# Improving the reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils of Sabangan Elementary School through WordWall

Dela Cruz, Mary-Vhel O. ✉

*Sabangan Elementary School, Philippines (Mary-Vhel.DelaCruz@deped.gov.ph)*

## Abstract

Reading plays a vital role in enhancing learners' comprehension skills. Learning to read does not only stop in a single textbook or any other reading materials that are available inside the classroom. The inclusion of technology and digital aid in teaching has more likely to substitute the task of a teacher and technological advancement keeps on causing accelerative changes in almost every way of life. The researcher believes that WordWall will help improve pupils reading comprehension and give them skills that they will continue to build on in more advanced classes including reading. This study aimed to improve reading comprehension skills of Grade 1 pupils of Sabangan Elementary School. It made use of the One-group Pretest-Posttest research method. Twenty-four (24) or the total population of Grade 1 pupils was used as the participants of the study. The following conclusions were drawn: 1.a) The level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils during the pre-test is "Moderate"; 1.b) The level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils during the post-test is "Very High", and 2) There is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post test. These recommendations were derived from the conclusions: 1) The use of WordWall should be implemented to further improve the reading skills of the pupils; 2) Offline version of the WordWall is highly encouraged.; 3) If budget warrants, the school may consider a stable internet connection to facilitate instructions more efficiently and 4) Further studies should be conducted using more respondents.

*Keywords:* Grade 1 pupils, reading comprehension skills, WordWall

# Improving the reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils of Sabangan Elementary School through WordWall

## 1. Introduction

Reading plays a vital role in enhancing learners' comprehension skills. Instilling a love for reading is the key that unlocks the door to lifelong learning. Learning to read does not only stop in a single textbook or any other reading materials that are available inside the classroom. It takes a repeated steps, techniques, materials and references only to improve their reading habit. Teaching kids to read and comprehend is one of the greatest gifts a teacher can provide. A learner who knows how to comprehend on what he or she's reading is considered as reader.

WordWall is a software-based interactive game introduced by Russel Stannard during the 12th Annual International Symposium on Foreign Language attended by the researcher as an offline participant. The researcher believed that Wordwall will help improve pupils reading comprehension and give them skills that they will continue to build on in more advanced classes including reading. This inspired the researcher to emphasize the use of WordWall since the reading materials in administering reading assessment are in printed form. Traditionally, they are used to read the printed reading materials given to them but many learners now tend to read digital texts and give them fun, valuable and easier experience reading habit. Why not give the learners something new to utilize during their reading time? Something that is interactive and technology-based.

The researcher also focused to the struggling readers which are considered as Non-reader, Very Slow Reader and Slow Reader. However, there were instances observed by the researcher wherein the Sabangan Elementary School District Pre-Reading Validation result recorded numbers of struggling readers in MTB, Filipino and most especially in English wherein the Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT), Philippine Reading Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) and Pre-oral Reading Assessment was used in its administration. Based on the result of the FLAT District Pre-reading Validation, the functional literacy level of the Grade 1 Pupils of Sabangan Elementary School was identified as follows: 16 out 24 were marked in the letter level, 6 on the word level and 2 on the paragraph level which means the most numbered level which is the letter level is considered as struggling readers. Meanwhile, the District Pre-oral Reading Assessment came up with the following results: 15 out 24 Grade 1 Pupils were considered as very slow readers; 7 slow readers and only 2 good readers. These results enthused the researcher to help the struggling readers to improve their reading comprehension skills.

The researcher was reckoned this by the reading comprehension skills of Sabangan Elementary School learners that needs to be addressed in order to cut the numbers of struggling readers. The 226 total number of learners resulted how alarming the numbers of struggling readers are but the researcher will only focus on the Grade 1 class because they are fundamentals of learning. The Grade-I pupils must be taught to read fluently at their early age in order for them to become an independent reader and begin to develop more academic skills because they will undergo a substantial transition to more extensive learning. Moreover, the pre-test and post-test will only focus on the FLAT and pre-oral reading since Grade 1 has no PHIL-IRI assessment.

Grade 1 is certainly an exciting part of a pupil's reading journey. A significant aspect of the Grade 1 pupils is to nurture their reading comprehension skills. Beginning readers learn to think actively as they read and develop a stronger ability to process the text. However, reading comprehension sometimes comes naturally for others, while it takes a bit more time for others. In due course, the goal is for our learners to dive deeper into the meaning of what they are reading.

***Objectives of the Study -*** This study sought to improve the reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 Pupils of Sabangan Elementary School through WordWall. Specifically, it attempted to answer the following

questions:

➢ What is the level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils during the pre-test and post-test?

➢ Is there a significant difference of the level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils between the pre-test and post test result?

## 2. Review of Related Literature

The synopsis of related studies and actions was presented on this part of the study which helped the researcher conceptualize the proposed innovation, intervention and strategy and only focused on the application of WordWall during the conduct of her study.

