

Initial Gain of National Learning Camp in English: Basis for a Reading Program on the Least Mastered Competency

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Abstract. This study determined the Initial Gain of the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental. This study used a mixed-methods design, notably the Explanatory Sequential approach. The respondents of this study were composed of 126 Grade III students from six schools in Clusters 3 and 4 of the Jose Abad Santos 1 District in Davao Occidental, Philippines, utilizing Slovin's formula with a 5 percent margin of error. The data analysis employed the mean and thematic content analysis. The findings disclosed that the initial gain of the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental, was good, indicating that the program has made moderate progress in improving key learning areas. Moreover, the reading program proposed based on the findings was generated from the participants' responses. Based on the findings, teachers should enhance pupils' capacity to examine literary devices and comprehend fundamental concepts, including cause-and-effect linkages, through engaging and interactive pedagogical approaches. This approach will enhance students' understanding and analytical abilities while cultivating a more significant engagement with the material.

KEY WORDS

1. National Learning Camp in English
2. reading
3. learners
4. teachers
5. Davao Occidental

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1. Introduction

Reading proficiency is fundamental to academic achievement, affecting students' capacity to flourish across diverse areas. Many learners, especially in early school, encounter substantial difficulties acquiring essential reading skills, including understanding, grammar, and critical thought. Among them, particular competencies, such as differentiating fact from opinion, comprehending grammatical structures, and reading metaphorical language, frequently remain inadequately developed. Despite the extensive adoption of various reading programs designed

to tackle these difficulties, data reveal that most programs inadequately deliver tailored treatments necessary to bridge these gaps effectively. Consequently, pupils struggle to acquire fundamental reading skills crucial for academic success.

A recent study within the Division of Davao Occidental established a strong correlation between vocabulary acquisition, an important aspect of English language proficiency, and reading comprehension (Aballe et al., 2024). Given these findings, it is recommended that educa-

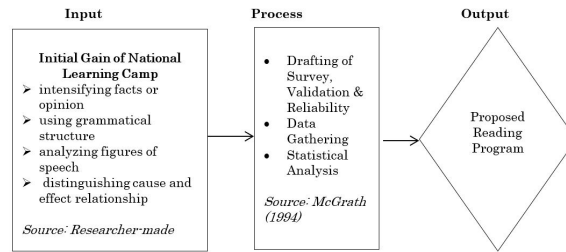


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

tors prioritize vocabulary development through strategies such as the "word-of-the-day" approach to enhance learners' comprehension and overall literacy effectively.

At Jose Abad Santos, the students participating in the National Learning Camp were drawn from schools that fall short of meeting the reading standards set by the Department of Education. Most of these learners are currently reading at the frustration level, indicating significant challenges in decoding and comprehension. The Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) results further confirm this, highlighting a widespread deficiency in foundational reading skills among participants. This study aims to provide baseline data on the current state of learners' reading proficiency and to assess the initial progress made by those engaged in the National Learning Camp. By analyzing these early outcomes, the research will lay the groundwork for a targeted reading intervention program designed to address these critical learning gaps and support long-term literacy development.

The study sought to address the following objectives: a.) to determine the level of initial gain of National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental in terms of intensifying facts or opinion, using grammatical structure, analyzing figures of

speech, and distinguishing cause and effect relationship. b.) to propose a reading program based on the findings drawn out from the study.

This study aimed to benefit various stakeholders in the educational sector by providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of reading interventions, particularly the National Learning Camp. The Department of Education offered data to guide policy adjustments and resource allocation for improved literacy outcomes. School heads gained essential information to evaluate and refine program implementation within their schools, while teachers could assess and enhance their instructional strategies based on students' reading progress. Students benefited from more targeted and individualized support, leading to improved reading skills and increased motivation. Finally, the study served as a foundation for future researchers to explore literacy programs' broader impacts and long-term benefits, contributing to the continuous improvement of educational practices nationwide.

Figure 1 illustrates the research's development. This study utilized the input-process-output structure, with the input including the initial gain of the National Learning Camp. The executed procedure was a survey, while the expected output was a proposed reading program.

2. Methodology

The following section outlines the procedures used by the researcher to perform this research study. It includes the population and sampling, instrumentation, data source, and data analysis.

