

# Improving Grade 5 Reading Performance Through a School-Based Remediation Program: Evidence from Phil-IRI Assessment in a Philippine Public Elementary School

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*Abstract* — Reading proficiency is foundational to academic achievement, yet many elementary learners continue to struggle with comprehension, inference-making, and fluency. This study examined the reading performance of Grade 5 learners at Julian Valerio Resuello Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026 and used the findings as the basis for an enhanced reading program. A one-group pretest-posttest quantitative design was employed involving 44 Grade 5 learners assessed through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Descriptive statistics and item analysis were used to determine reading levels and least mastered competencies, while the thesis reported a statistically significant pretest-posttest difference after the implementation of Project FIREFLY, a school-based reading intervention. Baseline findings showed that 56.82% of learners were at the frustration level, 27.27% at the instructional level, and only 15.91% at the independent level. The least mastered competencies were identifying main idea and supporting details, making predictions and drawing conclusions, and answering inferential questions. After the intervention, frustration-level readers decreased to 4.55%, while instructional and independent readers increased to 50.00% and 45.45%, respectively. The findings indicate that structured, competency-based reading remediation can substantially improve learner performance. The study supports sustained school-based interventions that combine guided reading, fluency practice, vocabulary development, and comprehension-focused activities to strengthen elementary reading achievement.

***Keywords:*** *Phil-IRI; reading intervention; reading comprehension; elementary education; Philippine public school*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is not a single isolated skill; it depends on the coordinated development of decoding and language comprehension. When learners experience persistent difficulty in word recognition, fluency, and meaning-making, they often require explicit and intensive intervention rather than routine classroom exposure alone. Research on reading difficulty consistently shows that targeted support is especially important for elementary and upper-elementary learners who have not yet achieved grade-level proficiency (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Al Otaiba et al., 2018; Donegan & Wanzek, 2021; Boucher et al., 2024).

Intervention studies further suggest that guided reading, reciprocal reading, intensive comprehension support, and structured school-based remediation can improve reading outcomes when instruction is aligned with learners' specific deficits. Evidence also indicates that supplemental intervention delivered by trained adults and strategically integrated digital support can strengthen reading growth, particularly when programs are systematic and sustained (Schwartz, 2005; Young et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2021; O'Hare et al., 2023; Vanbecelaere et al., 2023; Yilmaz & Melekoglu, 2022).

Within the Philippine basic education context, school-level reading assessment remains essential for identifying learners in need of remediation and for targeting the competencies that most constrain reading development. The uploaded thesis investigated the reading performance of Grade 5 learners at Julian Valerio Resuello Elementary School using Phil-IRI results and designed an intervention through Project FIREFLY to address the identified weaknesses. The present article refines that thesis into a Scopus-style manuscript focused on the intervention's educational significance and implications for elementary literacy improvement.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative one-group pretest-posttest design. The participants were 44 Grade 5 learners enrolled at Julian Valerio Resuello Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026. Total enumeration was used because the study covered the full Grade 5 cohort identified in the thesis. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) served as the primary

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assessment tool for determining learners' reading levels. Item analysis was also conducted to identify least mastered reading competencies. After the baseline assessment, the school implemented **Project FIREFLY** as the reading intervention program, with activities focused on guided reading, vocabulary development, oral reading practice, and comprehension exercises targeting inferencing, main idea, supporting details, prediction, and conclusion-making. Ethical safeguards in the thesis included informed consent, confidentiality, and protection of learner identity.

The thesis states that descriptive statistics were used to summarize reading levels and mastery percentages, while the pretest-posttest comparison was reported as statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Given minor inconsistencies across sections of the thesis, this manuscript retains the central conclusion that learner performance improved significantly after the intervention while relying primarily on the main results tables for descriptive interpretation.

### III. RESULTS

Baseline Phil-IRI results showed that 25 learners (56.82%) were at the frustration level, 12 learners (27.27%) were at the instructional level, and only 7 learners (15.91%) were at the independent level. These figures indicate that most Grade 5 learners entered the intervention period with reading proficiency below the expected grade standard.

Item analysis identified the most problematic competencies as **identifying main idea and supporting details** (31.81%), **making predictions and drawing conclusions** (40.91%), and **answering inferential questions** (45.45%), all classified as not mastered. In contrast, **using context clues to decode unfamiliar words** obtained 63.63% and was classified as nearly mastered. These findings suggest that higher-order comprehension, rather than basic recognition alone, represented the primary reading challenge for the group.

After the implementation of Project FIREFLY, only 2 learners (4.55%) remained at the frustration level, while 22 learners (50.00%) were categorized as instructional readers and 20 learners (45.45%) as independent readers. The thesis also reported a statistically significant

pretest-posttest difference, with the reported two-tailed probability far below .05, supporting the conclusion that the intervention was associated with improved reading performance.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results indicate a strong positive shift in reading performance following targeted remediation. The large reduction in frustration-level readers and the concurrent rise in instructional and independent readers suggest that the intervention addressed both access-to-text issues and deeper comprehension demands. This pattern is consistent with the view that reading growth occurs when decoding support is integrated with explicit comprehension instruction, rather than treating these as separate instructional domains (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Al Otaiba et al., 2018).

The mastery profile is also theoretically and pedagogically meaningful. Learners performed relatively better on context clues than on inferencing, main idea identification, and drawing conclusions, implying that literal and word-level processing may develop earlier than higher-order meaning construction. This aligns with intervention literature showing that struggling readers benefit from explicit modeling, teacher scaffolding, reciprocal questioning, and structured comprehension routines aimed at inference generation and text integration (Schwartz, 2005; Yilmaz & Melekoglu, 2022; O'Hare et al., 2023).

The findings further support the use of school-based programs that are systematic, locally contextualized, and responsive to assessment evidence. Studies on intensive and supplemental reading interventions have reported gains when learners receive repeated opportunities for guided reading, supported practice, and focused strategy instruction. Meta-analytic and review evidence also suggests that intervention effectiveness improves when support is structured, sustained, and implemented by trained personnel within a coherent school literacy framework (Jones et al., 2021; Donegan & Wanzek, 2021; Vanbecelaere et al., 2023; Boucher et al., 2024).

At the same time, the study's design limits strong causal claims. Because the thesis used a one-group pretest-posttest approach, the gains cannot be attributed exclusively to the intervention with the same confidence as in a randomized or controlled quasi-experimental design. Even so,

the magnitude and direction of the descriptive improvement indicate that Project FIREFLY functioned as a promising school-based remediation model for Grade 5 struggling readers.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the Grade 5 learners initially demonstrated weak reading performance, with most classified at the frustration level. Their greatest difficulties were concentrated in higher-order comprehension competencies, particularly inferencing, main idea identification, and conclusion drawing. Following the implementation of Project FIREFLY, learner performance improved markedly, as reflected in the sharp decline in frustration-level readers and the increased proportions of instructional and independent readers. Overall, the study shows that an assessment-informed, school-based reading remediation program can strengthen elementary learners' reading proficiency when intervention activities are aligned with specific comprehension gaps.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools should institutionalize structured reading remediation programs anchored on diagnostic assessment results.
2. Teachers should prioritize higher-order comprehension instruction, especially inferencing, main idea identification, and conclusion-making.
3. Reading intervention sessions should combine guided reading, oral fluency practice, vocabulary support, and text-based questioning.
4. School leaders should strengthen progress monitoring through regular Phil-IRI-based assessment and competency tracking.
5. Parent and community support should be mobilized to extend reading practice beyond the classroom.
6. Future studies should use quasi-experimental or controlled designs, larger samples, and longer follow-up periods to verify the durability of intervention effects.

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