As per definition, **WordWall** (https://wordwall.net/, 2023)**,** is a free online tool for designing educational exercises. With it, teachers may enter the subject they want to cover in class into the Wordwall and get a range of ready-made, completely customizable activities including tests, word games, labyrinth hunts, and more. Users can even design entirely own activities. The majority of Wordwall activities can also be used in printed and interactive formats. (Stannard, 2021), the simple method for making your own teaching materials. Create unique assignments for your students, including tests, math challenges, word games, and more.

There are concepts in using the WordWall. (Dana, 2012), Pros. The four games are sufficiently different from one another for most kids to find at least one of them intriguing and captivating. Cons: Exercises that involve dragging and dropping aren't very participatory, and some youngsters could become bored easily. Conclusion: Simple games are helpful for pre-readers with different learning preferences, although complexity and interaction levels could be increased.

In the Philippines, the problem of learners in reading is not a new issue. In fact, certain studies reveal that the reading problems of Filipino students seemed to be perennial (Al Ryanne G. Gatcho, 2019). In order to assist the struggling readers, the practice of remedial reading has been in the limelight for a long time in the Philippine education sector. Teachers even tend to devise their own materials to be able to provide the proper interventions for them. Nowadays, another strategy used by the teachers in remedial reading and instruction is through integrating technology. As stated by (Mills, 2023 (Retrieved)), technology is a way of meeting learners where they are. Many technology learning resources are adaptive and self-paced, meaning they respond to input from users in order to guide the students to the most effective learning pathway. Technology is more motivating and engaging for many pupils.

The inclusion of technology and digital aid in teaching has more likely to substitute the task of a teacher. It is undeniably true in some reasons specially so when the learner is tech-savvy and they are more exposed to the gadgets. At the present time, technological advancement keeps on causing accelerative changes in almost every way of life. As stated by (Science, 2018) "Technology has transformed the way we do things and the way we live". Reading is no exception to it. That's why teachers more likely to rely on the online learning programs, multimedia and software-based interactive games reading materials which the researcher gave relevance and maximize the use of the so called WordWall which served as an intervention to improve the reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 Pupils of Sabangan Elementary School.

## 3. Methodology

*Research Design -* This study used a One-group Pretest-Posttest research method. According to (Calmorin, 2010) descriptive method of research is valuable in providing facts and essential knowledge about the nature of objects and persons. It is descriptive in the sense that the study determined the reading comprehension skills of the respondents during the pre-test and post-test using the WordWall.

*Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information -* This study was focused on improving the reading comprehension skills through WordWall which was reflected on the pre-test and post-test result. Twenty-four (24) or the total population of Grade 1 pupils of Sabangan Elementary School, Santiago District was used as the participants of the study. The selection of the respondents was based on the criterion that Grade 1 class is the fundamentals of learning and they must be taught to read fluently at their early age in order for them to become an independent reader and begin to develop more academic skills because they will undergo a substantial transition to more extensive learning. The researcher employed the total population.

*Data Gathering Methods -* This study used a One-group Pretest-Posttest research method. According to (Calmorin, 2010) descriptive method of research is valuable in providing facts and essential knowledge about the nature of objects and persons. It is descriptive in the sense that the study determined the reading comprehension skills of the respondents during the pre-test and post-test using the WordWall.

*Data Analysis -* The researcher used mean, frequency count and percentage and dependent t-test as statistical tools to analyze the data and treatment of the study. The researcher employed the pre-test and post-test result in determining the significant effect of the proposed intervention in improving the reading comprehension skills of Grade 1 pupils of Sabangan Elementary School. The researcher developed test questions in terms of the reading comprehension skills which was validated by three experts in which the inclusion criteria are: a graduate of post-studies, subject expert, and language expert. The researcher also identified the district pre-reading result of Sabangan Elementary School as basis in conducting the research.

*Ethical Considerations -* Since respondents are considered to belong to the vulnerable group, the researchers will ensure to adhere to ethical standards. Before the distribution of questionnaire and the conduct of assessment, the researcher will brief the respondents about the nature of the study and explain the goal and objectives of the study. The consent of the respondents will be respectfully asked. Most importantly, the data gathered from the respondents including their personal profile and assessment level will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of conducting the said research study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion of the study. Table 1 reveals the level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 Pupils during the pre-test and post-test.

