,” accurately decoding simple and compound sentences. Notably, some learners could read up to 130 words but answered few comprehension questions, indicating stronger gains in fluency and word recognition than in comprehension.  Based on these findings, it is recommended that the MMDA Reading Program be sustained and expanded to include all primary grade levels, including Kindergarten. Early and structured exposure to reading strategies may help learners develop stronger literacy foundations and long-term reading success.  Keywords: Reading Intervention, MMDA Program, primary learners, phonemic awareness, decoding skills, reading fluency |

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that opens doors to learning, imagination, and communication-but for some learners, this journey is not always easy. Struggling readers often face challenges that can impact their confidence, motivation, and academic progress. Recognizing these struggles is the first step toward supporting them with empathy, effective strategies, and a belief that with the right tools and encouragement, every child can become a successful reader.

The ability to read for students is seen as a determinant of success in their learning activities at school. It is because all subject matter in various fields of study taught in schools requires an understanding of concepts and theories that must be understood through reading activities. With the ability to read correctly and reliably, students have the basic capital and the main determinant of success in various subjects; On the other hand, failure to master the ability to learn to read will be an obstacle or even a source of failure in student studies at school [Fauzi, F. (2018)].

In the Philippines education system reading is used most frequently to gauge the effectiveness of learning. Recently, Philippine Star (2019) informed that among 79 participating countries and economies, the Philippines scored the lowest in reading literacy in the 2018 Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA) [San Juan, (2019)

Reading challenges remain a significant concern in the Philippine education system [Kilag et al. (2023)].

The Department of Education (DepEd) continues to implement Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) to enhance literacy among Filipino learners, especially in the wake of pandemic-related learning gaps (Ambat, 2022). The program, which began in 2001, remains central to the national education agenda, although it has drawn attention regarding implementation challenges and learning outcomes (Philippine Star, 2023).

In line with this initiative, the DepEd extended the contact hours for the Communication Arts period to allow more time for integrated reading instruction. In contrast, private elementary schools typically offer reading as a separate subject to ensure adequate time for the development of essential reading skills (Department of Education, 2011)

On the other hand, teachers’ role is important in increasing students’ reading interest, this is because students tend to prefer playing with peers rather than reading books, especially in today’s modern era students use mobile phones. (Syafira et al 2022)

The ability to read is the heart and soul of basic education and the foundation of life-long learning. (Bariquit, 2019). Still on Bariquit study, one of the problems that educators are facing nowadays is the low academic performance of the students which is attributed to their inability to read, the worst low if no comprehension at all. This problem is observed not only in the results of National Achievement Tests (NAT) but also in the day-to-day classroom situation. The lower NAT ratings in recent years are reflections of how the quality of Education is declining in the Philippines. These problems create conflict among teachers in the lower and higher grade levels.

To address the gap, the Department of Education issued DepEd Memorandum No. 173, s2019 titled “Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiative) to task all schools across the country to assist learners in developing their reading skills aiming to make every learner a proficient reader.

Regional Memorandum No. 70, s2020 of the Department of Education, Cordillera Administrative Region (DepEd-CAR) addendum to Regional Memorandum No. 013, s.2020, reiterating the “No Read, No Pass Policy”. Learners who cannot read in English and Filipino will consequently face challenges in coping with other learning areas and these difficulties will be compounded if learners are not able to read and write.

In our school, the school head has proposed a project initiative titled “The 21st Century Readers,” envisioning that over the next three years, our school will become a learning institution that promotes a genuine passion for reading and writing among learners. This initiative aims to address issues and concerns related to literacy skills and competencies through the involvement of teachers, parents, and stakeholders. The project “21st Century Readers” aligns with the school's goal of decreasing the number of learners classified as below letter level and at frustration level. This initiative is linked to the school-initiated program, which incorporates various reading programs introduced by the division for K to 6 learners. By the end of the school year, the project aims to achieve specific objectives: Grade I learners will reach Key Stage 3 Level 2; Grades II and III learners will attain Key Stage 4 Level 1; and Grades IV to VI learners will achieve Key Stage 5 Level 3 in both English and Filipino using the Apayao Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program (LEAP) framework.

Apayao “LEAP” is a comprehensive reading intervention initiative of SDO Apayao which was developed and designed to address reading gaps as well as to enhance or advance the reading skills among learners in both elementary and secondary schools based on their individual reading needs as to what stage, specific reading levels and degree of reading difficulties across all grade levels.

Grades 1-3 English – Apayao LEAP starting with Stage 1, Level 1, but if the learner exhibit mastery of the competencies, go up one level at a time.

