Skill Book and Reading Performance of Grade 6 Learners

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Abstract - *This study investigated the effectiveness of a developed Skill Book on the reading performance of Grade 6 learners at Sto. Domingo Elementary School, Bula North District, Division of Camarines Sur, school year 2023–2024. It specifically examined learners' pretest and post-test performance in comprehensive evaluation assessment skills and reading comprehension, the design and curricular validity of the Skill Book, and the extent of its effect on learners' reading outcomes. Employing a descriptive-comparative and research and development (R&D) design, the study utilized a teacher-made test, documentary analysis, and a validity evaluation checklist. The sample consisted of 28 learners. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, proficiency levels, t-test, and Cohen's d. Findings revealed a significant improvement in post-test scores across reading domains. Pretest results indicated that 53.57% of learners were at the established level, with 21.43% categorized as deficit. In contrast, post-test data showed 82.14% of learners at the established level, with none in the deficit category. The Skill Book, which integrates phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary, was validated as highly curricular-valid (M = 3.86). Statistical tests showed significant differences between pretest and post-test scores in key reading components, with very strong effect sizes: phonemic awareness ($r^2 = 0.97$), phonics ($r^2 = 0.98$), fluency ($r^2 = 0.95$), and vocabulary ($r^2 = 0.99$). Results confirm the Skill Book's effectiveness in enhancing learners' reading performance and support its use as an instructional intervention in reading instruction.*

Keywords – *Skill Book, Reading Performance, Grade 6 Learners*

INTRODUCTION

Reading performance among Grade 6 learners is shaped by various interrelated factors, including the quality of reading materials, teaching methodologies, and the broader learning environment. A key concern is the persistent disparity in reading proficiency levels, often attributed to learners' diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, unequal access to books, and differing levels of parental involvement. Furthermore, conventional instructional approaches frequently fail to accommodate individual learning needs, leading to disengagement and diminished motivation. To effectively address these challenges, educators must adopt innovative strategies that promote differentiated instruction, provide access to enriched reading materials, and foster inclusive learning spaces conducive to active participation and critical thinking.

One such innovation is the use of skill books specifically designed to enhance reading performance. These instructional tools are structured to progressively develop core literacy competencies—such as comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and critical thinking—through scaffolded exercises, culturally responsive content, and formative assessments. However, their effectiveness hinges on alignment with curriculum standards, inclusivity of content, and adaptability to

varied reading proficiencies within a classroom setting. Integration into daily instruction, combined with strategic teacher facilitation, is essential to optimize their pedagogical value.

Comprehensive evaluation assessment skills further play a critical role in measuring and supporting learners' reading development. These assessments, which include both formative and summative measures, allow educators to diagnose strengths and target specific areas for growth. When well-aligned with curriculum goals, such evaluations ensure that skill books are used to their full potential, enabling adaptive instruction and data-informed teaching practices.

The importance of structured reading interventions is underscored by global and national educational frameworks. The Global Proficiency Framework for Reading, introduced by UNESCO and presented by Montoya (2020), stresses the development of reading skills from Grades 1 to 9 and identifies regional disparities rooted in socio-economic inequities, limited access to quality materials, and ineffective instructional strategies. Developed in collaboration with USAID, the World Bank Group, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this framework advocates for inclusive reading education tailored to diverse learner contexts.

Aligned with this is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Two specific targets are most relevant:

> *Target 4.1: Free Primary and Secondary Education: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.*

> *Target 4.7: Education for Sustainable Development: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including education for sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity.*

These objectives collectively endorse equitable access to quality education, the use of inclusive teaching strategies, and the promotion of literacy skills among all learners—particularly those at risk of underachievement. Emphasizing equity and engagement, this global agenda supports local initiatives such as the use of skill books to mitigate reading disparities and cultivate a culture of reading.

Skill books are widely acknowledged as effective tools for literacy enhancement. According to Shea and Ceprano (2017), these resources are designed to improve reading skills through structured, engaging exercises that reinforce comprehension, vocabulary, and analytical thinking.

