

# Reading Comprehension Challenges Among Grade 6 Learners: Basis for A Reading Mentorship Program

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*Abstract* — Reading comprehension is a critical skill that forms the foundation of academic success and lifelong learning. In elementary education, it is essential for learners to develop strong reading skills to comprehend texts across various subjects. However, many elementary learners face significant challenges in reading comprehension, impacting their overall academic performance. Addressing these difficulties is crucial for ensuring that learners are equipped with the necessary skills to excel academically and beyond. Empirical studies have provided further insights into reading comprehension challenges and interventions. For instance, a study by Torgesen et al. (2016) found that early intervention programs focusing on phonemic awareness and decoding skills significantly improved reading comprehension outcomes for struggling readers. Torgesen et al. (2016) demonstrated that children who received systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics showed marked improvement in their reading skills, suggesting that early, targeted support can mitigate long-term reading difficulties. Conducting this study will provide valuable insights into the unique needs and challenges of learners in Guimba West Annex District and inform the development of tailored interventions that can be scaled across similar educational contexts in the Philippines.

*Keywords* — *Reading Comprehension, Reading, Descriptive-correlation, Challenges, Learners Elementary Learners*

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## I. Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the reading comprehension challenges faced by Grade 6 learners and to propose a reading mentorship program as an intervention to improve their literacy skills. A total of 125 Grade 6 learners from a selected school participated in the study. Data were gathered using questionnaires focused on learner profiles, types of reading materials engaged with, and the specific reading comprehension challenges they encountered. The study found that household income and parental education level significantly influenced the learners' reading comprehension abilities. Learners from higher-income households and those with better-educated parents faced fewer challenges in reading comprehension. In contrast, challenges such as inadequate use of context clues, limited vocabulary knowledge, and difficulties in making inferences were prevalent. Furthermore, engagement with various types of reading materials, including e-books and online articles, showed some correlation with improved comprehension, though not statistically significant. Based on these findings, a reading mentorship program was proposed to provide targeted support in vocabulary development, reading strategies, and comprehension monitoring. The program also aims to involve parents and address socio-economic

barriers to enhance the reading abilities of Grade 6 learners. The study concludes that a holistic, multi-faceted approach, including mentorship, parental involvement, and access to diverse reading materials, is essential for improving reading comprehension outcomes among learners.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study on reading comprehension challenges among elementary learners and the implementation of the reading mentorship program is grounded in several key educational theories and models. These theories provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing reading comprehension and the potential impact of mentorship programs on improving reading skills.

#### **Engagement Theory.**

The Engagement Theory of Reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2015) emphasizes the critical role of learner engagement in the reading process. According to this theory, engaged readers are motivated, strategic, knowledgeable, and socially interactive. The theory suggests that learners who are actively engaged in reading activities are more likely to develop strong comprehension skills. The Reading mentorship Program aligns with this theory by promoting interactive and engaging reading activities, where mentors can help mentees develop a love for reading and engage them in meaningful discussions about texts

The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 2016) posits that reading comprehension is the product of two primary components: decoding and linguistic comprehension. According to this model, both components are necessary for successful reading comprehension. The Reading mentorship Program can address both aspects by helping learners develop their decoding skills through phonemic awareness activities and enhancing their linguistic comprehension through discussions and interactions about texts.

The Matthew Effect. Stanovich (2016) introduced the concept of the "Matthew Effect" in reading, which suggests that early success in reading leads to more success, while early difficulties lead to further challenges. This theory highlights the importance of early and continuous support for struggling readers. The Reading mentorship Program aims to mitigate the Matthew Effect by providing ongoing support and fostering a positive reading experience for all learners, thereby preventing the widening of the achievement gap in reading comprehension.

