

Early Intervention in Reading: A Case Study of a 4Ps Beneficiary

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Abstract: *This case study was focused on probing the onset of early reading difficulties of a beneficiary of the social amelioration program of the Philippine government through issuance of monthly cash assistance to Filipino poor families. An intervention program was tailored to immediately arrest the arising reading difficulties that the learner is exhibiting. Using eleven kinds of pre-reading assessment tools, the reading difficulties of the child was clearly diagnosed. His lack of phonemic awareness or knowledge impedes his learning to read in his First Language (L1-Filipino) of which he is orally fluent and competent. To expedite his recovery in learning to read in his L1, the Marungko Lessons were used with additional consonant clusters lessons, then further reinforced by writing activities. The intervention program tailored according to his needs pole vaulted him from being a child-at-risk to an independent reader. Pre-assessment, during assessment, and post assessment tools documented the tremendous progress happened to the child. The intervention program was incredibly successful in addressing the early reading difficulties of the child.*

Keywords: child-at-risk, intervention, tailored plan phonemic awareness, assessment tools,

1. Introduction

Early Intervention in Reading is technically complicated, undeniably tedious, and absolutely demanding work. Yet, your compassion, commitment, and love for young, helpless, and dependent but promising children will definitely surpass all these challenges.

There are many things discovered in exploring early reading intervention program. Such discoveries help you probe the problems that make you see with clarity and deeper foresight of the details and variables interplaying to a particular reading problem.

An appropriate lens is empirical in bringing a reading difficulty into the lime light. Meaning, using different assessment tools is significantly needed to probe scientifically the existence of a reading difficulty. The degree of difficulty can be assessed to have a gauge of how the reading problem is affecting the learner. This helps you identify and plan the intervention program that should be tailored fit in addressing the pressing difficulties that learner is exhibiting.

Components of an intervention program should be tailored to meet the needs and address the pressing difficulty of at – risk – children. Revising the intervention plan as need arises is required. Flexibility of the plan must be one dynamic element of a plan. As the child progresses, the intervention plan must conform to such progress occurring.

Communicating the objectives, contents, and procedures of the intervention plan is extremely needed in the program. Transparency of the whole process solicits shared responsibility, cooperation, and commitment from the child. Progress or difficulties should be communicated to the child as well. It helps the child to accept his needs and difficulties.

There are things that are beyond your control such as disease, physical handicap, etc. but it does not mean that you

cannot do anything about it. One confronting problem about doing intervention program is poverty. Most *at – risk – children* (children with reading difficulties) belong to poor families. Even these children wanted to help themselves but their financial resources deprived them physically, cognitively, educationally, and socially limiting them in maximizing their full potential. Thus, all the more, these children are in dire need of an intervention program.

To have background about the child as subject of the study, here is his portrait as a learner:

JSA is a Grade 2 pupil from the adopted elementary school of the College of Education. He is recommended by his teacher for an intervention program because he is not performing academically well in school. He belongs to the least performing group in the class.

His main problem for not performing well is his difficulty reading in Filipino. Thus, all the more that he cannot read in English. His difficulty reading in his L1 (First Language) is compounding. It becomes worst for he is compelled to read also in L2 (Second Language) because his books in his several subjects like Science, Mathematics, English, etc. are already in English.

His family is supported by the government through its 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), a financial assistance program for poor Filipino families given on a monthly basis.

His parents have no stable job. Though sometimes they have job but their earnings are below the regular daily wage which cannot even support the five members of the family. He is not regularly present in school for he is needed also to help his parents earn or to take care of his younger siblings. Being the eldest, even in his young age, he is demanded to share in the responsibilities in his family.

If his difficulties reading in Filipino will not be first addressed before working on his difficulties reading in English, eventually the child back out from school.

2. Methodology

The child was recommended by his teacher due to his poor academic performance. The primary cause of his poor academic performance was his early reading difficulty in his First Language (L1).

The child was subjected to reading assessments (pre-reading assessments, during reading assessments, and post reading assessments). Eleven reading assessment tools were used for the *pre – reading* and *post reading* while three assessment tools for the weekly *during reading* to monitor progress and diagnose other arising reading difficulties.

An intervention plan was tailored based from the pre-reading assessment results. The components of the reading intervention plan were: (1) Phonemic Lessons in which the Marungko Lessons were adopted; (2) Read Aloud Activity in which reading fluency was monitored; (3) Writing Activities in which served as the final gauge in learning to read.

The whole duration of the intervention program was spread out in eight weeks which were calendared as follows:

Week 1: Assessment Period. The Pre – reading Assessments were conducted on three consecutive days. Four assessment tools were conducted on the first day, two assessments on the second day, and three assessments on the third day. On the fourth day, the results are studied carefully to establish background information about the portrait of the client. On the fifth day, an intervention plan was tailored to meet the needs and address the reading difficulties of the client.

