

The Use of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA): Its' Effect on the Reading Performance of Learners

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) on the reading performance of Grade 2 learners at Talifugo Elementary School, Conner, Apayao, for the academic year 2025–2026. A total of 24 Grade 2 pupils from two sections served as participants. Employing a pre-experimental research design, the CRLA tool was administered as both a pre-test and post-test instrument to measure learners' literacy proficiency in Mother Tongue (Ilocano) and Filipino before and after the intervention. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, and paired sample t-test to describe and compare reading performance levels across assessment periods. Prior to the intervention, most learners were categorized at the emergent and developing reading levels, indicating significant gaps in phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Following the implementation of CRLA-guided instruction and targeted reading interventions, a notable improvement in learners' reading performance was recorded, with a marked increase in mean scores from pre-test to post-test in both language subjects. The paired sample t-test results revealed a statistically significant difference in reading performance before and after the use of CRLA, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings underscore the diagnostic and instructional value of the CRLA tool in identifying specific literacy strengths and weaknesses, enabling teachers to design differentiated and targeted reading interventions. The study recommends the sustained and systematic use of CRLA in early grade classrooms to support struggling readers and advance overall literacy outcomes among Filipino learners.

Keywords: Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment; Reading Performance; Early Grade Literacy; Reading Intervention; Literacy Proficiency

1. Introduction

Reading ability plays a key role in learners' academic success, as academic competence is highly associated with students' level of reading proficiency. According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, reading literacy is defined as 'understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on, and engaging with texts in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society [1]. Reading literacy is a fundamental skill that underpins learners' ability to access, comprehend, and critically engage with information [2].

To become self-regulated learners, pupils must evaluate their work, identify strengths and weaknesses, and find ways to improve. Learners' understanding of assessment purposes and processes is crucial for making informed judgments and becoming effective self-regulators [3]. Early identification and intervention are critical to educators' success in improving outcomes for low-achieving beginning readers [4]. Literacy is critical to educational success. Although the focus on learning to read begins in kindergarten, there are large individual differences in reading abilities that persist throughout adulthood [5]. There are some evidence that oral-language abilities are closely related to the emergence of print knowledge and phonological ability in primary learners [6].

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Scaffolding strategies function as an instructional bridge, facilitating learners' progression from their existing abilities to more advanced levels of text comprehension. [7]. This work aims to review the level of reading comprehension provided by studies carried out in different countries, considering the heterogeneity of existing educational models. [8]. Considering the importance of reading and comprehension, educators has been called to ascertain that support must be given to children develop functional literacy determined by the country's standard [9]. However, as the learners' advances in reading skills his need for materials which deal with information and ideas beyond his own experiences grow [10]. Literacy is a cornerstone of educational and social development, serving as the foundation for academic success, critical thinking, and active participation in society [11]. Although many studies agree that supplementary reading materials can improve students' reading comprehension skills, no systematic review has synthesized the effectiveness of these materials across different educational contexts [12]. Effective literacy education provides essential skills needed for success. [13]. Reading skills in elementary school are not only about the ability to read words, but also about text comprehension, critical thinking skills, and vocabulary development [14].

The Philippine educational system regarded reading fundamental to all forms of academic learning and growth. Various reading programs have been implemented at all levels to ensure that every Filipino child learns how to read [15]. Reading difficulties present severe and potentially lifelong challenges, and children who do not read well are likely to retain a grade in school. To become life-long learners, children in grade 1 and up need excellent instruction and experience with varied, differentiated, and engaging texts [16].

The Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) is a vital tool for assessing the readiness of the key stage 1 learners. This tool indicates a learner's preparedness for their current grade level. It aligns with the MATATAG agenda of Department of Education's former secretary, which emphasizes providing alternative learning intervention to address literacy challenges among Filipino learners. [17]. The CRLA tool is used to determine the reading profile of grades 1 to 3. For grade 2, the assessments are administered using Mother Tongue (Ilokano) and Filipino. The insights gleaned from this assessment will serve as valuable tools for identifying grade-level readiness and skills that require improvement. Reading level varies from emergent level to current grade level. This information helps teachers design effective intervention activities for the school year. To support low- emerging readers, teachers' reading intervention with a variety of strategies and materials.

Emergent level readers represent the basic stage of reading, divided into Emergent Low (minimal previous grade skills, needing direct instruction) and Emergent High (basic previous grade skills but lacking mastery in automaticity, fluency, and current grade-level comprehension). Developing Readers have solid letter knowledge and phonological awareness, capable of decoding words. However, they require guidance and practice to improve automaticity, accuracy, fluency, and comprehension of texts at their current grade level

Transitioning Readers have mastered letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and phonics patterns, allowing them to accurately decode and read simple texts from previous and current grade levels. This prepares them for second language reading instruction. Grade Level Readers exhibit strong letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and decoding skills. They benefit from reading varied L1 (Mother Tongue) and L2 (Filipino) texts, easily transitioning between them and starting L3 (English) reading.

