

**READING BEHAVIOR LEVEL AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY GRADE 7 STUDENTS****\*Lyra Marie P. Deleña**

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**Abstract**

The reading behavior level and the difficulties encountered in reading of grade 7 students of Presentacion National High School for the school year 2023-2024 was determined through the descriptive-correlational and research and development (R&D) methods; thus results were used as basis in crafting a behaviour-based enhancement book. Findings revealed that more than one-third of the students are demonstrating strong reading skills. There are 3 identified reading difficulties encountered by students such as, word reading with 83%; oral reading with 73%; and comprehension with 70%; whereas word reading was interpreted as satisfactory while oral reading and comprehension both did not meet expectation. Moreover, reading level and difficulties along oral reading and word reading is described as by the r-values of -0.340 and 0.7. On the other hand, between the reading level and difficulties encountered along comprehension is described by the r- value of 0.294; (among the difficulties encountered, it was only comprehension signified positive correlation on the reading level of the students. With the design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book, it got an overall average weighted mean of 4.71 and was analysed as excellently valid; and finally, the curricular validity of the reading behavior-based enhancement book resulted to an overall average weighted mean of 4.79; thus the curricular validity of the reading behaviour-based enhancement book was excellently valid.

**Keywords:** Reading Behaviour Level, Reading Difficulties, Reading Enhancement book.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Reading is one of the most essential skills one should develop. It plays a very obvious role when one listens, talks, and watches. Every individual approaches a different behaviour in reading. As it is a very complex skill, reading behaviour is seen to be an essential factor in developing one's reading skill. The complications in learning and developing the skill to read are not only an educational problem; they create, as well as, a serious public health concern. Reading is not simply develop naturally, and for many youngsters, specific decoding, word recognition, and reading comprehension skills must be taught directly and thoroughly. A learner's reading behavior contributes to learning the skill. Reading behavior is not attained as logically as language. In other words, it is not predetermined to attain reading skills but is naturally supported to acquire language. Reading behaviours is plainly demonstrated and then exhibited; thus, it allows an individual to develop skills will be useful throughout their lives. Reading behaviour is defined as a broad range of activities that are related to the interaction between reader and written text. They include everything a child does when reading or being read to. Reading behaviors have to do with a learner's skill as a reader, but also with their personality, likes, and dislikes. On the other hand, reading difficulty is defined as a widely known reading disorder, it occurs when a person has trouble reading words or understanding what they read (NICHD, 2020). The lack of knowledge of the sounds associated with letters and letter patterns which result in weak decoding and often cause problems with comprehension. This difficulty can lead to problems in understanding a reading text. Most reading difficulty may result from specific alterations in the way the mind processes the written words and text.

The difficulty in reading can not only impact one's academic, but also one's self-esteem and emotional health. Being left behind in reading makes one feel being left behind in life progress. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the importance of education as a driver of sustainable development, particularly through Goal 4: Quality Education viz:

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all; ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes; eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations; and ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, in an article released, UNICEF reported that only a third of 10-year-olds globally are estimated to be able to read and understand a simple written story. Thus, UNICEF warns of the global education crisis and the need for urgent actions. The rest around two-thirds (64%) are unable to cover this marker for minimum proficiency in reading comprehension. Moreover, Philstar cited in an article that in the Philippines, at least 90% of Filipino children aged 10 struggle to read or understand simple text, and that learning poverty in the Philippines is at 70% according to the World Bank's 2022 data on learning poverty.

During school year 2023-2024, the Department of Education hit the public with another directive to address the reading difficulties issues. The Regional Memorandum No.363, s. 2023 known as the Guidelines in the Administration of the Rapid Literacy Assessment for Grades 7 Learners in Region V which states that:

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The Rapid Literacy Assessment (RLA) is intended to determine the word attack or decoding skills of the Grades 7 learners in English and Filipino. These basic skills are necessary to transition Key Stage 2-4 learners into successful readers. Each grade level has two sets: the Pre-Test, which should assist the teachers in profiling the specific reading skills of learners in the previous grade levels and implementing reading interventions to address specific reading difficulties; while the Post-Test reveals the progress that the learners have accomplished in a school year. These assessment materials have undergone the thorough process of content development; quality control of passages, phrases, and words; pilot testing, and refinement prior to their finalization. Rapid Literacy Assessment is a new concept both for the learners and teachers. This is somehow in connection with the Phil-IRI, but this time RLA highlights the essence of a learners' word attack or decoding skills. Also, enclosed in the manual in administering the RLA is the latest classification of a learner's reading level namely established, emerging, coping, and deficit. On the other hand, the learner's reading behaviour is categorized under 4 levels where; Level 1 (reads word by word or lower); Level 2 (reads words by chunks); Level 3 (reads accurately but does not observe punctuation marks or shows signs of hesitation), or Level 4 (reads with automaticity, accurately and with proper expression). Presentacion National High School is one of the many schools facing significant challenges with the reading behaviour and difficulties of incoming Grade 7 students. While the school utilizes the Phil-IRI as a tool to assess students' reading levels and provide targeted interventions, a considerable number of students continue to be classified at the frustration level which is the lowest category. This indicates severe struggles in reading comprehension and fluency, underscoring the urgent need for enhanced resources, teacher development programs, and tailored interventions. The situation highlights the critical role of addressing these localized challenges to improve literacy outcomes, ultimately aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4: Quality Education, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable education for all learners. Addressing the reading difficulties of learners at Presentacion National High School is crucial to fostering academic success and lifelong learning. The continuous identification of students at the frustration level highlights the pressing need for innovative and targeted solutions. Developing a reading-based enhancement book tailored to the specific needs of these learners for the school year 2023-2024 presents a promising opportunity to bridge literacy gaps. This resource can provide culturally relevant, engaging, and level-appropriate reading materials, serving as a valuable tool for both teachers and students. By equipping learners with the skills to overcome their reading challenges, this initiative not only supports the school's academic goals but also aligns with the broader mission of providing inclusive, equitable, and quality education.