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Supporting this, Talain (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of Project ARISE in enhancing Grade 6 learners' reading comprehension through a true experimental design. The intervention yielded statistically significant improvements, underscoring the effectiveness of innovative and localized instructional materials. Similarly, De Sagun (2019) demonstrated through a quasi-experimental study that localized learning materials significantly improved the reading comprehension of Grade 6 pupils, emphasizing the value of texts contextualized to learners' daily experiences for increasing engagement and understanding.

Nationally, these findings are reinforced by **DepEd Order No. 24, s. 2023**, which provides *"Guidelines on the Provision of Supplementary Learning Resources for Public School Libraries and Library Hubs."* This directive aims to strengthen text-based learning through the identification, procurement, and distribution of quality learning resources, aligned with the *Enhanced Basic Education Act*. It mandates:

> *"… the provision of Supplementary Learning Resources (SLRs) to enhance public school libraries and library hubs; identification, procurement, and distribution of SLRs to support text-based learning; aligned with good governance principles and the Enhanced Basic Education Act; for immediate implementation, registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR), and the repeal of inconsistent provisions in previous orders."*

The order emphasizes immediate dissemination and strict compliance to ensure equitable access to quality educational resources, particularly in underserved areas.

Against this backdrop, the present study was conducted to address the reading performance disparities observed among Grade 6 learners at Sto. Domingo Elementary School, Bula North District. The researcher aimed to develop and implement a skill book tailored to the learners' specific needs, with the goal of enhancing comprehension and critical thinking skills. This initiative is aligned with both local and global educational mandates advocating for quality, inclusive education. By introducing contextually relevant, pedagogically sound instructional materials, the study seeks to empower educators and engage learners through meaningful reading experiences, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the effect of a developed skill book on the reading performance of Grade 6 learners at Sto. Domingo Elementary School, Bula North District, Division of Camarines Sur, for the school year 2023–2024. It sought to assess the learners' performance in the comprehensive evaluation assessment skills during the pretest, particularly in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development.

The study also examined the learners' level of reading performance in reading comprehension in the pretest, categorized as established, emerging, coping, and deficit. Furthermore, the study intended to design a skill book, ensuring it was structured around clear objectives, relevant learning content, engaging activities, and appropriate assessment tools. The curricular validity of the skill book was

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In addition, the study assessed the learners' performance in the post-test across the same components of the comprehensive evaluation assessment skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development. It also analyzed the post-test reading comprehension levels using the same established categories. The study further aimed to determine whether significant

differences existed between the learners' pretest and post-test scores in both evaluation skills and reading comprehension levels. Ultimately, it evaluated the overall effectiveness of the developed skill book in enhancing the reading performance of Grade 6 learners..

METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive-comparative-correlational design integrated with a research and development (R&D) approach. The descriptive method assessed Grade 6 learners' reading performance—specifically phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development—through pre- and post-intervention evaluations. It also guided the analysis of the skill book's structure, including objectives, content, activities, and assessments, and its curricular validity in terms of face, content, and construct. The comparative method determined significant differences in reading performance before and after using the skill book, while the R&D method supported the development, validation, and refinement of the material.

All 28 Grade 6 learners at Sto. Domingo Elementary School participated through total enumeration. Data collection tools included a teacher-made test, an evaluation checklist, and documentary analysis. The teacher-made test, structured by a table of specifications and aligned with cognitive domains, was validated by experts and refined through a dry run and item analysis. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha; content and construct validity were confirmed through expert review and curriculum alignment.

Documentary analysis of learners' records and previous assessments provided additional insights into reading progress. The evaluation checklist, consisting of 15 indicators across three ...ators using a four-...xpert feedback.

The research followed a systematic process: problem identification, securing permissions, tool development, validation, dry run, implementation, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Pre- and post-tests measured learning gains, while experts evaluated the skill book's quality and alignment with standards.