Our school is a multigrade school. Each teacher handled two grades level. The teacher may struggle to provide individualized attention to each pupil, especially when there are wide differences in reading abilities across grade levels. Younger pupils might not receive enough foundational support in reading, while older pupils may not be challenged enough. Additionally, the diverse needs can make it difficult for the teacher to implement effective reading strategies tailored to each student’s level, potentially leading to slower reading progress and lower levels of literacy development for some students.

Teachers, parents, and stakeholders will receive training and programs relevant to their roles as advocates for developing the 21st-century literacy skills of learners. Failure to develop basic reading skills by age nine predicts a lifetime of illiteracy. Unless these children receive appropriate instruction, more than 74% of those entering first grade who are at risk for reading failure will continue to experience reading difficulties into adulthood.

Considering this, the researcher, drawing on years of teaching experience and challenges encountered while teaching reading, has developed a plan for an additional project entitled “MMDA” (Mmmm Makakabasa Din Ako). This program involves a set of targeted teaching strategies designed to help learners who are struggling with reading. The researcher will identify first the pupils who need help and determine their specific reading difficulties by conducting one-on-one Pre-reading assessments using the LEAP Reading Assessment Tool. After getting the pre result, the researcher then plans the intervention. The implementation of the MMDA program will be the next step. There is a direct teaching of reading skills between the researcher and the identified participants using the time allotted for Remedial Reading Class. She uses interactive PowerPoint and songs to teach letter sounds and blending to catch the interest of the targeted participants.

This study is significant as it sought to address the growing concern of struggling readers at the primary level, particularly among grades 1-3 learners. By implementing the MMDA Program as a reading intervention, the research aims to improve the reading skills of early graders and help them become more confident and competent readers.

The findings of this study benefited various stakeholders. Teachers will be equipped with an alternative and innovative reading intervention that they can apply in their classrooms. Parents will gain a better understanding of how to support their children’s reading at home. Pupils, especially those who are struggling with readers, stand to benefit the most as the program is designed to enhance their reading abilities during their formative years. Lastly, future researchers may use this study as a foundation for further investigations on reading interventions at the early education level.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Generally, this study assessed the effectiveness of the MMDA Program as a reading intervention for the primary learners of Guinamgamman Elementary School.

Specifically, it sought to address the following research questions:

1. What is the reading level performance of primary learners in the pre-reading assessments across various phonetic categories before the implementation of the Mmmm Makakabasa Din Ako (MMDA) Program?

2. What is the reading level performance of primary learners in the post-reading assessments across various phonetic categories after the implementation of the Mmmm Makakabasa Din Ako (MMDA) Program?

3. Is there a significant difference between the performance of readers in the pre-reading and post-reading assessments?

**2.1 Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the performance of the primary learners in the pre-reading and post-reading assessments.

3. methodology

**3.1 Research Design**

The study employed a single pre-test and post-test design within an experimental research framework. According to Mike (2017) as cited by Cayabyab et.al, behavioral researchers often utilize this design to analyze the impact of an intervention on a specific sample.

In this study, experimental manipulation was applied to the participants. Observations will be made both before and after this manipulation, which eliminates the need for random selection of participants. The results from both tests will provide insights into the participants' performance, and the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores will reflect the effectiveness of the intervention.

**3.2. Locale of the Study**

The study was conducted at Guinamgamman Elementary School in Guinamgamman, Conner, Apayao, for the school year 2024-2025.

**3.3. Respondents of the study**

The participants were the primary learners of Guinamgamman Elementary School enrolled in the school year 2024-2025.

**3.4. Research Instrument**

The primary tools for assessing the reading performance of the participants are the pre-reading and post-reading assessments, utilizing remedial reading drills adapted from the LEAP Reading Assessment Tool. The assessment components include Part One – Letter Name and Letter Sound Knowledge, Part Two –Blending, Part Three – Sight Words, Part Four – Silent Letter Words, Part Five – Phrases, Part Six – Sentences, Part Seven - Learners’ Experience/s during the process of reading remediation. This reading material will provide a structured assessment aimed at improving the reading skills of the primary learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School.

**3.5 Statistical Analysis**

In the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following tools and measurements were utilized.