### Reading behaviour

Learners have diverse characteristics in learning. It is most essential to help learners overcome their learning difficulties so that they may gain a sense of achievement and recover their confidence and interest in learning. Good reading requires the student to know the aspects of reading comprehension such as the ability of association, conception ability, perception ability, syntactic ability - semantic ability and cognitive understanding. Sartika *et al.* (2020) aimed in their study to observe on the

correlation between students' reading habit and their reading comprehension of eleventh grade; where it was found that reading habit was not only aspect that influenced student reading comprehension; that many factor also influenced the reading comprehension: internal factor (intellectual, language skills, psychological, environment, experience) and external factor (facilities, time to learning). As defined by the Oxford University Press (2019), reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it and understand its meaning. It relies on two, interconnected abilities: word reading (being able to decode the symbols on the page) and language comprehension (being able to understand the meaning of the words and sentences). Poor comprehenders are identified as the significant subgroup of poor readers due to their capacity to read aloud precisely. In a study conducted which aimed to determine whether assessment using two oral language tasks, mapped onto the two components of the Simple View of Reading, would provide an efficient approach to identification, the result proposes that through the tasks as the primary phase, followed up with a reading assessment, could be effective in identifying poor comprehenders, and reduce time spent in testing as this involve at-risk children Kelso, Whitworth, Leitão, *et al.* (2020).

Moreover, the study of Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) revealed that several factors contributing to the low reading abilities of the pupils were identified as (1) their lack of confidence to practice how to read in class, (2) poor motivation from teachers and parents to help develop the interest of the pupils in reading, (2) lack of pre-reader books in school and at home, (4) lack of library, (5) teachers inadequate knowledge on phonemic awareness strategy of teaching reading, and (6) lack of reading clubs and lack of reading competition among the pupils in the school. Additionally, the study also found that the lack of pre-reader books and other reading materials in the school are some of the reasons why the pupils have low reading ability in the school. It was likewise exposed that word pronunciation and reading loudly have not been well imparted in the school for the reason that of the lack of text books in the school. Lack of text books are the main obstructions to teaching reading in schools since books serve as guide to the learners for them to learn how to read. The absence of text books and the lack of sufficient and advantageous reader books are the causes for learners' low reading ability and performance in schools. Although teachers are a big part of the students to learn, the eagerness and the motivation in a student should be also considered. It is a very important concern that a learner wants and is eager to learn a skill (Gedik and Akyol, 2022). Furthermore, through an intervention, the student's desire to read increased, he began to read out loud, he began to identify sounds that he previously did not recognize or confused, and improvements in his reading skill were observed.

In the study associated to determining reading status, it was recognized that the learner had made mistakes such as repetition, syllabication, omission, addition and failure to notice punctuation marks (Akyol and Boyaci-Altinay, 2019). Learning to read is a complex skill, thus everyone should be able to develop. It is use almost every hour of the day by an individual. It's not just all about the skill itself, but the comprehension as well. A response can be made if the information read is understood. Based from the study of Laplanche (2019), it was found that lack in reading by pupils, laziness to read books such as novels, newspapers and

magazines by pupils, lack of enjoyment of reading test outside classroom work, playing by pupils rather than reading during leisure time and lack of provision of reading materials by parents, lack of guidance by parents on pupils reading, no proper method of reading by teachers in teaching, lack of guidance by teachers on pupils reading, lack of instructional materials for teaching reading in school and lack of encouragement to develop the habit of reading at early age, parents negative attitude toward reading, and illiteracy of parents are factors causing reading difficulties. Additionally, comprehension error, word recognition errors, problems relating to reading habits, in appropriate word grouping and ignored or misinterpreted punctuations are common reading difficulties among the respondents. The result had revealed that it's not just a sole thing but rather a variety of reasons that may result to a learners' reading difficulty.

