



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The Reading Comprehension Level of Grade 7 Students in Conner Central National High School: A Basis for A Comprehensive Reading Intervention Program

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Abstract

Reading is a fundamental skill that serves as the cornerstone of learning and academic success. It is not merely the ability to decode words on a page but a complex process that involves comprehension, interpretation, and critical thinking. This study assessed the reading comprehension levels of Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School in Ripang, Conner, Apayao during the third and fourth quarters of School Year 2024–2025. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research involved the entire Grade 7 population across three sections, with a total of 110 respondents. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the students' profiles, while weighted mean were applied to evaluate their reading comprehension strategies and performance. Findings revealed that a substantial number of students remain at the *Developing* and *Satisfactory* levels, indicating limited ability to fully comprehend academic texts across subject areas. This gap underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive, evidence-based reading intervention program that integrates strategic techniques, individualized support, and continuous assessment. Strengthening skills such as vocabulary development, inferencing, summarizing, and critical reading is essential to foster a more inclusive learning environment. Ultimately, improving reading comprehension is not only an educational priority but also a crucial step toward empowering learners with the tools for academic success and cultivating a culture of reading excellence within the school.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension; Reading Intervention; Students

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that serves as the cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning across all educational systems worldwide. In the global educational landscape, reading proficiency has been recognized by international organizations such as UNESCO and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a critical competency for the 21st century, essential for individuals to participate effectively in an increasingly knowledge-based society. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) consistently highlights that students who struggle with reading comprehension face significant barriers not only in language arts but across all subject areas, as reading is the primary medium through which students access information and engage with academic content. Consequently, nations worldwide have prioritized the development of reading intervention programs to address comprehension deficits and ensure that all students achieve the literacy skills necessary for academic achievement and future career success.

In the Philippines, reading comprehension remains a persistent challenge that has garnered significant attention from educational stakeholders and researchers. The country's performance in international assessments has revealed concerning gaps in reading literacy among Filipino students (Bernardo, 2021). Studies have documented the multifaceted nature of reading difficulties among Filipino learners. Research indicates that vocabulary knowledge, decoding skills, and prior knowledge significantly influence reading comprehension outcomes among elementary and

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secondary students in the Philippines (Torres, 2019). Furthermore, the Department of Education's implementation of the K-12 curriculum has emphasized the critical need for evidence-based reading interventions tailored to the specific needs of Filipino learners (Adarlo & Jackson, 2016). Studies examining reading comprehension among junior high school students in various Philippine regions have identified common challenges including limited vocabulary, weak inferential thinking skills, and insufficient exposure to diverse reading materials (Jala, 2020). Research has also highlighted the role of socioeconomic factors, home literacy environment, and instructional practices in shaping students' reading comprehension abilities (Dumlao, 2024). Investigations into reading intervention programs in Philippine schools have demonstrated that systematic, comprehensive approaches targeting multiple components of reading proficiency yield positive outcomes (William et. al, 2025). Studies have emphasized the importance of diagnostic assessment in identifying specific areas of difficulty and designing targeted interventions (Cabural, 2024).

Within the Cordillera Administrative Region, educational challenges are compounded by geographical, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors that uniquely affect student learning outcomes. Research in the region has documented lower literacy rates compared to national averages, with reading comprehension being identified as a critical area requiring immediate intervention (Miguel, 2017). Studies examining multilingual contexts in the Cordillera region have revealed that students' first language proficiency and the transition to Filipino and English as languages of instruction significantly impact reading comprehension development (Arzadon & Abaya, 2025). Investigations into the reading habits and comprehension levels of students in Benguet province specifically have identified gaps in critical reading skills and the need for culturally responsive reading materials (Apiles, 2025). Furthermore, research has shown that rural schools in the region, like in Apayao Province, face additional challenges including limited access to reading resources, larger class sizes, and fewer opportunities for individualized reading instruction (Arellano, 2025). The unique linguistic landscape of the region, where students navigate multiple languages daily, presents both challenges and opportunities for developing comprehensive reading interventions that acknowledge and leverage students' multilingual competencies.

In response to these documented challenges, Conner Central National High School in Ripang, Conner, Apayao, recognizes the urgent need to systematically assess the reading comprehension levels of its Grade 7 students and develop an evidence-based intervention program. Preliminary observations by teachers have indicated varying levels of reading proficiency among incoming junior high school students, with many demonstrating difficulty in understanding academic texts, making inferences, and engaging with complex reading materials across different subject areas. This research seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current reading comprehension levels of Grade 7 students, identify specific areas of strength and weakness, and establish a solid foundation for designing a targeted, culturally appropriate intervention program. By examining reading comprehension through multiple lenses, including literal, inferential, and critical comprehension skills, this study aims to contribute to the broader efforts of improving literacy outcomes in the Cordillera region and provide actionable insights that can inform instructional practices, resource allocation, and policy decisions at the school level. The findings of this research will serve as a basis for developing a comprehensive reading intervention program that addresses the specific needs of students at Conner Central National High School while contributing to the growing body of knowledge on effective literacy instruction in Philippine secondary schools.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design to assess Grade 7 students' reading comprehension levels.