A **paired sample t-test** is utilized to assess the significant difference in the pre-reading and post-reading assessments of participants before and after the implementation of the MMDA Program as a reading intervention for struggling readers. This test is appropriate because it compares the means of two related groups (the same participants' scores before and after the intervention) to determine if there is a statistically significant change in reading performance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Reading level performance of primary learners in pre-reading assessments across various phonetic categories prior to the implementation of the MMDA program

Table 1- Results of the English Pre-Test Administered under the Apayao Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program (LEAP) for S.Y. 2024-2025

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learner #** | **Grade Level** | **Stage** | **Level** | **Yes** | **No** | **Remarks** | **Reading Level** |
| 1 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2 |  | ✓ | Needs close supervision to master the skill. | Starting Level |
| 2 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1 |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CV) 7 and below out of 10 words. | Letter Level |
| 3 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2 |  | ✓ | Needs close supervision to master the skill. | Starting Level |
| 4 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2, 3, 4a | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 4b |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CVCC) 11 and below out of 15 words. | Letter Level |
| 5 | Grade 2 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 3 |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CVC) 11 and below out of 15 words. | Letter Level |
| 6 | Grade 2 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 4c | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 4d |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CCVC) 11 and below out of 15 words. | Letter Level |
| 7 | Grade 2 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  | 3 |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CVC) 11 and below out of 15 words. | Letter Level |
| 8 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2, 3 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  | 4a |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (VCC) 15 and below out of 20 words. | Letter Level |
| 9 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2, 3 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  | 4a |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (VCC) 15 and below out of 20 words. | Letter Level |
| 10 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2, 3, 4a | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  | 4b |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CVCC) 15 and below out of 20 words. | Letter Level |
| 11 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  | 4e |  | ✓ | The child can only blend (CVCV) 15 and below out of 20 words. | Letter Level |

Table 1 shows the results of the English Pre-Test administered under the Apayao Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program (LEAP) for S.Y. 2024-2025 revealed that all 11 primary learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School are reading below their expected grade level. Learners from Grade 1 (Learners 1–4) were generally assessed at the “Starting Level,” requiring close supervision even in foundational reading skills. Learners in Grades 2 and 3 (Learners 5–11) performed slightly better but were still categorized at the “Letter Level,” with consistent difficulties in blending consonant-vowel patterns such as CVC, CCVC, CVCC, VCC, and CVCV structures. These findings indicate that learners have not yet developed automatic word recognition and decoding skills, which are critical for reading fluency and comprehension. The results emphasize the urgent need for targeted, structured reading interventions like the MMDA Program to systematically address phonemic awareness and phonics deficits. Without immediate and sustained instructional support, these learners risk falling further behind academically, potentially impacting their overall learning across all subject areas. The results are aligned with the study of [3], which found that early-grade students commonly experience significant difficulties in beginning reading, especially in decoding and blending sounds. Their research emphasized that many first-grade learners struggle to recognize letter-sound correspondences and construct basic syllables, mirroring the challenges faced by the primary learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School as reflected in their performance at the Starting and Letter Levels. This reinforces the need for structured phonics-based interventions like the MMDA Program to build foundational reading skills.

**4.2 Reading Level Performance of Primary Learners in Post-Reading Assessments Across Various Phonetic Categories Prior to the Implementation of the Mmmm Makakabasa Din Ako (MMDA) Program**

**Table 2- Post-test results of the Apayao Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program (LEAP) under the MMDA Program**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learner #** | **Grade Level** | **Stage** | **Level** | **Yes** | **No** | **Remarks** | **Reading Level** |
| L1 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  |  | Stage 3 | 1 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 7 phrases and below out of 10. | Phrase Level |
| L2 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1, 2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 7 phrases and below out of 10. | Phrase Level |
| L3 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 7 phrases and below out of 10. | Phrase Level |
| L4 | Grade 1 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 4 sentences out of 5. | Sentence Level |
| L5 | Grade 2 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 4 sentences out of 5. | Sentence Level |
| L6 | Grade 2 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 4 simple sentences out of 5. | Sentence Level |
| L7 | Grade 2 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  |  | 1.1 |  | ✓ | The learner can read 80 % or 78 words and above but can’t answer the 5 questions correctly. | Sentence Level |
| L8 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1, 1.1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 4 compound sentences out of 5. | Sentence Level |
| L9 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1, 1.1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2 |  | ✓ | The learner can only read 4 compound sentences out of 5. | Sentence Level |
| L10 | Grade 3 | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| Stage 4 | 1, 1.1, 2, 2.1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
| 2.2 |  | ✓ | The learner can read 80 % or 57 words and above and able to answer 2 questions only. | Sentence Level |
|  |  | Stage 1 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  |  | Stage 2 | 1-6 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  |  | Stage 3 | 1-2 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  |  | Stage 4 | 1, 1.1, 2, 2.1, 3, 3.1 | ✓ |  |  |  |
|  |  | 3.2 |  | ✓ | The learner could read 80% or 130 words and above but was not able to answer all the questions that follow. | Sentence Level |