In a study of Cheon and Hyun (2014), results determined no abrupt effect of establishing reading purpose, though immediate reading purpose effects might be found if a longer treatment period is set. The data of the study also revealed the sustained effect of reading purpose on reading comprehension. In perceived text difficulty, it suggests that learners establishing a reading purpose can achieve greater easiness in reading than those without a reading purpose. On the other hand, Din (2020) gave focus in his study about Critical reading. The findings exposed that the university students have highly positive attitude towards critical thinking but their level of critical thinking and their ability to reflect critical thinking in their critical reading skill do not correspond with their attitude towards critical thinking. Meanwhile, Hernani (2024) revealed in her study that the learner-respondents have satisfactory reading comprehension abilities, primarily falling within the "Approaching Proficiency" and "Proficient" classifications. Moreover, a minimal negative association between reading habits and reading comprehension, implying that there may be additional unmeasured factors that affect comprehension outcomes. Sun *et al.* (2018) discovered that highly motivated students exhibited a relatively serious reading pattern in a multi-tasking learning environment. Reading comprehension made a significant, although uncertain contribution to predict students' academic performance. The students' average reading level was below the level of text complexity required in their first term and, although by their senior year they had made significant progress in reading comprehension, their reading level continued to be lower than text demands, (Silva *et al.*, 2023).

Repeated Readings (RR) has garnered much attention as an evidence-based intervention designed to improve all components of reading fluency (rate, accuracy, prosody, and comprehension). Ardoin *et al.* (2016) proved that substantial gains made by students across conditions, with some measures indicating greater gains by students in the two intervention conditions. Analyses do not indicate that repeated reading was superior to Wide Reading; while Individualized Student Instruction was effective in improving reading scores. However, students with very low or very high behavior ratings did not benefit from the approaches. Core reading instruction and interventions have gap effects based on student characteristics such as cognitive ability and pre-intervention skill level. Evidence for differential effect based on affective characteristics is limited and unclear; however, students with problem behavior are more often non-responsive to core reading instruction and intensive reading interventions,

Schatschneider *et al.* (2014). At the classroom level, students in classrooms with a higher average of problem behaviors did not benefit from this instruction. Similarly, Day *et al.* (2015) exposed in their study that children who were in classrooms where more time in disruptions, transitions, and waiting showed weaker literacy skill gains in the spring compared to children in classrooms with lesser amounts of such unproductive non-instructional time and this effect was generally greater for students with initial weaker skills. Extensive reading activities in drama class really supported students to be active in reading behaviour, (Bella, 2019). Similarly, a study showed the students' reading performance and their behavior in the classroom are all significantly interrelated. Better reading performance at the beginning of the school year goes with better behavior at the end of the school year. In turn, better behavior at the beginning of the school year goes with better reading performance at the end of the school year. On the other hand, a study suggested that reading deficits and problem behaviors are positively related. Reading interventions tended to have positive reading outcomes, while behavioral/social skill outcomes were small or negative, (Roberts, 2015).

Whitten, Labby, & Sullivan (2016) concluded in their study that students who read for pleasure averaged higher scores than their non-reading counterparts in the subject areas measured. Moreover, Owusu-Acheaw's (2014) study that proved that majority of the students acknowledge the importance of reading, while these respondents neither read novel nor fiction; students only read for the purpose of passing examination. It also identified that reading habit has influence on academic performance and there is a relationship between reading habit and academic performance.

### Reading Difficulties

Reading difficulty is widely known as reading disorder, it occurs when a person has trouble reading words or understanding what they read (NICHD, 2020). Most reading disorders result from specific differences in the way the brain processes written words and text. Usually, these differences are present from a young age. People with reading disorders often have problems recognizing words they already know and understanding text they read. They also may be poor spellers. People with reading disorders may have other learning disabilities, too, including problems with writing or numbers. Reading disorders can also involve problems with specific skills (a) Word decoding; (b) Fluency; and (c) Poor reading comprehension. People with poor reading comprehension have trouble understanding what they read. Additionally, difficulty with reading is a common problem among children, struggle with reading in some way. Reading difficulties can cause concern in other areas of learning, including writing, spelling, fluency, and comprehension. These barriers make it very hard for students to perform well in school and often lower self-esteem (Oxford Learning 2024). The study of Fazio *et al.* (2021) focused on children with dyslexia that often show second-language reading and writing difficulties, but the cognitive mechanisms connected to this impairment need to be clarified. The results suggest that memory mainly influences accuracy in English writing and, together with phonological skills, plays an important role in reading accuracy. Socio-economic status also plays an important role in L2 learning. Difficulties with fluent word reading can stem from diverse underlying causes. The lack of knowledge of the sounds

associated with letters and letter patterns will result in weak decoding which can add to difficulties with fluent word reading, and in turn, often cause problems with comprehension. When a learner isn't able to learn according to his or her learning style, it makes it difficult to build core skills including reading. Moreover, the study of Mohammad and Eldaw (2023) came out with the result that 86% of the respondents pointed that there are difficulties like understanding the sentence that link together and paragraph, and the general and detailed meaning for the text. Whereas 88% agreed that graduates do not make use of the media for an effective teaching reading. Also, 62% confess that graduates face problems of coherence and cohesion system during reading that lead to incompleteness of the general meaning of the text. Academic reading is one of the encounters commonly faced by students. Anwar and Sailuddin (2022) found in their study that overall students considered academic reading easy. Reading carefully to understand the text was found as the aspect with the least difficulty and working out the meaning of difficult words was identified as the most difficult one. These results are supported by the qualitative finding whereas 43% students having problems translating and understanding difficult and formal words.

The study of Şuteua et al., (2021) revealed that difficulties in reading comprehension were found to be an issue for most of the Romanian students while gender differences were present for all the analyzed dimensions, girls outperforming boys in the reading performance, reading enjoyment and perceived competencies in reading but scoring lower levels of the perceived difficulty in reading. Reading comprehension as an activity to find meaning or message from the writer through the text they read.