Integrating these theories provided a robust framework for understanding the reading comprehension challenges faced by elementary learners and the potential benefits of the Reading mentorship Program. Constructivist and sociocultural theories emphasized the active and social nature of learning, suggesting that peer interactions can significantly enhance reading skills. The Engagement Theory highlighted the importance of motivation and active participation in reading

activities, while Cognitive Load Theory underscored the need for instructional support that manages cognitive demands. The Simple View of Reading and the Matthew Effect both pointed to the necessity of early and comprehensive interventions to support reading development.

## II. Methodology

The study will employ a descriptive-correlation research design to evaluate reading comprehension challenges among Grade 6 learners in the Guimba West Annex District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, for the school year 2024-2025, serving as a basis for implementing a Reading mentorship Program. The descriptive component will outline the profiles of Grade 6 learners, including their age, gender, household income, parental education level, and the types of reading materials they engage with, while also identifying specific reading comprehension challenges faced by these learners. The study will be conducted with 125 Grade 6 learners from the Guimba West Annex District, Schools Division of Nueva Ecija, during the 2024-2025 school year. The following tools will be utilized to treat the data statistically.

In describing the profile of Grade 6 learners in terms of age, gender, household income, parental education level, and types of reading materials they engage with, frequency and percentage will be used. Frequency refers to the number of cases, while percentage is computed using the formula,

$$\% = f/N \times 100$$

where

%	Percentage
f	Frequency
N	Total Number of Cases

In determining the reading comprehension challenges among Grade 6 learners, the weighted mean will be used. The weighted mean is computed using the formula,

$$\bar{X} = (\sum WX) / n$$

where

$\bar{X}$	Weighted Mean
W	Weight
X	Raw Scores
n	Number of Cases

The data will be interpreted as.

4.50-5.00	Very High
3.50-4.49	High
2.50-3.49	Moderately High
1.50-2.49	Moderately Low
1.00-1.49	Very Low

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations for the study will focus on ensuring informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and protecting participants' welfare. Before participation, learners and their guardians will receive detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and any potential risks, and consent will be obtained to ensure voluntary participation. To safeguard confidentiality, participants' identities and responses will be anonymized and securely stored, with access limited to authorized personnel. The study will be designed to minimize discomfort or harm, with age-appropriate procedures in place, and participants will have the option to withdraw at any time without repercussions. These measures will uphold the integrity of the research while protecting the rights and well-being of all participants.

**III. Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents the discussion of findings brought from the data gathering procedure. The data gathering procedures were based on the questions posited at the beginning of this study.

**1. Grade 6 Learner Profiles**

**Table 1.1**  
**Household Income**  
 N =

Household Income	f	%
Below PHP 10,000	4	3
PHP 10,000 - PHP 20,000	38	30
PHP 20,000 - PHP 30,000	48	38
PHP 30,000 - PHP 40,000	30	24
Above PHP 40,000	6	5
Total	125	100

The profile of Grade 6 learners in terms of household income reveals a diverse distribution, with the majority falling within the PHP 10,000 - PHP 30,000 income range. Specifically, 30% of learners have household incomes between PHP 10,000 and PHP 20,000, while the largest group, 38%, falls within the PHP 20,000 - PHP 30,000 bracket. This indicates that a significant portion of learners comes from middle-income households. A smaller proportion, 24%, have household

incomes between PHP 30,000 and PHP 40,000, and only 5% belong to households with incomes exceeding PHP 40,000.

The income distribution also shows that 3% of learners come from households earning below PHP 10,000, which may indicate a lower socio-economic background. It is important to note that a majority of the learners are from families within a modest income range, with most income levels focused between PHP 10,000 and PHP 30,000. These income levels could potentially influence the learners' access to educational resources, such as books, internet access, and other materials that may support their reading comprehension development.