2.1. Research Design—This study employed a mixed-methods design using the Explanatory Sequential approach, beginning with quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by qualitative interviews to explain the results (Creswell Creswell, 2023). Guided by the Input-Process-Output (IPO) Model, the research assessed initial reading gains from the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, focusing on skills like intensifying facts or opinions, grammatical structure, figures of speech, and cause-effect relationships. Quantitative analysis was followed by qualitative exploration to propose a suitable reading program. The IPO model enabled a systematic examination of reading deficiencies and supported the development of a targeted literacy intervention without experimental manipulation, offering a foundation for future reading programs.

2.2. Ethical Considerations—The researcher followed RMC's Research Ethics Committee guidelines, ensuring ethical standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, participant safety, and transparency. The study on the Initial Gain of the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District offered valuable insights into reading interventions for DepEd, school leaders, educators, and students. Informed consent was secured from students and guardians using age-appropriate language, emphasizing voluntary participation. Special care was taken to protect the young participants' identities and psychological safety. The researcher, a qualified Master's student, worked under academic supervision, using secure facilities and systems for data collection and storage. The study complied with the Data Privacy Act, had no conflicts of interest, and ensured fair participant inclusion. Transparency and objectivity guided the process, resulting in a credible and ethical study.

2.3. Research Respondents—This study involves 126 Grade 3 students from six schools in Clusters 3 and 4 of Jose Abad Santos 1 Dis-

trict, Davao Occidental, selected from a total of 185 learners identified at the frustration level in reading based on CRLA results. Participants were formally enrolled in the National Learning Camp for the 2023–2024 academic year. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5 percent margin of error to ensure accurate representation. Learners were strategically chosen across schools to capture diverse experiences, and the camp's initial impact on English reading comprehension was comprehensively analyzed, enhancing the study's inclusivity and validity.

2.4. Research Instrument—This study used structured written tests, performance tasks, and rubrics to assess Grade 3 learners' competencies in four key English proficiency areas: intensifying facts or opinions, using grammatical structures, analyzing figures of speech, and distinguishing cause-and-effect relationships. Assessments were aligned with curricular standards and designed to be age-appropriate. A mixed-methods approach incorporated open-ended questions to gather qualitative insights alongside quantitative survey data. The rubric provided clear evaluation criteria, and statistical analysis of the results offered meaningful insights to assess the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement in learners' literacy development.

2.5. Data Gathering Procedure—To ensure accuracy and credibility, the study followed a systematic process that began with securing formal approval from relevant authorities and maintaining communication with school heads. The research instrument underwent expert content validation and a pilot test with a separate group to refine its reliability. Surveys were administered face-to-face to promote trust and clarity, allowing participants to ask questions and respond thoughtfully. Completed questionnaires were collected only after thorough responses, securely stored, and backed up to preserve data integrity. Data analysis was con-

ducted using SPSS, applying rigorous statistical methods to ensure valid, reliable, and actionable findings.

2.6. *Data Analysis*—The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools to ensure accuracy. The mean was used to assess the National Learning Camp's initial gains in key areas such as intensifying facts or

opinions, using grammatical structure, analyzing figures of speech, and identifying cause-and-effect relationships. For the qualitative phase, Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was employed to analyze interview and focus group transcripts, allowing the researcher to identify core themes and gain deeper insights into participants' experiences.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter outlines the research's findings and discussion. The presentation includes an extensive discussion on the level of initial gain of National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental in terms of intensifying facts and opinions, using grammatical structure, analyzing figure of speech, and Distinguishing Cause-and-Effect Relationships. Moreover, the next part addresses the proposed reading program.

3.1. *Level of initial gain of National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental*—Table 1 presents the results concerning the level of initial gains observed in the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental, focusing on key learning indicators such as intensifying facts and opinions, using grammatical structure, analyzing figures of speech, and distinguishing cause-and-effect relationships. Each indicator's mean scores are displayed in tabular and textual formats, arranged from highest to lowest for clarity. The highest-rated indicator was intensifying facts and opinions, with a mean score of 3.91, classified as "Good." This suggests that students provided clear support with multiple examples and used varied vocabulary to strengthen their points. Using grammatical structures followed by a mean score of 3.49, also categorized

as "Good," reflecting a good understanding of grammatical structures with few errors and a mix of simple and complex sentences.