Similarly, Ratna *et al.* (2020) showed on their study that there is a positive correlation between reading interest and reading comprehension. The level of their reading comprehension is determined by high or low of their reading interest. Based on the findings, reading interest that categorized as "very high" is found in creative reading comprehension group.

Being a fast and competent reader is significant for classroom based lessons, but also for substantial homework requirements and performing well on even exams (Cicerchia, 2023). It also identified 3 Common difficulties in reading namely: (a) decoding, also known as sounding out words; (b) poor comprehension pertains from letter and word recognition to understanding meaning at the phrase, sentence, and paragraph level; and (c) speed whereas students expand their vocabulary, they recognize more words by sight and reading speeds up. Moreover, Rohimah (2021) revealed in a study that there are two factors that affect reading difficulties, internal factors, which can be seen from the physical students; and external factors of students are factors from the social environment and the most influential is the role of parents who accompany children to read at home. Parents who do not participate in the development of students' reading will hinder students' reading skills. Moreover, the challenges that delay the reading skills enhancement of the EFL learners and the teachers as well include lack of sufficient knowledge of the language, lack of vocabulary, curriculum issues, interest of students, and other such issues, (Alharbi, 2022). In the same way, Hayati *et al.* (2022) pursued a study where the results revealed that students' reading comprehension difficulties were affected by internal factors and external factors and the use of the internet became

the media for students' attempts to deal with reading difficulties. Gedik and Akyol (2022) study observed that the participant, who was at the second-grade instructional level at the beginning, reached the independent level in the text of the third grade and the instructional level in the text of the fourth grade at the end of the study lasted for 31 class hours. Similarly, Rivera and Aggabao (2020) found out in their conducted study that the grade 5 pupils had difficulties on word recognition and reading comprehension; investigated the pupils' reading difficulties with the focus on word recognition and reading comprehension to determine their reading level as a basis in developing a reading program that would cater to their reading needs. Likewise, reading behaviors are also factors that contributed to the reading difficulties encountered by the pupils while reading.

In addition, Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), with a 1-min fluency measure, was used to identify readers who are struggling or at risk of reading difficulties. The study concluded that it was possible to classify students based on the 1-min fluency measures, with reference intervals of words read correctly per minute per school year (for the third, fourth, and fifth years) for those who were making adequate progress in reading and reference intervals for those who were considered readers who were struggling or at risk of reading difficulties, (Martins & Capellini, 2021). Additionally, in their study, Weaver *et al.*, (2022) examined the differences in English language comprehension, reading fluency, and executive functions among Spanish-English bilinguals with reading difficulties. On two measures of language comprehension, readers with either difficulty tended to demonstrate significant weaknesses relative to average readers. On passage reading fluency, readers with specific-reading comprehension difficulties performed worse than average readers but better than readers with general reading difficulties. Additionally, readers with general reading difficulties demonstrated weaknesses relative to average readers, but there was little evidence that readers with specific-reading comprehension difficulties showed these weaknesses.

On the other hand, the study conducted by Rath (2018), concluded that there was no specific correlation found between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. Moreover, Fazio, et. al (2021) concluded in a study that memory mainly influences accuracy in English writing and, together with phonological skills, plays an important role in reading accuracy. Socio-economic status also plays an important role in L2 learning. Additionally, Almutairi (2018) revealed in his study that the reading problems that negatively influence reading comprehension of their third graders with learning disabilities include: (a) issues with background knowledge, (b) trouble with fluency, (c) difficulty with informational text, (d) difficulty with making inferences, (e) issues with vocabulary, and (f) low reading level.

### Enhancement Book

In an article by Banou, (2017), it is stated that business models in publishing require reader engagement. Aside from these models, the expectations of the readers are considered, thus, parameters that define reader as well as reading behaviour are also being examined and considered. On the other hand, the article of Roberts, *et al.* (2022) discussed that students with co-occurring reading difficulties and distraction be likely to respond to reading interventions less favorably than those with

reading difficulties without inattention. Instructional intervention is defined as strategies and techniques that are designed to provide support and guidance to students who are struggling or have gaps in specific areas of learning. The interventions you chosen should be secured as grounded in evidence-based practices, and tailor them to meet the unique needs of the individual learners (Leon, 2023). Additionally, instructional intervention strategies are adaptable tools that authorize educators to support students at several levels of know-how. Similar concept arouse as The Fuchs Research Group defined intervention as a program that provides targeted instruction in a specific skill or set of skills to students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes.

Moreover, Dimarucot (2021) worked on a study where findings exposed that the instructional materials for financial management developed and validated with respect to: (1) learning contents; (2) Format and; (3) assessment and activities of learning were interpreted to very great extent. In concern with the material's quality assurance, it should be assessed and validated by experts. Then, Gladis (2023) highlighted in her article that an instructional intervention should meet students' individual learning needs through their levels of readiness, learning styles, and interests, thus should address the depth and complexity of state standards. On the other hand, Wanzek et al, 2017 examined effective reading interventions for students with reading difficulties where it was found that there is no overall group differences noted on word reading or vocabulary. Students' initial word reading scores moderated this effect. Reading comprehension effects were similar for English learner and non-English learner students.