2.2. Locale of the study

This study was conducted at Conner Central National High School, located in Ripang, Conner, Apayao.

2.3. Participants of the Study

This study involved the entire population of Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School, consisting of three (3) sections during the third and fourth quarters of School Year 2024–2025. The total number of respondents is presented in the table below

Table 1 Distribution of Students Respondents According to Section

Sections	Frequency	Percentage
I- Red	30	100%
I- Blue	44	100%
I- White	36	100%
Total	110	100%

2.4. Statistical Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the students. On the other hand, weighted mean was used to assess the reading comprehension of the respondents. The following 4-point Likert Criterion Scale were also used to describe the means of the responses:

Table 2 4-Point Likert Scale

Scale	Mean range	Descriptive interpretation
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always
3	2.51 – 3.25	Sometimes
2	1.76 – 2.50	Rarely
1	0 – 1.75	Never

3. Results and discussion

Table 3 How often do you read Reading materials outside of school?

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Never	2	2.60 %
Rarely	10	12.99 %
Sometimes	59	76.62 %
Always	6	7.79 %
Total	77	100 %

The data in Table 3 reveals that the majority of Grade 7 students (76.62%) reported that they “sometimes” read materials outside of school, while only a small proportion indicated that they “always” read (7.79%). Meanwhile, 12.99% said they “rarely” read, and 2.60% admitted they “never” read outside of school. This suggests that although most students engage in reading beyond the classroom, their practice is irregular and not yet habitual. Such findings highlight the need for structured interventions to encourage consistent reading habits.

A related study by Baba and Affendi (2020) found that students who cultivate regular reading habits outside of school develop stronger intellectual growth and broader mental horizons. Correlating this with the present study, the irregular reading patterns of Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School may limit their comprehension development, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive reading intervention program to transform “sometimes” readers into “always” readers.

Table 4 What kinds of materials do you usually read at home?

Kinds of reading materials	No. of students	Percentage
Textbooks	13	11.818 %
Storybooks	17	15.454 %
Comics	12	10.909 %
Online articles	22	20 %
Magazines	12	10.909 %
Social media	30	27.272 %
Others		3.636 %
Total	110	100 %

The data in Table 4 shows that the majority of students (27.27%) prefer reading social media content at home, followed by online articles (20%), while smaller proportions read storybooks (15.45%), textbooks (11.82%), comics (10.91%), and magazines (10.91%). Only a few (3.64%) reported reading other materials. This indicates that students' reading habits are heavily influenced by digital platforms, with social media and online articles dominating over traditional print materials. Such a trend reflects the growing role of technology in shaping literacy practices.

A related study by Millar & Schrier, (2015) found that while many learners still value printed resources, digital materials are increasingly preferred due to accessibility and convenience. Correlating this with the present findings, the dominance of social media and online articles among Grade 7 students suggests that reading interventions should integrate digital literacy components, ensuring that students not only consume online content but also develop critical comprehension skills.

Table 5 Respondents Place/Area to read

Place where they Read	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Home	43	39.09 %
School	28	25.45%
Library	29	26.36%
Internet Cafe	10	9.09%
Others	0	0%
Total	110	99.99%

The data in Table 5 indicates that most students (39.09%) prefer reading at home, followed by the library (26.36%) and school (25.45%), while only a small proportion (9.09%) read in internet cafés, and none reported other places. This distribution suggests that students primarily engage in reading within familiar and accessible environments such as their homes and schools, with libraries serving as an important secondary venue for academic and leisure reading. The low percentage of students reading in internet cafés highlights that such spaces are less conducive to sustained reading, possibly due to distractions or limited access to appropriate materials.

A related study by Alvermann, (2002) emphasized that the environment where students read significantly influences their engagement and comprehension, with supportive spaces like homes and libraries fostering better literacy practices compared to less structured settings. Correlating this with the present findings, the dominance of home, school, and library as reading venues underscores the need for schools to strengthen reading programs in these environments, while also encouraging families to create supportive reading spaces at home.

Table 6 Respondents access to reading materials at home

Responses	No. of Responses	Percentage
Yes (they have access to reading materials at home)	69	62.727 %
No (they do not have access to reading materials at home)	39	35.454 %
Total	108	

The results in Table 6 show that a majority of respondents (62.73%) reported having access to reading materials at home, while a significant portion (35.45%) indicated they do not. This suggests that although most students have resources available, a considerable number still face limitations in their home environment, which may hinder the development of consistent reading habits and comprehension skills. Access to materials is a critical factor in literacy growth, as students with readily available books and resources are more likely to engage in independent reading.