Table 2 shows the post-test results of the Apayao Literacy Engagement and Advancement Program (LEAP) under the MMDA Program reveal that among the eleven primary learners assessed, significant progress in reading fluency and comprehension was evident, though varying across grade levels. Grade 1 learners (Learners #1–4) remain at the “Phrase Level,” indicating they can read up to 7 phrases out of 10, suggesting early decoding skills with emerging fluency. Grade 2 learners (Learners #5–7) and Grade 3 learners (Learners #8–11) consistently reached the “Sentence Level,” successfully decoding simple and compound sentences; however, many struggled to answer comprehension questions despite high word recognition scores. For example, Learners #10 and #11 demonstrated the ability to read 80% of the text (57 and 130 words respectively) but could only answer a few or none of the comprehension questions. This suggests that while the MMDA Program has effectively enhanced word recognition and fluency, comprehension skills remain a challenge. The implication is a need for more targeted instruction focusing on reading comprehension strategies such as inferencing, summarizing, and question-answering techniques to bridge the gap between decoding and understanding, ensuring learners not only read fluently but also grasp the meaning of what they read. These results aligned in the study of [8], which emphasized the critical connection between reading fluency and comprehension. Their findings highlighted that while students may demonstrate the ability to decode words quickly and accurately—a skill developed through consistent practice and exposure—this does not necessarily translate to strong comprehension skills. In the context of the MMDA Program, although learners showed improved fluency and word recognition, their struggle with answering comprehension questions mirrors Walczyk and Griffith-Ross’s assertion that fluency alone is insufficient. Thus, these results underscore the necessity of integrating targeted comprehension strategies alongside fluency training to ensure holistic reading development.

**4.3 Comparison of Readers’ Performance in Pre-Reading and Post-Reading Assessments**

**Table 3- Significant improvement in the reading performance of primary learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School after the implementation of the MMDA Program**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **SD** | **t-value** | **p-value** | **Decision at** | **Interpretation** |
| Pre-test Reading Perforamnce | 3.89 | 1.83 | -8.54 | <0.001 | Reject Ho | Significant |
| Post-test Reading Performance | 11.50 | 2.67 |

Table 3 reveal a significant improvement in the reading performance of primary learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School after the implementation of the MMDA Program (Mmmm Makakabasa Din Ako). The mean score increased substantially from 3.89 in the pre-test to 11.50 in the post-test, with corresponding standard deviations of 1.83 and 2.67, respectively. A computed t-value of -8.54 and a p-value of less than 0.001 indicate that this difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the MMDA Program had a meaningful and positive impact on the learners' reading abilities. The implication of this result is that structured and contextually relevant reading interventions such as the MMDA Program can effectively address reading difficulties in early grades. Educators and school administrators may consider adopting or adapting this program as a viable tool for enhancing foundational literacy skills among primary learners, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes across subject areas. The results aligned in the study of [13], which revealed that a structured reading remediation program significantly improved the reading performance of struggling learners. Like the outcomes of the MMDA Program at Guinamgamman Elementary School, their findings demonstrated that focused intervention strategies can effectively enhance foundational reading skills in early grade learners, affirming the value of targeted and contextualized support in literacy development.

**5. CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the study confirm that the MMDA Program significantly improved the reading fluency and word recognition skills of primary learners at Guinamgamman Elementary School, especially those who initially lacked foundational literacy skills. While students showed notable progress in decoding, ongoing challenges in reading comprehension highlight the need for future interventions to also target understanding of text. Overall, the findings underscore the effectiveness and importance of structured reading programs in addressing early literacy gaps and supporting academic success.

Consent

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality.

Ethical approval

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the college. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondents’ privacy and confidentiality.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

Option 2:

Author(s) hereby declares that generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models, etc. have been used during the writing or editing of manuscripts. This explanation will include the name, version, model, and source of the generative AI technology and as well as all input prompts provided to the generative AI technology

Details of the AI usage are given below:

1. Used ChatGPT (GPT-4, Open AI) to clarify ideas, assist in rephrasing sections for improved readability and format references in APA style.

2. Used Google Scholar (Google) to search for academic literature and verify the accuracy of references and citations. No content was generated using this tool.

3. Used Grammarly (Advanced Writing Assistant to check grammar, punctuation, and provide suggestions for tone and clarity enhancement.

The author acknowledges the use of generative AI (ChatGPT, GPT-4 by open AI) and assistive AI (Google Scholar, and Grammarly) as support tools in the writing and editing process of this manuscript. The AI was used responsibly and ethically to assist in rewording sentences, summarizing content, and formatting citations. All ideas, arguments, and conclusions presented in this work are entirely the author’s own.

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