Week 2: Marungko Lesson 1-5. Since the client is considered a child at risk, the introduction of the lesson is done gradually. Five lessons were calendared and done the session in 30 – 45 minutes only. Some writing activities were incorporated in the intervention program. Review of past lessons were done in few minutes. Towards the last day of the week, an assessment was conducted.

Week 3: Marungko Lesson 6 – 10. This was a continuation of the intervention program. Review of the past lessons, writing activities, and assessments were done as part of the daily and weekly routine.

Week 4: Marungko Lesson 11 – 15. The intervention program was continued. Review of the past lessons, writing activities, and assessments were done as part of the daily and weekly routine.

Week 5: Marungko Lesson 16 – 20. The last set of lessons for the Marungko Technique was implemented. Review of the past lessons, writing activities, and assessments were done as part of the daily and weekly routine.

Week 6: Consonant Cluster Lesson 21 – 25. An additional lesson was incorporated to the Marungko Lessons to

condition the client for his transition for a reading intervention in English. Review of the past lessons, writing activities, and assessments were done as part of the daily and weekly routine.

Week 7: Consonant Cluster Lesson 26 – 30. Last set of cluster lessons was implemented. Review of the past lessons, writing activities, and assessments were done as part of the daily and weekly routine.

Week 8: Post Assessment. Same assessment tools were implemented; same clustered of assessments were calendared and conducted at same time just like in the pre – assessment.

3. Results and Discussion

The following data presented in the table were the results of the *pre – reading assessment*:

Table 1 presents the assessment on **naming** the 28 Filipino Alphabets.

Table 1: Naming the Filipino Alphabets

Assessment Tools	Score
Upper Case Letters	27/28 (96%)
Error/Confused Letter	Ñ
Lower Case Letter	25/28 (89%)
Error/Confused Letters	ñ, d, w

The client can identify most of the *name* of the Filipino alphabets. He has one and three mistakes for big letters and small letters respectively.

Table 2 presents the assessment on **sounding** the 28 Filipino Alphabets.

Table 2: Sounding the Filipino Alphabets

Assessment Tools	Score/Percentage
Upper Case Letters	12/28 (42%)
Error/Confused letter	P, Z, E, J, T, Y, D, I,C, NG, R, W, L, Q, V
Lower Case Letters	14/28 (50%)
Error/Confused letter	f, k, p, e, j, o, y, c, ng, h, w, g, q, v

The client can barely give half of the *sound* of the Filipino Alphabet with scores of 12 and 14 for the big and small letters respectively.

This shows now the problem of the client. His difficulty starts from his limited knowledge on the basic requirements of reading which phonemic awareness is. His knowledge on naming the Filipino Alphabet does not help him at all for it is not a prerequisite at all reading in Filipino. In fact, naming the Filipino Alphabet is the last part of the process.

Table 3 shows the assessment on **matching** the big and small letters of the 28 Filipino Alphabets using flash cards or magnetic letters.

Table 3: Matching letters Using Flash Cards/Magnetic Letters

Assessment Tools	Score/Percentage
Upper Case Letters	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letter	0
Lower Case Letter	27/28 (96%)
Error/Confused Letter	q

The table shows that the client has no problem on matching the big and small letters of the Filipino Alphabet. He was only confused on one letter for the small letter equivalent which is the letter **q**.

Table 4 shows the written assessment on **matching** the big and small letters of the 28 Filipino Alphabets.

Table 4: Matching by Writing the Filipino Alphabets

Assessment Tools	Score
Upper Case Letters	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0
Lower Case Letters	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0

The table shows that the client has no problem in writing the match letters of the big and small letters of the Filipino Alphabets.

Table 5 displays the assessment on phonemic awareness, read aloud, and, writing own story.

Table 5: Phonemic Assessment; Read Aloud; Writing Own Story

Assessment tools	Score	Percentage
Phonemic Assessment	30/38	79%
Read Aloud	15/60	25%
Writing Own Story	10/15	67%

Results of assessments for Phonemic Awareness (79%), Read Aloud (25%), and Writing Own Story (67%) shows that these are consistently low which explains the poor reading performance of the learner. In these assessments, the learner is consistent to be in the frustration level. It leads us to see clearly the very cause of his reading difficulties and why he is poorly performing in reading and as a domino effect, even in his academic performance.

The following data presented in the table were the results of the **post reading assessment**:

Table 6 presents the assessment on **naming** the 28 Filipino Alphabets.