**Table 1**
*Level of Reading Comprehension Skills of the Grade 1 Pupils during the Pre-Test and Post-Test*

| Variables | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Respondents | 24 | | 24 | |
| Range | Pre -FLAT | | Post - FLAT | |
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 4 (Paragraph) | 2 | 8.33 | 21 | 87.50 |
| 3 (Word) | 6 | 25.00 | 3 | 12.50 |
| 2 (Letter) | 16 | 66.67 | - | - |
| 1 (Below Letter) | - | - | - | - |
| Range | Oral Pre-Test | | Oral Post Test | |
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Very Good Reader | - | - | 11 | 45.83 |
| Good Reader | 2 | 8.33 | 10 | 41.67 |
| Slow Reader | 7 | 29.17 | 3 | 12.50 |
| Very Slow Reader | 15 | 62.50 | - | - |
| Non-Reader | - | - | - | - |
| Mean | 4.88 | | 8.21 | |
| Descriptive Level | Moderate | | Very High | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.23 | | 0.93 | |

In terms of Functional Literacy Assessment Tool (FLAT), 16 or 66.67% Grade 1 pupils can read letters, six (6) or 25% can respond to words and two (2) or 8.33% can already read paragraphs during the pre-test evaluation. After the WordWall intervention, post-test shows that 21 or 87.50% Grade 1 pupils can already read paragraphs

while 3 or 12.50% can respond or read words.

As to the Oral Reading Assessment, pre-test reveals that 15 or 62.50% are very slow readers, seven (7) or 29.17% are slow readers while two (2) or 8.33% are good readers. After the WordWall intervention, 11 or 45.83% Grade 1 pupils became very good readers, ten (10) or 41.67% are good readers and only three (3) were considered as slow readers. This implies that WordWall is a powerful tool in enhancing or improving the ability of Grade 1 pupils in reading. Pupils nowadays are more attracted to technology-based materials and it boosts their interest in reading. It conforms to the study of Sulistami (2018) that intervention strategies are helpful in improving the reading comprehension skills of pupils. The present study made use of WordWall while on the study of Sulistami, using Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) could improve the average score of students' reading comprehension in one class. The strategy could be used as way to teach in reading class especially in learning narrative text. Moreover, Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) could help the students the text well. It could be seen from the students 'progress in test and in every meeting.

As shown in the table, the pre-test of the Grade 1 pupils garnered a mean rating of 4.88 or a "moderate" level while the post-test of the pupils revealed a mean rating of 8.21 or a "very high" level. This implies that WordWall has a great impact towards the reading ability and improvement of the Grade 1 pupils. According to (Dana, 2012), the four games of the WordWall are sufficiently different from one another. However, most kids find the application intriguing and captivating. Thus, simple games are helpful for pre-readers with different learning preferences. It agrees to the study of Cedo (2022) that art integration as a teaching strategy to improve the reading skills of pupils has a significant difference to the improvement of the respondents. The pupils had positive progress in reading comprehension when proper interventions were given.

**Table 2**
*Significant Difference Between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Result*

| Source of Variation | Mean | Mean Difference | Computed t-Value | Tabular Value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Test (FLAT and Oral Reading) | 4.88 | | | | |
| Post-Test (FLAT and Oral Reading) | 8.21 | 3.33 | 2.07 | -11.9 | Significant |

Table 2 reveals the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. As shown in the table, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test as backed up by tabular value of -11.9. This implies that the WordWall greatly affects the reading ability of the pupils. The significant difference in test scores implies that the implementation of WordWall had a positive impact on the reading ability of the pupils. It suggests that WordWall has the potential to improve reading skills and comprehension. The introduction of the developed tool that helps aid the reading ability of the students significantly impacted the pupils of the said school. As supported to the study of (Mohd, 2022), positive impacts of integrating ICT where it includes interactive games, multimedia on English language and reading comprehension skills under the straightforward headlines such as: availability of materials, students' attitudes, learners' autonomy, authenticity, helping teachers, student-centred, and self-assessment. Thus, WordWall was defined as free online tool and also an interactive game used for reading and language literacy.

WordWall, as an instructional tool, can be effective in enhancing reading abilities. To corroborate these implications, the study of (Pader, 2022) explained about the multimedia reading materials or online reading tools (example: Multimedia Sceme-Based Reading, WordWall and others), interactive games and environments offer a variety and flexible support for learners to help them become comfortable in learning to read which these citations trigger them to get away from traditional way of teaching reading among learners and make use of new technology which is more engaging and motivating nowadays. The use of multimedia reading materials or online reading tools is purposely to address the poor reading comprehension of learners which led to the positive effect of WordWall on reading abilities. The implication that WordWall greatly affects the reading ability of all pupils

may be negated if the study population is not representative of a larger, diverse population. The effectiveness of WordWall may vary depending on the specific context, student characteristics, and other factors.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions were drawn: 1.a) The level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils during the pre-test is "Moderate"; 1.b). The level of reading comprehension skills of the Grade 1 pupils during the post-test is "Very High" and 2) There is a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test. Based from the conclusions, it came up with the following recommendation: 1) The use of WordWall should be implemented to further improve the reading skills of the pupils; b) Offline version of the WordWall is highly encouraged; c) If budget warrants, the school may consider a stable internet connection to facilitate instructions more efficiently; d) Further studies should be conducted using more respondents.

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