This study sought to determine the use of comprehensive rapid literacy assessment (CRLA) and its effect on the reading performance of learners. It specifically aimed to examine the learners' reading performance in both Mother Tongue and Filipino before the implementation of CRLA, and to assess their performance after its use. Furthermore, the study investigated whether there is a significant difference in the learners' reading performance before and after the application of CRLA. Finally, it explored the challenges that teachers encountered in utilizing the assessment tool, providing insights into both its effectiveness and the practical issues faced during its implementation.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study used pre-test - post-test-one group design to evaluate the use of Comprehensive rapid literacy Assessment (CRLA). It determined the effects of CRLA to the reading comprehension of learners at Calcifuge Elementary School, S.Y. 2025-2026.

2.2. Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the Talifugo Elementary School (TES) located at located in Purok 1, Talifugo, Conner, Apayao.

2.3. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were the Grade 2 learners, pineapple 1 with 12 learners and section pineapple 2 with 12 learners and six teachers of key stage 1. Total enumeration was employed in the study; there were 30 participants in all.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents

Participants	Number of pupils
Grade 2- pineapple 1	12
Grade 2 -pineapple 2	12
Teachers	6
Total	30

2.4. Research Instrument

The main instruments used in the study are the pre-test and post-test lifted from the CRLA tool. Each grade level was given a set of tests.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

The frequency and Percentage were used to determine the pre-test and post-test performance of the participants.

The scoring scale to determine reading level based on CRLA is presented on the table.

Table 2 CRLA scoring

Reading Level	Criteria
Low Emerging Reader	Learner scores 0 to 10 in Assessment Part 1
High Emerging Reader	Learner reads less than 25% of the passage in 2 minutes and cannot answer any of the questions
Developing Reader	Learner reads between 26% to 50% of passage accurately in 2 minutes and answers 1 to 2 question correctly
Transitioning Reader	Learner reads between 51% to 75% of passage accurately in 2 minutes and answers 3 to 4 questions correctly.
Reading At Grade Level	Learner reads between 76% to 100% of passage accurately in 2 minutes and answers 5 to 6 questions correctly.

Paired T- test were determine the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Reading Performance of the Learners Before the Use of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment CRLA

Table 3 presents the reading performance of 24 learners in Mother Tongue (Ilocano) and Filipino before the CRLA was administered. The data show that learners were distributed across only two reading profiles: Low Emerging and Transitioning Reader. The majority, 15 learners (62.5%) were at the Transitioning level, while the remaining nine (37.5%) were classified as Low Emerging Readers. No learner reached the Developing, At Grade Level, or any higher

category. This distribution suggests that while more than half of the class showed early signs of independent reading, a considerable portion had not yet developed basic reading fluency.

Table 3 Reading performance of learners before the use of CRLA

Reading Level	Mother Tongue (Ilocano)		Filipino	
	Frequency(n=24)	Percentage	Frequency(n=24)	Percentage
Low Emerging	9	37.5%	0	0.00
High Emerging	0	0.00	0	0.00
Developing	0	0.00	13	54.17%
Transitioning	15	62.5%	11	45.83%
At Grade Level	0	0.00	0	0.00

Meanwhile no learner in this subject fell under the Low Emerging category for the Filipino category. Instead, all 24 learners were distributed between Developing and Transitioning levels, 13 learners (54.17%) at the Developing level and 11 (45.83%) at the Transitioning level. This suggests that Filipino reading performance prior to the intervention was, on average, slightly more advanced than in Mother Tongue, though none of the learners had yet reached grade-level proficiency in either subject.

Taken together, data confirm that all 24 learners in both subjects required some degree of instructional support before the CRLA. The absence of any At Grade Level readers across both language areas establishes a clear baseline from which the effect of the intervention can be evaluated.

3.2. Reading Performance of the Learners After the Use of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment CRLA

Table 4 presents the reading performance of the same learners in Mother Tongue (Ilocano) after the CRLA was administered. The distribution shifted toward higher reading levels. Nineteen of the 24 learners (79.17%) moved to the At Grade Level category, while five (20.83%) remained at the Transitioning level. No learner was classified below Transitioning after the intervention. Comparing Table 2 with Table 1, the upward movement is considerable: nine learners who were previously at the Low Emerging level advanced at least one profile category, and the group moved from zero At Grade Level readers to 19 a shift that accounts for 79.17% of the class.

Table 4 Reading performance of learners after the use of CRLA in Mother Tongue (Ilocano)

Reading Level	Frequency(n=24)	Percentage
Low Emerging	0	0.00
High Emerging	0	0.00
Developing	0	0.00
Transitioning	5	20.83%
At Grade Level	19	79.17%

Table 5 presents the post-assessment results for Filipino. The data show a pattern of improvement. Nineteen learners (79.17%) reached the At Grade Level category, and five (20.83%) were classified as Transitioning Readers. No learner remained at the Developing level, and neither the Low Emerging nor High Emerging categories recorded any frequency. Comparing Table 2B with Table 1B, every learner who was previously at the Developing level advanced to at least the Transitioning category, and the majority reached grade-level proficiency. This represents a complete elimination of the two lowest reading profiles observed in the pre-assessment.

