

EMPOWERING PARENTS AS READING REINFORCERS: AN ACTION RESEARCH ON IMPROVING BEGINNING READING SKILLS OF STRUGGLING GRADE 1 LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This action research investigates the effectiveness of empowering parents as reading reinforcers in improving the beginning reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners. The study aims to examine how structured parental involvement and home-based reading reinforcement strategies influence learners' reading development, particularly in letter recognition, phonemic awareness, word decoding, and reading fluency. A group of identified struggling readers participated in a parent-supported reading intervention program, where parents were oriented and trained on simple, guided reading strategies to be implemented at home. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test reading assessments, reading progress checklists, and teacher observation records. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentage gains, were used to analyze improvements in reading performance before and after the intervention. The study is expected to show significant improvement in learners' beginning reading skills because of consistent parental reinforcement and home reading support. Findings will provide practical insights into the role of parents as active partners in early literacy development and support the design of school-based intervention programs that strengthen home-school collaboration. By highlighting the impact of parental empowerment on reading development, the study contributes to early literacy research and offers a sustainable, community-based approach to supporting struggling beginning readers in the primary grades.

Keywords: Empowering parents, CRLA Assessment, Beginning Reading, Struggling Readers, Reading Reinforcers

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill crucial to learners' academic success, especially in the early grades where basic reading abilities are developed. However, many Grade 1 learners struggle with beginning reading skills, affecting their confidence and performance in school. Recognizing the importance of parental involvement in reinforcing literacy at home, this action research titled Empowering Parents as Reading Reinforcers: An Action Research on Improving Beginning Reading Skills of Struggling Grade 1 Learners in Bamban Elementary School aims to determine the effectiveness of empowering parents in improving learners' reading development.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

This action research aims to determine the effectiveness of empowering parents as reading reinforcers in improving the beginning reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners at Bamban Elementary School. Specifically, it seeks to examine the learners' reading levels before and after the implementation of the intervention and to determine whether there is a significant improvement in their letter recognition, decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills because of active parental involvement.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the level of reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners before the implementation of empowering parents as reading reinforcers.
- To evaluate the level of reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners after the implementation of empowering parents as reading reinforcers.
- To determine whether there is a significant difference in the learners' reading performance before and after the implementation of the intervention.
- To describe the experiences encountered during the implementation of empowering parents as reading reinforcers.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This action research employed a mixed methods design to examine the effectiveness of empowering parents as reading reinforcers in improving the beginning reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners. Approval from the school principal and informed parental consent were secured prior to data collection. The Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) was administered as a pretest to establish baseline reading levels and identify struggling learners.

The three-month intervention included daily 30-minute tutoring sessions focusing on letter-sound

recognition, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Parents were oriented and provided with instructional materials to support home-based reading reinforcement. Weekly progress monitoring and observation checklists were conducted to track learner development.

Following the intervention, the CRLA was re-administered as a post-test. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean, percentage, standard deviation, mean difference, and paired sample t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data from parent reflections and informal interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to explain and support the quantitative results.

RESULTS

1. Level of Beginning Reading Skills Before the Implementation of Empowering Parents as Reading Reinforcers

Table 1 presents the distribution of learners according to reading level based on the CRLA pretest.

Table 1. Distribution of Learners According to Reading Level (Pretest)

Reading Level	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Low Emergent	14	7	21	50.00%
High Emergent	9	12	21	50.00%
Developing	0	0	0	0.00%
Transitioning	0	0	0	0.00%
Grade Level Ready	0	0	0	0.00%
Total	23	19	42	100%

The results show that all 42 Grade 1 learners were classified as struggling readers. Specifically, 50% were Low Emergent Readers, while the remaining 50% were High Emergent Readers. None of the learners reached the Developing, Transitioning, or Grade Level Ready levels.

This indicates that learners had limited letter-sound recognition, decoding ability, and comprehension skills prior to the intervention. These findings confirm the need for immediate instructional support and reinforcement, particularly through parental involvement.

2. Effect of Empowering Parents as Reading Reinforcers on Improving Beginning Reading Skills

After the three-month intervention, the CRLA post-test was administered. Two male learners transferred to another school; therefore, only 40 learners were included in the post-test.

Table 2 presents the distribution of learners according to reading level based on the CRLA Post-test.