**Table 1.2**  
**Parental Education Level**  
**N = 125**

<b>Parental Education Level</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
No formal education	3	2
Elementary level	28	22
High school level	55	44
College level	33	26
Postgraduate level	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>

Specifically, 44% of parents have completed only high school education, while 26% have reached the college level. A smaller group, 6%, have completed postgraduate education, and 2% of parents have no formal education. The largest proportion of parents, 44%, having only a high school education, may indicate limited access to educational resources or support for their children's learning, potentially affecting the learners' academic performance. Additionally, the 22% of parents with only an elementary level of education may face challenges in providing academic support, particularly with tasks that require advanced literacy skills, which could impact the learners' reading comprehension. Given the varied educational backgrounds of the parents, it is essential to consider how this may influence the learners' academic development, particularly in reading comprehension. Parents with higher education levels may be better equipped to support their children's reading skills, while those with lower education levels may face challenges in providing the necessary support.

**Table 1.3**  
**Types of Reading Materials You Engage With**  
**N = 125**

Types of Reading Materials You Engage With	f	%
Textbooks	3	2
Storybooks	5	4
Magazines	10	8
Newspapers	19	15
E-books	23	18
Comics/Graphic novels	20	16
Online articles/blogs	31	25
Educational websites/apps	11	9
I do not regularly engage with reading materials	4	3
Total	125	100

Among the 125 learners, the most popular reading materials are online articles/blogs (25%), followed by e-books (18%) and newspapers (15%). These findings suggest that Grade 6 learners are primarily engaging with digital content, which aligns with current trends where younger generations have greater access to and interest in online resources.

In contrast, more traditional reading materials, such as textbooks (2%) and storybooks (4%), are less frequently engaged with by the learners. This low engagement with traditional print materials may reflect a preference for digital formats, possibly due to easier access to devices and the engaging nature of online content. However, the limited use of textbooks and storybooks may indicate that learners are not regularly exposed to structured, comprehensive reading materials that are important for developing deep reading comprehension skills.

While comics/graphic novels (16%) and magazines (8%) are also fairly popular, they may not offer the same level of educational content as textbooks or storybooks, which can provide more in-depth knowledge and critical thinking exercises. The relatively low engagement with educational websites/apps (9%) further highlights the need for integrating structured, educational resources into the learners' reading practices.

## 2. Reading Comprehension Challenges

**Table 2**  
**Reading Comprehension Challenges**

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Description
Inadequate Use of Context Clues. Struggles to use surrounding text to infer the meaning of unknown words or phrases, affecting overall understanding.	4.69	Very Much Serious
Limited Vocabulary Knowledge. Difficulty understanding and using a wide range of words, resulting in poor comprehension of texts that use unfamiliar vocabulary.	4.61	Very Much Serious
Inability to Make Inferences. Difficulty drawing conclusions or making connections between information presented in the text and what is implied but not explicitly stated.	4.54	Very Much Serious
Lack of Engagement with the Text. Minimal interest or involvement with the content, leading to passive reading and reduced comprehension.	4.48	Very Much Serious
Difficulty Decoding Words. Struggles with sounding out or recognizing words, leading to frequent errors and interruptions in reading flow.	3.65	Serious
Difficulty Following Narrative Flow. Trouble keeping track of the sequence of events or the main plot in a story, leading to confusion about the storyline.	3.58	Serious
Challenges with Text Analysis. Difficulty analyzing and interpreting the meaning of complex or abstract concepts presented in the text.	3.54	Serious
Challenges in Identifying Main Ideas. Difficulty identifying and summarizing the central themes or main points of a passage.	3.51	Serious
Weak Comprehension Monitoring. Inability to recognize when comprehension breaks down and difficulty using strategies to correct misunderstandings.	3.38	Moderately Serious
Poor Recall of Details. Trouble remembering key details or events from a passage, affecting the ability to summarize or discuss the text.	2.71	Moderately Serious
Low Reading Fluency. Slow and laborious reading that disrupts the natural flow of comprehension and affects the ability to engage with the text fully.	2.61	Moderately Serious
Problems with Critical Thinking. Struggles with evaluating and critiquing the content, including assessing the author's purpose, bias, or the validity of arguments presented in the text.	2.52	Slightly Serious
Struggles with Text Structure. Challenges in understanding how different parts of the text (e.g., headings, paragraphs) fit together and contribute to the overall meaning.	2.43	Slightly Serious
Poor Sentence Comprehension. Difficulty understanding and processing the meaning of individual sentences, leading to confusion about the text's content.	2.41	Slightly Serious
Difficulty with Question Answering. Trouble answering questions about the text, especially those requiring detailed responses or higher-order thinking skills.	2.32	Slightly Serious
General Weighted Mean	3.40	Moderately Serious