In an article written, Moloney (2018), stated 5 basic principles in designing an instructional material: (1) instructional design should proceed at an efficient pace, which implies that an instructional program should teach material efficiently, encouraging students to practice every chance they get; (2) instructional design should contextualize information, when students can relate new information and theories with that which they already know, they can learn faster, as well as they can also apply it better in real life through more situations and tasks; (3) design your course to be learner community-based, this means that learning doesn't take place in just a sole place; (4) include opportunities for students to produce original content, include activities such as a multiple-choice test or fill-in-the-blank; and (5) create fair, well-thought-out evaluation tools administered at the proper time, provide students with material presented and tested at a pace at which they can internalize the knowledge for a lifetime.

Moreover, Lindström, et. al. (2022) concluded in a study that word reading instruction is accompanied with improved word reading results and self-monitoring and function-based interventions are associated with improved student behavior. Furthermore, Wanzek et.al. (2017) examined the effects of a multi-component reading intervention for students with reading difficulties in fourth grade. Findings indicated students receiving the intervention made greater gains in reading comprehension than students who did not receive the intervention. This finding was similar for students who were English learners or non-English learners. Printed materials has been the common way of assessing a students' learning, this is proven in a study where the results showed that the learners in average level attained lower scores on the digital test than on the paper type. Most of the learners performed well on the

paper test matched to what they did on the computer test also the adverse effect of screen reading were obvious (Støle *et al.* 2020). On the other hand, Navarrete (2019) conducted a study with a focus on comprehension, which says that it is a vital component in the reading process and is connected with a learner's success in school, and even in life. The paper argued that it is vital for reading teachers, including content area teachers, to have operational knowledge on the diverse strategies in teaching reading comprehension and how to purposefully apply these in their teaching, mainly when reading multiple texts to improve their students' critical thinking skills. Additionally, another study aimed to examine the validity of the tool and, second, to explore performance reading patterns of children with reading difficulties. The respondents were tested using three computerized tasks that recorded accuracy and speed: lexical quality to examine the three levels of word representation; silent reading and listening comprehension to examine both literal and inferential processing. The results showed the suitability of the tool but also identified a number of limits. The results also revealed 76 children with reading comprehension difficulties and classified them into 5 groups basically according to their word reading performances (Auphan *et al.* 2019).

In designing an instructional material, Manurung (2017) claimed in a study that an effective instructional process requires well planned instructional packages. The preparation and design of good instructional packages require effort from decision maker and teachers. Decision makers have to thoroughly design curriculum and teachers translate the goals formulated in the curriculum into achievable and quantifiable instructional objectives which are used as a guide to prepare and design joyful teaching and teaching process.

Bastable *et al.* (2023) made use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess and improve the acceptability of a new intervention designed to reduce racial disparities in school discipline. Quantitative findings pointed out that the intervention was acceptable to a broad range of potential implementers, and qualitative findings were used to modify the intervention to further improve its utility. With a focus on the Significant Word Reading Difficulties, Boucher, *et al.* (2024) examined intervention effects for students with "significant" word reading difficulties. The findings indicate a need for interventions that improve generalized real-world reading for the target population. Moreover, the paper of Ljungdahl and Adler, (2018) investigated the effect learning materials on reading comprehension. The focus is not on the content of learning materials, but on the text design of materials and what effect they have on learners. It mainly focused on aspects such as text design, typefaces and text spacing and how that affects reading comprehension. The results show that choosing typefaces and text spacing mindfully, has a positive effect on reading comprehension. Additionally, Ochoma, (2020) stated that content relevance is important in instructional materials because it helps learners take ownership and connect to the content, making it more engaging and useful for their learning. Similarly, Sexton, (2017) highlighted in his paper that content relevance is vital in instructional materials as it influences students' learning behaviors and cognitive learning outcomes. In the same way, Mijares and Benjamin (2022) proved that their developed supplementary learning material conforms to the requirements of the Department of Education in terms of Content Quality, Instructional Quality, Technical Quality, and other findings, including conceptual, factual, grammatical, and

typographical errors. It also showed that supplementary learning materials suitable to serve as an intervention learning material that will help learners achieve the desired learning outcome. The development of supplementary learning material is systematic and ensures the development of students' higher-order thinking skills. Similarly, in the study of Akyol, H., & Boyaci-Altinay, Y. (2019) it was recognized that the student had made errors such as repetition, syllabication, omission, addition and failure to notice punctuation marks. Through using their intervention, the student's desire to read increased, he began to read out loud, he began to identify sounds that he previously did not recognize or confused, and improvements in his reading skill were observed. Furthermore, it was discovered that the teacher provided interventions were more effective than those provided by researchers suggesting the importance of the student-teacher relationship for reading instruction, (McKenna, *et al.*, 2019)