Reading Level	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Low Emergent	3	0	3	7.50%
High Emergent	0	0	0	0.00%
Developing	0	0	0	0.00%
Transitioning	7	5	12	30.00%
Grade Level Ready	11	14	25	62.50%
Total	21	19	40	100%

Table 2. Distribution of Learners According to Reading Level (Post-test)

The results show a substantial improvement in learners’ reading levels after the intervention. The number of Low Emergent Readers decreased significantly from 21 learners (50%) to only 3 learners (7.5%).

Most importantly, 25 learners (62.5%) reached the Grade Level Ready classification, while 12 learners (30%) progressed to the Transitioning level.

This indicates that empowering parents as reading reinforcers had a strong positive effect on improving learners’ beginning reading skills.

3. Significant Difference Between Pretest and Post-test Performance

To further examine improvement, the numerical equivalents of reading levels were used:

Reading Level	numerical Value
Low Emergent	1
High Emergent	2
Developing	3
Transitioning	4
Grade Level Ready	5

Table 3. Comparison of Pretest, Post-test, Mean Difference and T-test Reading Levels

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of empowering parents as reading reinforcers on learners' reading performance. There was a statistically significant increase in reading scores from the pretest ($M = 1.50$) to the post-test ($M = 4.40$), with a mean difference of 2.90. The results indicated that the improvement was statistically significant, $t(39) > 2.02$, $p < .05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that the intervention had a significant positive effect on the beginning reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners.

4. Experiences During the Implementation of Empowering Parents as Reading Reinforcers

Based on parent informal interviews, several key themes emerged:

Theme 1: Increased Parent Awareness and Involvement

Parents became more aware of their children's reading needs. Many parents reported that they gained confidence in helping their children read at home.

Test	Mean Score	Interpretation
Pretest	1.50	High Emergent Level
Post-test	4.40	Transitioning to Grade Level Ready
Mean Difference	2.90	Very Large Improvement in Reading Level
T(39)	>2.02	Significant at 0.05 level (Reject H_0)

Theme 2: Improvement in Learners' Confidence and Motivation

Parents observed that their children became more confident and interested in reading.

Theme 3: Strengthened Parent–Child Learning Relationship

Parents reported stronger bonding and communication with their children through reading activities. This strengthened emotional and academic support contributed positively to learners' progress.

Theme 4: Challenges Encountered

Some parents initially encountered challenges during the implementation of the intervention, particularly limited time due to work demands and difficulty in guiding their children in reading. These constraints affected their confidence and consistency in providing home support. However, with continuous guidance, coaching, and feedback from the researcher, parents gradually developed the skills and confidence needed to effectively assist their children.

The findings of the study demonstrate that empowering parents as reading reinforcers significantly improves the beginning reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners. Integrating systematic reading intervention with sustained parental involvement is an effective and practical long-term strategy for enhancing early literacy development.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that empowering parents as reading reinforcers is an effective strategy for improving the beginning reading skills of struggling Grade 1 learners. Prior to the intervention, all learners were classified as struggling readers, with 50% at the Low Emergent level and 50% at the High Emergent level, indicating limited foundational literacy skills.

Following the three-month intervention that combined structured daily tutoring with guided parental involvement, substantial improvement was observed. Most learners progressed to higher reading levels, with 62.5% reaching the Grade Level Ready classification. The significant increase in the mean reading score from 1.50 to 4.40, supported by the paired-samples t-test result, confirms that the intervention had a statistically significant positive effect on learners' reading performance.

Qualitative findings further revealed increased parental awareness, stronger parent–child learning relationships, and improved learner confidence and motivation. Although some parents initially faced challenges, continuous guidance enabled them to effectively support their children's reading development.

Overall, the results highlight that integrating systematic reading instruction with sustained parental involvement is a practical and impactful approach to accelerating early literacy development among struggling learners.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the struggling Grade 1 learners initially exhibited low levels of beginning reading skills, particularly in letter recognition, decoding, and comprehension. The implementation of empowering parents as reading reinforcers proved effective in improving learners' reading performance, with many progressing to higher reading level classifications, including Grade Level Ready. A significant difference was found between the pretest and post-test results, confirming the positive impact of the intervention. Furthermore, the program fostered positive experiences for both learners and parents, as increased parental involvement strengthened learners' confidence, motivation, and overall literacy development.

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