Statistical tools included mean, standard deviation, proficiency level, weighted mean, t-test for dependent samples, and Cohen's d. These measured performance trends, variability, improvement levels, validation outcomes, significance of differences, and the effect size of the intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that among the four components assessed, phonics had the highest mean score (8.64/10 or 86.4%), indicating a Proficient level. Vocabulary development followed with a mean of 12/15 (80%), also classified as Proficient. In contrast, phonemic awareness (7/10 or 70%) and fluency development (10.46/15 or 69.73%) were both at the Approaching Proficiency level. Vocabulary showed the greatest variability (SD =

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Interpret

The results suggest learners were relatively stronger in phonics and vocabulary but showed weaker performance in phonemic awareness and fluency. While all areas remained at or above the Approaching Proficiency level, the range in scores—particularly for vocabulary and fluency—points to varying levels of reading ability. The lowest scores in phonemic awareness and vocabulary (both at 3) further highlight the presence of struggling readers in need of focused intervention.

Table 1. Summary Table of the Performance of the Learners in Comprehensive Evaluation Assessment Skills in the Pretest

Statistical Measure	Statistical Value			
	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Fluency Development	Vocabulary Develo

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Lowest score	3	7	5	3
Mean	7	8.64	10.46	12
Standard deviation	2.00	1.13	3.28	4.03
Proficiency Level	70	86.4	69.73	80
Interpretation	AP	P	AP	P

Table 2 presents the pretest results of learners' reading comprehension, categorized into four performance levels: Established, Emerging, Coping, and Deficit. These data provide a baseline

assessment of learners' initial reading proficiency prior to any instructional intervention. The distribution of reading levels reveals that a majority of learners (53.57%) fall within the Established category, accurately and automatically reading at least 80% of high-frequency words in paragraphs. Meanwhile, 17.86% of learners are classified as Emerging, demonstrating accurate reading of at least 50% of high-frequency words in phrases. A smaller proportion, 7.14%, are coping by accurately reading 30% of individual words, while 21.43% of learners fall into the Deficit category, scoring below 30%. These findings highlight a range of reading abilities, underscoring the need for differentiated instructional strategies to support learners, particularly those in the Coping and Deficit categories.

Table 2. Level of Reading Performance of the Learners in Reading Comprehension in the Pretest

Reading Level	Description	f	%
		5	53.57
	number of high-fluency words in the paragraph.		
Emerging	Learners who accurately and automatically read at least 50% of the high-frequency words in the phrases.	5	17.86
Coping	Learners who accurately and automatically read 30% of the individual words.	2	7.14
Deficit	Learners who score less than 30%.	6	21.43
Total		28	100

The Skill Book was developed to enhance learners' reading comprehension by focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development through active engagement with varied texts. Its design promotes critical predict, read, and er comprehension.

The Skill Book's objectives clearly target foundational reading skills: phonemic awareness for sound recognition and manipulation, phonics for decoding letter-sound relationships, fluency for reading speed and accuracy, and vocabulary development for contextual word understanding. Content is systematically organized with concise explanations and visual aids, supporting clear learning outcomes. Activities following each lesson require learners to apply these skills through phoneme identification, phonics drills, timed reading

for fluency, and vocabulary exercises. Assessments include multiple-choice, matching, essay, and identification tests, contextualized to reflect real-world reading scenarios. Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback, while summative assessments evaluate mastery. Individualized feedback enables tailored instruction.

The comprehensive design addresses key components critical to reading comprehension, aligning instructional content, activities, and assessments cohesively. By integrating theory with practice, the Skill Book effectively supports learners in developing decoding and fluency skills alongside vocabulary expansion, which are essential for understanding texts. The use of varied assessment types accommodates diverse learning preferences and promotes reflective thinking, while ongoing feedback supports learner progress and motivation. This holistic approach not only enhances reading proficiency but also builds learner confidence and engagement, laying a strong foundation for sustained academic success.

phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development—ensuring the material is comprehensive and instructional objectives are clear. Construct validity affirms the Skill Book's effectiveness in fostering the intended reading skills and abilities, supporting its theoretical foundation. The overall high validity supports the Skill Book's use as a reliable tool for enhancing reading comprehension, providing educators confidence in its instructional and assessment quality.