## METHODOLOGY

The Descriptive-Correlational and Research & Development (R&D) methods were utilized to achieve the purpose of the study and to find the answers to the specific questions. The data were obtained from the entire population of the Grade 7 students of Presentacion National High School for school year 2023-2024, with a total of 144 students, through the Rapid Literacy Assessment - Pre Test, Observation Sheet, Teacher-made Questionnaire and Evaluation Checklist and were statistically treated using mean, standard deviation, performance level, Pearson product-moment correlation of coefficient, and weighted mean.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding the different reading behavior levels of students is essential for fostering effective literacy development. Each student progresses through unique stages as they build the skills necessary for fluent and comprehensive reading. Recognizing these levels allows educators and parents to tailor instruction, choose appropriate reading materials, and provide targeted support to enhance each child's reading journey. The present study utilized the total enumeration where the researcher utilized the entire population of the Grade 7 students among 4 sections of Presentacion National High School for school year 2023-2024. The respondents took the RLA Pre-test. This was in time as they were the first batch takers of the recently conducted Rapid Literacy Assessment. Table 1 showed the total respondents of this study where Section A had 39 students, Section B had 38, Section C had 35, and Section D had 32. The total number of respondents was 144.

Table 2 presents the reading behavior level of students along Level 1 (reads word by word or lower), Level 2 (reads words by chunks), Level 3 (reads accurately but does not observe punctuation marks or shows signs of hesitation), and Level 4 (reads with automaticity, accurately and with proper expression) of grade 7 students of Presentacion District, Presentacion, Camarines Sur. In the gathered data, the students categorized under level 4 are those showing independency in their reading skill. They may be the students who have the ability to demonstrate string reading skills. They may show ability to read fluently, and analyze the reading material presented to them. As the data showed, 25.69% of the

respondents are under level 1. This implies that more than one fifth of the students are still working on basic reading skills, such as decoding words and improving reading fluency. These students may need additional support or targeted interventions to reach higher levels of reading proficiency. The data revealed that, 17.36% of the respondents are under this level 2. This implies that more than one-tenth of the of them are under this level who are more likely to use "chunking" as a reading strategy, and it causes them the lack of comprehension, since students forget the beginning of a sentence before they get to the end because they tend to read and understand it by chunk instead of as a whole. Furthermore, 15.97% of the respondents are under level 3. These data revealed that these students under this level are most likely having poor reading fluency. Moreover, not observing proper use of punctuation marks may have made students to experience difficulty in reading through the ideas in a sentence. They have difficulty when to slow down, speed up, or stop. Additionally, the data showed that 40.97% of the respondents can read independently. This number of students is demonstrating strong reading skills. They may be able to read with fluency, comprehend complex texts, and analyze information effectively. Students at this level are likely more independent readers, capable of handling challenging material.

**Table 1. Distribution of Respondents**

Section	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A	39	27.08
B	38	26.39
C	35	24.31
D	32	22.22
TOTAL	144	100

**Table 2. Reading Behavior Level of Students**

Reading Level	f	%
Level 1	37	25.69
Level 2	25	17.36
Level 3	23	15.97
Level 4	59	40.97
Total	144	100.00

Table 3 presents data on the difficulties encountered by students in different aspects of reading: Word Reading, Oral Reading, and Comprehension. It includes values for NI (Number of Items), Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Percentage Level (PL), Transmuted Score, Interpretation, and Rank. It can be noted that, word reading is satisfactory with performance level of 83%; oral reading with performance level of 73%; comprehension with performance level of 70%, both interpreted as did not meet expectation. The data revealed that word reading is satisfactory with 83%. The SD of 16.68 is the largest among the three reading aspects, indicating a wide range of student performance in word reading. The satisfactory performance in Word Reading with 83% aligns with Wagner & Torgesen's theory, indicating that most students have adequate phonological awareness to decode words. However, the large SD of 16.68 suggests that phonological processing ability is uneven across the student population, with some students still needing support to strengthen their phonological processing and word recognition skills. Also in table 3 presents oral reading as one of the difficulties in reading with 73% transmuted performance. There are specific indicators for each reading difficulty encountered by the students. The SD of 1.5 is the lowest, meaning students' oral reading scores are relatively similar with little variation.

**Table 3. Difficulties encountered by the students**

Aspects	NI	Mean	SD	PL	Transmuted	Interpretation	Rank
Word Reading	118	86.52	16.68	73.32	83	S	1
Oral Reading	15	7.62	1.5	50.78	73	DNME	2
Comprehension	16	6.87	2.65	42.93	70	DNME	3

**Legend**  
**Value**  
 90 – 100 Outstanding (O)  
 85 - 89 Very Satisfactory (VS)  
 80 - 84 Satisfactory (S)  
 75 - 79 Fairly Satisfactory (FS)  
 Below 74 Did Not Meet Expectations (DNME)

**Table 4. Test on significant relationship between the reading level of learners and the difficulties encountered in reading**

Reading Level	Aspects	r- value	p-value	Int.
	Oral Reading	-0.340	0.688	NS
	Word Reading	-0.7	0.404	NS
	Comprehension	-0.294	0.000	S

**Legend:**  
 p-value > 0.05 Not Significant (NS)  
 p-value < 0.05 Significant (S)

**Table 5a. Design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along learning objectives**

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The learning objectives are well-constructed.	5.00	EV	1
The instructions are simple and clearly stated.	4.80	EV	2
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.90</b>	<b>EV</b>	