Table 2: This table tells Reading Comprehension Challenges reveals that Grade 6 learners face several significant difficulties in reading comprehension, with most challenges categorized as very serious. The two most critical issues identified are inadequate use of context clues (mean =

4.69) and limited vocabulary knowledge (mean = 4.61). Learners struggle to infer the meaning of unknown words and phrases from the surrounding text, and their limited vocabulary hampers their understanding of texts that contain unfamiliar words. These challenges indicate that learners may be missing key strategies for improving their comprehension, such as utilizing contextual hints and expanding their vocabulary range.

### 3. Significant Relationship between the Profiles and the Reading Comprehension Challenges among Grade 6 Learners

**Table 3**  
**Significant Relationship between the Profiles and the Reading Comprehension Challenges among Grade 6 Learners**

Profile	Reading Comprehension Challenges	
Household Income	Pearson r:	0.469
	p-value:	0.009
	Interpretation:	Significant
Parental Education Level	Pearson r:	0.683
	p-value:	0.000
	Interpretation:	Significant
Types of Reading Materials	Pearson r:	0.268
	p-value:	0.151
	Interpretation:	Not Significant
Total	Pearson r:	0.55
	p-value:	0.002
	Interpretation:	Significant

Household Income shows a significant correlation with reading comprehension challenges, with a Pearson correlation of 0.469 and a p-value of 0.009. This suggests that students from families with lower incomes are likely to face more difficulties with reading comprehension compared to those from higher-income households. Learners from lower-income families may lack access to educational resources, such as books, internet access, or tutoring services, which can hinder their ability to engage with texts effectively. This gap in resources can contribute to the development of reading comprehension challenges as these students may not have the same level of exposure to diverse vocabulary and reading materials as their peers from higher-income backgrounds.

### 4. Proposed Reading Mentorship Program

The proposed Reading Mentorship Program is designed to provide targeted and personalized support to Grade 6 learners facing reading comprehension challenges. The program begins with the mentor selection process, where teachers with experience in literacy instruction are identified as mentors. These mentors are then paired with students based on the learners' specific challenges, ensuring that each student receives the most relevant and effective support. The program starts with an initial assessment of each learner's reading level, followed by ongoing

progress monitoring through quizzes, oral discussions, and comprehension tests to track improvements over time.

One-on-one reading sessions are a key component of the program, where learners receive individualized support focusing on building vocabulary, making inferences, and improving overall comprehension. In addition to these individual sessions, the program includes parental involvement workshops to engage parents in supporting their child's reading development at home. These workshops will provide parents with strategies to help their children with vocabulary expansion, reading together, and understanding texts more deeply. The program also emphasizes reading material diversity, offering learners a range of materials such as e-books, comics, newspapers, and educational apps to boost engagement with reading.