Table 4 data show that learners attained proficient performance levels across all four assessed reading skills in the post-test. Both phonemic awareness and phonics achieved mean scores of 8.64 out of 10, corresponding to an 86.4% proficiency level. Fluency development followed with a mean score of 12.61 out of 15 (84.07% proficiency), while vocabulary development had the highest mean of 13.86 out of 15, equating to a 92.40% proficiency level. The lowest scores remained relatively high (7 to 8), and standard

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Table 3. Summ

Validity	AWM	Int.	Rank
Face	3.92	HV	1
Content	3.87	HV	2
Construct	3.79	HV	3
Overall Weighted Mean	3.86	Highly Valid	

The curricular validity of the Skill Book was evaluated across three dimensions: face validity, content validity, and construct validity. Face validity received the highest average weighted mean (AWM) of 3.92, indicating a high degree of perceived appropriateness and relevance by the evaluators. Content validity followed closely with an AWM of 3.87, confirming that the material comprehensively covers the intended reading skills. Construct validity scored 3.79, still within the "Highly Valid" range, suggesting the Skill Book effectively measures the theoretical constructs it aims to develop. The overall weighted mean of 3.86 confirms the Skill Book's high curricular validity.

These findings indicate that the Skill Book is well-designed and aligned with curricular standards, making it a credible instructional resource. The high face validity suggests that educators perceive the Skill Book as relevant and suitable for the learners' needs. Strong content validity reflects the thorough coverage of essential reading components—

Table 4. Summary Table of the Performance of the Learners in the Comprehensive Evaluation Assessment Skills in the Post-test

Statistical Measure	Statistical Value			
	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Fluency Development	Vocabulary Development
No. of items	10	10	15	15
Highest score	10	10	15	15
Lowest score	7	7	8	8
Mean	8.64	8.64	12.61	13.86
Standard deviation	1.13	1.13	2.41	1.96
Proficiency Level	86.4	86.4	84.07	92.40
Interpretation	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient

The post-test results demonstrate marked proficiency in all critical reading components, reflecting effective skill acquisition and development through the instructional intervention. The equal proficiency levels in phonemic awareness and phonics underscore solid foundational decoding skills, essential for fluent reading. The strong performance in fluency development suggests improved reading speed and expression, which facilitate better comprehension. Vocabulary development's highest proficiency indicates significant growth in word knowledge, enhancing learners' ability to understand and interpret texts. Low variability in scores suggests that these improvements were widespread across the learner

group, with few outliers. Overall, the results affirm the efficacy of the comprehensive, multi-component approach in the skill book, highlighting its role in fostering robust reading skills that support overall reading comprehension.

The post-test results show that 82.14% of learners achieved the *Established* reading level, accurately reading at least 80% of high-fluency words, while 10.72% and 7.14% were at the *Emerging* and *Coping* levels, respectively, with no learners in the *Deficit* category. This marks a significant improvement from the pretest, indicating that the instructional strategies effectively enhanced learners' reading fluency and comprehension. Although most learners reached proficiency, a small portion still requires additional support to fully develop their skills. Overall, the data demonstrate the success of the reading program in promoting stronger reading comprehension and fluency among the learners.

Table 5. Level of Reading Performance of the Learners in Reading Comprehension in the post-test

Reading Level	Description	f	%
Established	Learners who accurately and automatically read at least 80% of the total number of high-fluency words in the paragraph.	23	82.14
Emerging	Learners who accurately and automatically read at least 50% of the high-frequency words in the phrases.	3	10.72
Coping	Learners who accurately and automatically read 30% of the individual words.	2	7.14
Deficit	Learners who score less than 30%.	0	0
Total		28	100

Table 6 reveals significant differences in learners' proficiency levels between the pretest and post-test for phonemic awareness (t = -3.78, p = 0.000), fluency development (t = -2.78, p = 0.002), and vocabulary development (t = 2.19, p = 0.016),

However, no significant changes were observed in phonics (t = 0.00, p = 0.500) and overall reading comprehension (t = 0.00, p = 0.500), suggesting that learners had already achieved stable performance in these areas prior to the intervention or that further instructional adjustments may be needed. These findings highlight the program's positive impact on specific components of reading

proficiency, particularly in phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary, which are essential for improving learners' comprehension evaluation skills.