Moreover, analyzing figures of speech earned a mean score of 3.08, categorized as "Good," indicating students could identify and explain some figures of speech with relevant examples. However, the analysis could have been deeper. Finally, distinguishing cause-and-effect relationships had the lowest mean score of 2.85, classified as "Satisfactory," suggesting that students identified a few relationships. However, the explanations were vague and lacked the depth required for a more detailed understanding. These findings highlight strengths in certain areas, particularly in intensifying facts and opinions and using grammatical structures, but indicate that more focus is needed on analyzing figures of speech and understanding cause-and-effect relationships.

3.2. *Proposed Reading Program*—In light of the findings from the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental, it is evident that while students demonstrated good performance in intensifying facts and opinions and using grammati-

cal structures, there are notable areas requiring improvement, particularly in analyzing figures of speech and distinguishing cause-and-effect relationships. These findings indicated a gap in critical thinking and analytical skills among students, which were essential for academic suc-

Table 1. Level of Initial Gain of National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Intensifying facts and opinions	3.91	Good
2	Using Grammatical Structure	3.49	Good
3	Analyzing Figures of Speech	3.08	Good
4	Distinguishing Cause and Effect Relationship	2.85	Satisfactory
Overall		3.34	Good

cess and effective communication. A targeted reading program is proposed to address these challenges and build upon students' strengths. This program aims to enhance comprehension, critical thinking, and language skills, focusing on the areas identified in the findings to promote holistic student development.

Based on the recent results of the National

Learning Camp, Grade 3 pupils in Jose Abad Santos 1 District demonstrated low proficiency in distinguishing Cause-and-Effect Relationships. This gap in comprehension has been identified as the most pressing concern compared to other areas, such as the use of grammatical structures, figures of speech, and distinguishing facts from opinions.

3.3. Program Objectives—The main objectives of the proposed reading program are aligned with specific competencies identified in the K to 12 Curriculum Guide for English at the Grade 3 level. These include:

- (1) Focus on analyzing figures of speech and identifying cause-and-effect relationships to enhance critical thinking skills.
 - (1) Competency Code: EN3RC-IVc-3.3 – Analyze cause-and-effect relationships in stories
 - (2) Competency Code: EN3LT-IIa-2.3 – Identify figures of speech used in literary texts
- (2) Strengthen comprehension and persuasive communication skills through intensive practice in intensifying facts and opinions and using proper grammatical structures.
 - (1) Competency Code: EN3OL-IVc-2.1 – Express opinions effectively
 - (2) Competency Code: EN3G-IIIf-1.1 – Use appropriate grammatical structures in spoken and written communication
- (3) Improve reading and analytical skills through structured activities that encourage deeper engagement with texts and foster independent thinking.
 - (1) Competency Code: EN3RC-IIId-2.4 – Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text
 - (2) Competency Code: EN3RC-IVb-2.1 – Make inferences and conclude texts

3.4. Program Components—

3.4.1. Intensifying Facts and Opinions—Goal: Enhance students' ability to support arguments and articulate ideas persuasively. Activities:

- (1) Debate and Discussion: Students will debate various topics, practicing intensifying their facts and opinions using appropriate vocabulary and examples.
- (2) Writing Exercises: Students will be tasked with writing persuasive essays, ensuring they use intensifiers effectively to support their viewpoints.

- (3) Peer Review: After writing, students will exchange papers and review each other's work, focusing on how well they have used intensification strategies in their arguments.

3.4.2. *Using Grammatical Structures*—Goal: Improve students' proficiency in using grammatical structures to communicate ideas clearly and logically.

Activities:

- (1) Grammar Workshops: Sessions will focus on applying complex sentence structures, ensuring students can effectively use simple and complex sentences.
- (2) Contextual Grammar Application: Students will practice applying grammatical structures in reading comprehension activities, analyzing texts, and rewriting sentences to demonstrate correct grammar usage.
- (3) Real-Life Language Use: Encourage students to use grammar in real-life contexts by integrating grammar practice with reading comprehension tasks that reflect real-world language use.

3.4.3. *Analyzing Figures of Speech*—Goal: Help students understand and analyze figurative language to deepen their understanding of texts.