A related study by Krashen (2004), emphasized that access to reading materials strongly correlates with improved literacy outcomes, noting that students with greater exposure to books demonstrate higher comprehension and vocabulary development. Correlating this with the present findings, the lack of access among more than one-third of Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School underscores the need for school-based interventions and community support programs to bridge the gap and ensure equitable opportunities for reading development.

Table 7 Respondents' responses as to their parents or guardians whether they encourage them to read or not

Responses	No. of Responses	Percentage
Yes	48	43.64 %
No	60	54.54 %
Total	108	98.18 %

The results in Table 7 reveal that a majority of respondents (54.54%) reported that their parents or guardians do not encourage them to read, while only 43.64% indicated that they receive encouragement at home. This finding highlights a critical gap in parental involvement in fostering reading habits, which is essential for the development of literacy skills. When students lack encouragement from parents or guardians, they may be less motivated to engage in independent reading, potentially affecting their comprehension and academic performance.

A related study by Anderson, (1985), emphasized that parental support and encouragement play a vital role in shaping children's reading attitudes and success. Correlating this with the present findings, the limited parental encouragement among Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School underscores the need for school-based programs that not only target students but also involve parents in promoting a culture of reading at home.

Table 8 Reading Comprehension Strategies

Respondents Strategies Used	Mean	Interpretation
1. I preview titles, headings, and pictures before reading.	2.93	Sometimes
2. I try to guess unfamiliar words using clues from the text.	2.57	Sometimes
3. I read quickly to get the main idea (skimming).	3.03	Sometimes
4. I search for specific information in a text (scanning).	2.52	Sometimes
5. I reread difficult parts to understand them better.	2.69	Sometimes
6. I summarize what I have read.	2.62	Sometimes
7. I take down notes highlight important points.	2.62	Sometimes
8. I ask myself questions while reading.	2.74	Sometimes

9. I use a dictionary when I don't understand a word.	2.59	Sometimes
10. I relate the text to my own experiences.	2.70	Sometimes

The results in Table 8 show that students “sometimes” employ a variety of reading comprehension strategies, with skimming (Mean = 3.03) and previewing titles, headings, and pictures (Mean = 2.93) being the most frequently used, while scanning for specific information (Mean = 2.52) and guessing unfamiliar words from context (Mean = 2.57) are the least practiced. Overall, the data suggests that Grade 7 students are aware of different strategies but do not consistently apply them, which may limit their ability to fully comprehend texts. This irregular use of strategies highlights the need for explicit instruction and reinforcement of effective reading techniques.

A related study by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002), found that students who consciously and regularly apply strategies such as summarizing, questioning, and rereading demonstrate stronger comprehension outcomes. Correlating this with the present findings, the “sometimes” usage pattern among Conner Central National High School students indicates that while they recognize these strategies, they require structured guidance and practice to transform occasional use into habitual application, thereby improving their overall reading comprehension.

Table 9 Academic Performance of the respondents

Comprehension Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Did not meet Expectation	11	10%
Developing	35	31.818 %
satisfactory	32	29.090 %
Very satisfactory	14	12.72%
Outstanding	18	16.36%
Total	110	100 %

The results in Table 9 show that the academic performance of the respondents varies across different comprehension levels. A significant portion of students are in the *Developing* stage (31.82%), followed closely by those who achieved a *Satisfactory* level (29.09%). Meanwhile, 16.36% reached an *Outstanding* level, and 12.72% attained *Very Satisfactory*. On the other hand, 10% of the students did not meet expectations. This distribution suggests that while a considerable number of students are performing at average to above-average levels, a notable proportion still struggle with comprehension, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

A related study by Pretorius and Lephala (2011), found that students' academic performance is strongly linked to their reading comprehension skills, with weaker readers often lagging behind academically. Correlating this with the present findings, the performance levels of Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School reflect the direct impact of comprehension ability on overall achievement, reinforcing the importance of a comprehensive reading intervention program to uplift those in the “Developing” and “Did not meet expectations” categories.

4. Conclusion

The study underscores a pressing concern in the academic development of Grade 7 students at Conner Central National High School, revealing that many remain at the *Developing* and *Satisfactory* levels of reading comprehension, which limits their ability to fully engage with academic texts across subjects. This gap highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive, evidence-based intervention program that integrates strategic reading techniques, individualized support, and ongoing assessment. By strengthening skills such as vocabulary building, inferencing, summarizing, and critical reading, educators can foster a more inclusive learning environment that empowers students to achieve academic success. Ultimately, enhancing reading comprehension is not only an educational priority but also a vital step toward equipping learners with the tools necessary for lifelong achievement and cultivating a culture of reading excellence within the school.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge that I have not used ChatGPT or Copilot for refining some of the sections in the document.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

Author have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Statement of 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

Statement of informed 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, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

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