**Legend**  
**Range**  
 4.21 – 5.00 Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20 Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40 Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60 Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81 Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 5b. Design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along content**

Statements	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The lesson and activities provided are suited to the learners' ability.	4.80	EV	1
Provides concepts for every activity.	4.60	EV	2.5
Exercises provided are adequate enough to enhance the learner's reading skill.	4.60	EV	2.5
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.67</b>	<b>EV</b>	

**Legend**  
**Range**  
 4.21 – 5.00 Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20 Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40 Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60 Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81 Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 5c. Design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along activities**

Statements	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The lesson and activities provided are suited to the learners' ability.	5.00	EV	1
The concepts are clearly given, and are arranged logically for simple understanding.	4.60	EV	2.5
Exercises provided are adequate enough to enhance the learner's reading skill.	4.60	EV	2.5
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>EV</b>	

**Legend**  
**Range**  
 4.21 – 5.00 Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20 Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40 Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60 Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81 Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 5d. Design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along assessment**

Statements	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
It gives a better understanding about the topic which make more efforts and which topic can be taken slightly.	4.80	EV	1
Gives a fair idea to about the scores in the exercises.	4.40	EV	2
<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.60</b>	<b>EV</b>	

**Legend**  
**Range**  
 4.21 – 5.00 Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20 Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40 Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60 Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81 Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 5e.Design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along learning objectives, content, activities and assessment**

Design	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Learning Objectives	4.90	EV	1
Activities	4.73	EV	2
Content	4.60	EV	3.5
Assessment	4.60	EV	3.5
Average Weighted Mean	4.71	EV	

**Legend:**  
**Range**                      **Interpretation**  
 4.21-5.00                      Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41-4.20                      Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61-3.40                      Valid (V)  
 1.81-2.60                      Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00-1.80                      Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 6a.Curricular validity of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along face**

Statements	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The format and style are appropriate to the target learners.	5.00	EV	1.5
Correct grammar construction.	5.00	EV	1.5
The tool presents graphic that are engaging.	4.75	EV	3.5
The tool contains properly sequenced activities and concepts.	4.75	EV	3.5
Text size and style are clear and readable.	4.50	EV	5
Weighted Mean	4.80	EV	

**Legend**  
**Range**                      **Interpretation**  
 4.21 – 5.00                      Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20                      Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40                      Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60                      Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81                      Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 6b.Curricular validity of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along content**

Statements	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Provides concepts for every activity.	5.00	EV	1
The tool highly requires the learners to become actively involved in the learning process.	4.75	EV	2
Exercises provided are adequate enough to enhance the learner’s reading skill.	4.50	EV	3
Weighted Mean	4.75	EV	

**Legend**  
**Range**                      **Interpretation**  
 4.21 – 5.00                      Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20                      Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40                      Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60                      Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81                      Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 6c.Curricular validity of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along construct**

Statements	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
The learning content is well-constructed.	5.00	EV	1.5
The instructions are simple and clearly stated.	5.00	EV	1.5
The concepts are clearly given, and are arranged logically for simple understanding.	4.50	EV	3
Weighted Mean	4.83	EV	

**Legend**  
**Range**                      **Interpretation**  
 4.21 – 5.00                      Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41 – 4.20                      Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61 – 3.40                      Valid (V)  
 1.81 – 2.60                      Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00 – 1.81                      Least Valid (LstV)

**Table 6d. Summary of curricular validity of the reading behavior- based enhancement book along face, content and construct**

Curricular Validity	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Face	4.80	EV	2
Content	4.75	EV	3
Construct	4.83	EV	1
Average Weighted Mean	4.79	EV	

**Legend:**  
**Range**                      **Interpretation**  
 4.21-5.00                      Excellently Valid (EV)  
 3.41-4.20                      Highly Valid (HV)  
 2.61-3.40                      Valid (V)  
 1.81-2.60                      Less Valid (LV)  
 1.00-1.80                      Least Valid (LstV)



Most students seem to perform at nearly the same level, whether good or bad. Since this aspect is rated Did Not Meet Expectations (DNME), it suggests that oral reading struggles are widespread, but students face similar challenges. The low performance in oral reading of 73% and the low SD of 1.5) in Table 3 suggest that oral reading fluency is a widespread difficulty among the students, likely stemming from weaknesses in phonological processing. Furthermore, in the data gathered, it was found that proficiency of the students in comprehension did not meet expectations with its 70%. The SD of 2.65 indicates moderate variation in comprehension scores. Some students may demonstrate a better understanding of texts, while others struggle more. However, since comprehension has the lowest mean score of 6.87 and a DNME rating, it implies that many students face difficulty in understanding texts, though some do better than others.

Table 4 presents the significant relationship between the reading level of learners and the difficulties encountered in reading specifically oral reading, word reading and comprehension. Data revealed that between reading level and difficulties along oral reading and word reading, it signifies no significant relationship as described by the r-values of -0.340 and -0.7 and p-values of 0.688 and 0.404 respectively. On the other hand, between the reading level and difficulties encountered along comprehension, it signifies significant relationship as described by the r-value of 0.294 and p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05 level of significance). Among the difficulties encountered such as oral reading, word reading and comprehension, it was only comprehension signified positive correlation on the reading level of the students. The findings that only comprehension showed a positive correlation with students' reading levels suggests that students are struggling with reading comprehension, making it hard for them to make meaning from what they read.