Table 6: Naming the Filipino Alphabets

Assessment Tools	Score/Percentage
Upper Class Letter	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0
Lower Case Letters	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0

The client has not committed any mistakes in naming the Filipino Alphabets. He has mastered the name of the alphabets.

Table 7 presents the assessment on **sounding** the 28 Filipino Alphabets.

Table 7: Sounding the Filipino Alphabets

Assessment Tools	Score/Percentage
Upper Class Letter	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0
Lower Case Letters	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0

Lack of phonemic awareness and confusion of the sounds of the Filipino Alphabets had been addressed as shown in his zero mistake performance.

Table 8 shows the assessment on **matching** the big and small letters of the 28 Filipino Alphabets using flash cards or magnetic letters.

Table 8: Matching Letters Using Flash Cards or Magnetic Letters

Assessment Tools	Score/Percentage
Upper Class Letter	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0
Lower Case Letters	28/28 (100%)
Error/Confused Letters	0

Confusion on the physical appearance of the letters had been addressed as a result of the zero mistake performance.

Table 10 exhibits the post assessment on phonemic awareness

Table 10: Assessment Phonemic Awareness; Read Aloud; Writing Own Story

Assessment tools	Score	Percentage
Phonemic Assessment	38/38	100%
Read Aloud	60/60	100%
Writing Own Story	15/15	100%

The client's 100% performance for the assessments on phonemic awareness, read loud, and writing his own story clearly show that his reading difficulties had been treated and addressed fully through the tailored fit intervention reading program implemented for him.

To see clearly the improvement happened after the early intervention in reading, a **comparison** of the **pre** and **post reading assessment** is displayed on the next table.

Table 11 displays the overall improvement of the client considering the initial assessment prior to the intervention program up to post assessment which was conducted after the intervention program.

Table 11: Comparison of Results from the pre to post assessments

Assessment Tools	Pre - Assessment	Post Assessment
(1) Naming the Upper Case Filipino Alphabets	27/28 (96%)	28/28 (100%)
(2) Naming the Lower Case Filipino Alphabets	25/28 (89%)	28/28 (100%)
(3) Sounding Upper Case the Filipino Alphabets	12/28 (42%)	28/28 (100%)

(4) Sounding Lower Case the Filipino Alphabets	14/28 (50%)	28/28 (100%)
(5) Matching Upper Case of the Filipino Alphabets	28/28 (42%)	28/28 (100%)
(6) Matching Lower Case of the Filipino Alphabets	27/28 (50%)	28/28 (100%)
(7) Matching by Writing the Upper Case of the Alphabet	28/28 (100%)	28/28 (100%)
(8) Matching by Writing the Lower Case of the Alphabet	28/28 (100%)	28/28 (100%)
(9) Phonemic Awareness	30/38 (79%)	38/38 (100%)
(10) Read Aloud	15/60 (25%)	60/60 (100%)
(11) Writing Own Story	10/15 (67%)	15/15 (100%)

The client has improved tremendously in his mechanical aspect of reading. It only means that the program tailored according to his needs and problems had been met and solved. The primary problem of the client was his lack of phonological knowledge. Such handicap was the primary focus of the intervention program backed up with some reinforcing writing activities.

From being a child – *at – risk*, the client has graduated from it and he is now considered as an **Independent Reader** who is capable now of working in developing further the aesthetic aspects of reading.

Developing the reading comprehension will be then easier by now for the child because his focus is centered on *making meaning* of the text.

4. Conclusion

The assessment tools used were very appropriate in extracting the early reading difficulties of the child. As a result, the early reading intervention plan was made perfectly complementing in arresting his early reading difficulties.

The phonemic lessons (The Marungko Lessons) adopted to supply his needs for phonological knowledge fast-tracked his recovery in learning to read. It unlocked the mystery of those symbols (letters, words, sentences) making them sensible and functional in the initial process of meaning making.

The supporting components of the intervention program such as the read aloud and writing activities provided stronger and practical applications of the phonemic lessons learned.

The one – on – one daily session facilitated the fast recovery of the child’s reading difficulties. It consistently established stability in learning the mechanical aspect of reading.

All those things mentioned above synergistically contributed towards the undeniably success of the early reading intervention program.

5. Recommendations

The following are recommended for further study:

- 1) To test further the efficacy of the intervention program, it must be applied to at – risk – children exhibiting severe, moderate, and slight reading difficulties;
- 2) Transitional intervention reading program from the First Language (L1) to Second Language (L2) should be carefully planned and followed for smooth shift of the two languages.
- 3) Phonemic lessons whether in L1 and L2 should be the primary component of an early reading intervention program; and
- 4) To assure great success of an early intervention in reading, a one – on – one procedure must be faithfully observed.

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