Program Component	Objective	Target Group	Methodology	Resources Needed	Expected Outcome	Timeline
Mentor Selection	To select qualified mentors who can support learners in reading comprehension	Teachers with experience in literacy instruction	Teachers and professionals are selected based on their ability to work with students struggling with reading comprehension	Teacher volunteers, professional development workshops	Identification of skilled mentors capable of fostering reading skills	1 month
Initial Assessment	To assess each learner's reading comprehension level	All Grade 6 learners	Conduct reading comprehension tests, interviews, and surveys to gauge current comprehension challenges	Pre-assessment materials, test kits	Clear understanding of individual learner needs	2 weeks
Mentor-Student Pairing	To match mentors with students based on their specific challenges	Learners with reading difficulties	Pair mentors with students based on similarity of comprehension issues and personality compatibility	Data on learner profiles, mentor availability	Personalized support and improved rapport between mentor and mentee	1 week
One-on-One Reading Sessions	To provide individualized reading practice and comprehension strategies	Struggling readers	Weekly one-on-one sessions focused on context clues, vocabulary building, inference-making, and engagement with texts	Books, reading materials, comprehension tools	Improvement in reading skills, including vocabulary, inference-making, and comprehension	Ongoing (Weekly)
Parental Involvement Sessions	To involve parents in supporting their child's reading development	Parents of learners with reading challenges	Host workshops for parents on strategies to support reading at home, such as vocabulary expansion and reading together	Workshop materials, reading resources for home	Increased parental involvement and support for reading development	1 month (quarterly)

Reading Material Diversity	To expose learners to various reading materials to boost engagement	All Grade 6 learners	Provide access to a range of reading materials (books, e-books, magazines, educational websites) and encourage regular reading	E-books, comics, newspapers, educational apps	Improved engagement with reading materials and better comprehension	Ongoing (Weekly)
Reading Comprehension Strategies	To teach specific strategies for improving reading comprehension	Struggling readers	Focus on skills such as summarizing, identifying main ideas, questioning the text, and drawing inferences	Strategy guides, worksheets, teacher-led activities	Increased understanding and application of reading strategies	Ongoing (Weekly)
Progress Monitoring	To track the learners' reading comprehension improvement over time	All Grade 6 learners	Regular progress checks through quizzes, oral discussions, and comprehension tests	Assessment tools, tracking sheets	Tracking learner progress and making adjustments as needed	Monthly
Peer Reading Groups	To create a collaborative learning environment for reading practice	All Grade 6 learners	Organize group reading activities where learners share insights, read aloud, and discuss comprehension together	Group reading materials, discussion guides	Enhanced peer learning, confidence-building, and social interaction in reading	Ongoing (Bi-weekly)
Feedback and Adjustments	To gather feedback from mentors and learners to improve the program	All stakeholders (mentors, learners, parents)	Conduct surveys and feedback sessions to adjust the program based on needs and challenges encountered	Feedback forms, survey tools	Continuous improvement of the program based on participant feedback	Every 3 months

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reading material diversity, offering learners a range of materials such as e-books, comics, newspapers, and educational apps to boost engagement with reading.

To further enhance comprehension, the program introduces reading comprehension strategies designed to help learners break down texts, identify main ideas, and monitor their understanding. Peer reading groups foster a collaborative learning environment, where students can share insights, read aloud, and discuss texts with their peers, thereby building confidence and social skills. Lastly, feedback and adjustments are integral to the program, allowing for continuous improvement based on feedback from mentors, learners, and parents. This ensures the program is responsive to the evolving needs of the students.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Socio-economic factors, such as household income and parental education level, significantly influence reading comprehension challenges. Learners from lower-income households or those with less-educated parents experience more serious reading comprehension challenges. Inadequate vocabulary knowledge and the inability to use context clues are primary obstacles to reading comprehension, highlighting the need for interventions that focus on these foundational skills. Exposure to various reading materials, though beneficial, was not the sole factor influencing reading comprehension, indicating that other targeted interventions are necessary to address the challenges faced by learners. There is a need for tailored interventions focusing on key areas such as vocabulary development, decoding skills, and reading comprehension strategies, including making inferences and identifying main ideas. While providing access to reading materials is important, a more comprehensive approach that includes mentorship, personalized strategies, and socio-economic support is needed to improve reading comprehension among Grade 6 learners.

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