The tables 5a to 5d presented the validity of the design of the reading behavior-based enhancement book along its specific components such as learning objectives, learning activities, learning content and learning assessment. While the data from table 5e presented the summarized data gathered in terms of the validity of the reading behaviour-based across its components. Table 5 reflects that the reading behavior-based enhancement book is considered excellently valid across all components. This interpretation of the reading behavior-based enhancement book is well-aligned with Mercer & Mercer's Multisensory Learning Theory. By integrating clear, engaging, and multisensory design into the learning objectives, activities, content, and assessments, the book ensures that students are actively engaged through various sensory modalities. This approach not only supports reading skill development but also helps retain knowledge through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning experiences. Furthermore, table 6a to 6c revealed the gathered data in terms of the Curricular Validity of the reading Behavior-Based Enhancement book along Face, content and construct. With these specific indicators under content; the format and style are appropriate to the target learners; correct grammar construction; text size and style are clear and readable; the tool presents graphic that are engaging; and the tool contains properly sequenced activities and concepts. In the table presented, among the face indicators for the Curricular Validity of the reading Behavior-Based Enhancement book, "the format and style are appropriate to the target learners" along with "correct grammar construction" was marked as the highest with mean of 5.00. While the

indicator "Text size and style are clear and readable" gets the lowest with mean of 4.50. Moreover, all these indicators along face are all interpreted as excellently valid with overall weighted mean of 4.80. An excellently valid interpretation of the validity of a reading behavior-based enhancement book, assessed along face validity, signifies that the book appears to fulfill its intended purpose of enhancing reading behaviors at first glance. An excellently valid interpretation of the content validity of a reading behavior-based enhancement book signifies that the content aligns with the book's intended purpose of fostering reading skills and behaviors. The material comprehensively covers the key concepts, skills, and strategies necessary to achieve the book's goals. Additionally, the specific indicators under construct, the learning content is well-constructed, and text the instructions are simple and clearly stated, are both marked as the highest with mean of 5.00; while the concepts are clearly given, and are arranged logically for simple understanding, is marked as the lowest with mean of 4.50, respectively. All the indicators under construct are all interpreted as excellently valid; whereas the weighted mean for the validity of construct is 4.83 which is interpreted as excellently valid. Table 6d shows the Summary of Curricular Validity of the Reading Behavior-Based Enhancement book. In the data presented, it is seen that all the components are marked as excellently valid where construct got a weighted mean of 4.83, face with weighted mean of 4.80, and content with weighted mean of 4.75. In summary, the curricular validity of the Reading Behavior-Based Enhancement book is found to be excellently valid with an average weighted mean of 4.79. This high level of curricular validity makes the book a robust, trustworthy tool for fostering reading growth in a structured, impactful way.

## Conclusion

This study determined the reading behavior level and the difficulties encountered in reading of grade 7 students and used this as basis in crafting a behavior-based enhancement book at Presentacion National High School, Parubcan District, Division of Camarines Sur, school year 2023-2024. Generally, the respondents of this study happened to be categorized falling under different reading behaviour levels. Therefore, reading as a skill is not easily acquired for students had reading difficulties among themselves. There are factors identified that so happened to affect students' reading progress. The data revealed that more than one-third of the students are demonstrating strong reading skills, while the one-fourth suggests that some students are still working on basic reading skills, such as decoding words and improving reading fluency. That is the reading behavior-based enhancement book came to be realized, aligning to the data that not all students are fully grade level ready when it comes to reading. Moreover, it was also identified that among the difficulties encountered by students, it was only comprehension signified positive correlation on the reading level of the students. Yet, comprehension plays a vital role in the reading skill of the students. A learning material is expected to do as it say, learning. It should be learner-centered, where the objectives, content, activities and assessment are suited to the students that are entitled to utilize it. For a material to be accepted for utilization, it should be curricularly valid. Thus, the use of this enhancement tool will highly give assistance to learners struggling in reading.

## Recommendations

In general, it is recommended that teachers should initially identify the reading level of a student before presenting them new concepts. Thus, identifying the reading level of every student will allow teachers to know where to start and to choose the suitable material to the students. Furthermore, there is a more chance that teachers may be able to cater their exact needs in terms of reading development; also identifying the reading level of students will also guide the teachers to plot the interventions suited to every level. Additionally, it is highly recommended that teachers should use intervention tools that will assist the students to turn their reading difficulty into reading easiness. Intervention tools should highlight activities that show proper usage of punctuations and activities that engage the students into comprehensive reading. Also, in crafting a reading material that aims to assist a student in their reading difficulties, it is recommended that it should be validated by the experts in the field. It should not be something crafted out of nowhere. Thus, should pass a thorough dry run and validation. Through validation, it can be found what should be revised and what should be retained. It can also show the strengths and weaknesses of the material. As defined, instructional intervention are strategies and techniques that are designed to provide support and guidance to students who are struggling or have gaps in specific areas of learning. For a material to be accepted for utilization, it should be curricularly valid. Thus, the use of this enhancement tool is recommended given that it is able to pass curricular validity. Also, the material should surely be able to cater what it aims to pursue. It should be highly engaging among students, and be giving students the assistance they really need.

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