Activities:

- (1) Literary Analysis: Students will read various texts that employ figures of speech (metaphors, similes, personification, etc.) and analyze the purpose and impact of these figures of speech within the text.
- (2) Group Discussions: Students will work in groups to discuss the role of figurative language in the texts they read and how it contributes to the overall meaning.
- (3) Creative Writing: Encourage students to write their own stories or essays incorporating figures of speech, fostering creativity and improving their ability to use figurative language.

3.4.4. *Distinguishing Cause-and-Effect Relationships*—Goal: Develop students' ability to identify and explain cause-and-effect relationships in texts.

Activities:

- (1) Cause-and-Effect Mapping: Students will engage in exercises that map out cause-and-effect relationships in texts using visual aids like flowcharts or diagrams.
- (2) Text Analysis: Students will read texts and identify key cause-and-effect relationships, discussing how certain events lead to specific outcomes within the narrative.
- (3) Problem-Solution Writing: Students will be tasked with writing essays that identify a problem and propose solutions, highlighting the cause-and-effect relationships between the two.

3.5. *Assessment Methods*—To ensure that students are meeting the objectives of the program, the following assessment methods will be used:

- (1) Formative Assessments: Ongoing quizzes, in-class discussions, and writing exercises will provide regular feedback on student progress.
- (2) Summative Assessments: At the end of the program, students will submit a portfolio that includes their written work, analysis of figures of speech, and cause-and-effect diagrams, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of their growth.
- (3) Peer and Teacher Feedback: Students will receive feedback on their writing and analysis from peers and teachers, encouraging reflection and improvement.

3.6. *Program Sustainability Plan*—To ensure the long-term viability and continued implementation of this reading program, the following sustainability strategies will be applied:

- (1) Integration with School Programs - The reading program will be integrated into school-based remediation and enrichment activities, such as reading recovery and afternoon reading clubs.
- (2) Teacher Capacity Building - Teachers will participate in regular training sessions focused on literacy instruction, assessment, and intervention strategies to maintain a skilled teaching force.
- (3) Community and Stakeholder Involvement - The program will seek partnerships with the PTA, Barangay officials, and local volunteers to support materials, time, and reading activities. Reading corners and parent-led reading sessions will be promoted.
- (4) Student Leadership Engagement - High-performing pupils will serve as reading buddies or peer tutors to help struggling readers, creating a self-sustaining peer support structure.
- (5) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework - A system of periodic assessments and review meetings will be conducted to assess the program's progress and adapt strategies based on data and feedback.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study aimed to determine the initial gain of the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental in terms of intensifying facts and opinions, using grammatical structure, analyzing figures of speech, and Distinguishing Cause-and-Effect Relationships. Moreover, the next part addressed how the reading program can be proposed.

4.1. Findings—On the level of initial gain of the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental, the findings from the National Learning Camp in Jose Abad Santos 1 District, Division of Davao Occidental, indicate that the program has made moderate progress in improving key learning areas. While there are notable strengths in intensifying facts and opinions and using grammatical structures, areas such as analyzing figures of speech and distinguishing cause-and-effect relationships still require attention. The results suggest that while students performed well in some aspects, further focus on developing critical thinking and deeper analysis is necessary to address the remaining gaps and enhance overall learning outcomes.

4.2. Conclusions—The proposed reading program was essential to address the gaps identified in the National Learning Camp findings. By focusing on critical areas such as analyzing figures of speech and distinguishing cause-and-

effect relationships, alongside strengthening students' abilities to intensify facts and opinions and use grammatical structures, this program aims to foster well-rounded communicators and critical thinkers. Implementing this program is necessary for enhancing students' academic success, improving their language skills, and preparing them for the challenges of the 21st century.

4.3. Recommendations—Based on the study's conclusions, it is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd) provide more training and resources to help teachers enhance students' critical thinking, especially in analyzing figures of speech and identifying cause-and-effect relationships. School heads should support continuous teacher development and promote collaboration to share effective strategies. Teachers are encouraged to use interactive methods that strengthen analytical skills, while students should actively engage in activities that build critical thinking. Future re-

searchers were advised to examine the National Learning Camp's impact on addressing learning gaps, particularly in analytical and critical reading skills.

5. References

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