Table 6. Differences in the Proficiency Level of the Learners in the Comprehension Evaluation Assessment Skills in the Pretest and Posttest

Pretest	Post Test	t-value	p-value	Int.
Phonemic Awareness	Phonemic Awareness	-3.78	0.000	S
Phonics	Phonics	0.00	0.500	NS
Fluency Development	Fluency Development	-2.78	0.002	S
Vocabulary Development	Vocabulary Development	2.19	0.016	S
Reading comprehension	Reading Comprehension	0.00	0.500	NS

The analysis of the relationship between learners' proficiency levels in the Comprehension Evaluation Assessment Skills and their overall reading performance revealed very high correlations across all components. Phonemic awareness (r = 0.98, p < 0.05) and vocabulary development (r = 0.99, p < 0.05) demonstrated statistically significant very high correlations with reading performance, indicating that improvements in these areas strongly align with better reading outcomes. Phonics (r = 0.99) and fluency development (r = 0.97) also showed very high correlations, though these were not statistically significant. These findings suggest that while all assessed skills are closely linked to reading performance, phonemic awareness and vocabulary development may play particularly critical roles in influencing learners' reading proficiency.

Lastly, the analysis presented in Table 7 highlights the influence of learners' proficiency in various comprehension evaluation assessment skills on their overall reading performance. All components—phonemic awareness (r² = 97%), phonics (r² = 98%), fluency development (r² = 95%), and vocabulary development (r² = 99%)— ... nce, indicating that ... for a substantial ... abilities. Among them, vocabulary development exhibited the highest explanatory power, suggesting it plays a particularly pivotal role in determining reading performance. These findings underscore the importance of reinforcing foundational literacy components, especially vocabulary and phonics, in instructional practices to bolster learners' reading outcomes effectively.

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Table 7. Influence of the Proficiency Level of the Learners in the Comprehension Evaluation Assessment Skills on their Level of Reading Abilities

Comprehension Evaluation Assessment Skills	Reading Performance	r-value	r²-value (in %)	Interpretation
Phonemic Awareness	Reading Performance	0.98	97	Very Strong
Phonics	Reading Performance	0.99	98	Very Strong
Fluency Development	Reading Performance	0.97	95	Very Strong
Vocabulary Development	Reading Performance	0.99	99	Very Strong

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that learners initially exhibited an approaching proficiency level in phonemic awareness and fluency development, and a proficient level in phonics and vocabulary development. A majority of learners demonstrated established reading performance in the pretest, while a smaller percentage remained in emerging and coping levels. The developed Skill Book was found to be pedagogically sound, with high curricular validity in terms of face, content, and construct. Post-test results indicated significant improvements in learners' comprehension evaluation assessment skills, with a notable increase in overall proficiency and reading performance. Significant differences were observed in pretest and post-test scores for phonemic awareness, fluency development, and vocabulary development, demonstrating the Skill Book's effectiveness. However, phonics and reading comprehension did not show statistically significant changes, indicating areas requiring further instructional refinement. The strong correlation between proficiency levels and reading performance supports the Skill Book's impact in enhancing literacy skills, with phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary development each contributing strongly to reading outcomes.

To further enhance literacy outcomes, it is recommended that teachers sustain and enrich instructional strategies for phonemic awareness, fluency, and vocabulary development through interactive, contextually relevant, and differentiated activities. For phonics and reading comprehension, instructional approaches should be revisited and enhanced with advanced tasks, more engaging content, and individualized interventions. Targeted support should be extended to learners in emerging and coping levels through guided reading, structured literacy programs, and regular formative assessments. The Skill Book should be continuously refined to include reflective and culturally relevant activities that align with learners' backgrounds and needs. Additionally, differentiated instruction and personalized feedback should be embedded in practice to ensure that all learners receive appropriate scaffolding. Regular assessments should guide the instructional cycle, and higher-order thinking tasks should be introduced to challenge established readers and cultivate deeper comprehension. Finally, the strong effect size of the Skill Book across assessed skills underscores its utility; thus, it should be integrated into regular classroom instruction, with ongoing evaluation to ensure its adaptability and effectiveness in diverse learning contexts.

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