Table 5 Reading performance of learners after the use of CRLA in Filipino

Reading Level	Frequency(n=24)	Percentage
Low Emerging	0	0.00
High Emerging	0	0.00
Developing	0	0.00
Transitioning	5	20.83%
At Grade Level	19	79.17%

3.3. Difference in the Reading Performance of the Learners Before and After the Use of Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment

Table 6 presents the results of the paired samples t-test conducted to determine the significance of the difference in reading performance of learners in Mother Tongue (Ilocano). The paired samples t-test yielded a computed t-value of 11.24 ($p=0.000$). Based on these results, the hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that there is a highly statistically significant difference in the reading performance of the learners before and after the use of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment. The learners demonstrated a notable improvement in reading fluency, increasing from an average of 52.25 WPM in the pre-assessment to 74.80 WPM in the post-assessment which shows an improvement of 22.55 WPM.

Table 6 Paired samples t-test result for Mother Tongue-Ilocano

Assessment Period	Mean WPM	SD	t-value	p-value
Pre-Assessment (Before CRLA)	52.25	11.26	11.24**	0.000
Post-Assessment (After CRLA)	74.80	8.30		

** $p<0.001$ - highly significant

The results of the paired samples t-test in table 7 provide a statistical proof that the use of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment significantly improved the reading performance of learners in Mother Tongue (Ilocano). With a t-value of 11.24 ($p=0.000$), it can be concluded that the CRLA served as an effective tool not only for assessing reading levels but also for informing instructional strategies that can led to meaningful improvements in reading fluency. These findings support the continued and expanded use of the CRLA as a key component of literacy instruction in early grade education.

Table 7 presents the results of the paired samples t-test conducted to determine the significance of the difference in reading performance of learners in Filipino. The paired samples t-test yielded a computed t-value of 6.91 ($p=0.000$). Accordingly, the hypothesis is rejected. This finding indicates that there is a highly statistically significant difference in the reading performance of the learners in Filipino before and after the use of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment. Learners demonstrated considerable improvement in reading fluency, increasing from a mean of 47.33 WPM in the pre-assessment to 72.50 WPM in the post-assessment, a gain of 25.17 WPM. It is concluded that the CRLA was an effective instrument not only for assessing reading levels but also for informing targeted instructional interventions that will produce meaningful and measurable improvements in reading fluency. These findings strongly support the continued and expanded integration of the CRLA into Filipino language instruction at the early grade level. But this may also warrant a need for additional studies assessing factors affecting the proficiency of reading students.

Table 7 Paired samples t-Test results for Filipino

Assessment Period	Mean WPM	SD	t-value	p-value
Pre-Assessment (Before CRLA)	47.33	16.55	6.91**	0.000
Post-Assessment (After CRLA)	72.50	10.48		

** $p<0.001$ - highly significant

3.4. Challenges Encountered by the Teachers in Using CRLA

The analysis of the interview data revealed four major themes that describe the challenges and experiences of teachers in implementing the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA).

Theme 1. Operational Burden and Time Constraints. All teachers interviewed expressed significant concerns regarding operational burden and time constraints. The one-on-one nature of the assessment makes it very time-consuming and often disrupts regular teaching schedules. The pressure to meet deadlines frequently leads to rushing, and teachers report feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of assessments required, which include not only CRLA but also other tools such as Phil-IRI and RMA. As stated by six teachers: "One great challenge is the time constraint. The school should hire relieving teacher to conduct those assessments like CRLA, Phil-IRI, RMA and the other assessments."

Theme 2. Learner Diversity and Behavioral Challenges. Learner diversity and behavioral challenges pose additional difficulties. There is a wide disparity in learners' reading levels, ranging from low emerging to grade level readers, which complicates the assessment process. Furthermore, issues such as short attention spans, easy distraction, and language barriers hinder understanding and participation. Managing classroom while simultaneously conducting individual evaluations also proves to be a demanding task. According to the participants: "During one-on-one or small-group assessment, other learners become noisy or restless, making it difficult to manage the class while conducting CRLA simultaneously."

Theme 3. Lack of Training, Support, and Resources The study highlights a lack of adequate training, support, and resources. Many teachers feel they have not received sufficient orientation or training on CRLA methods, and there is a perceived absence of technical assistance and constructive feedback. Additionally, there is a noted shortage of essential materials, including printed resources, visual aids, and tools needed to effectively carry out the assessments. As mentioned, "Another challenge is the inadequate materials or resources. Sometimes, there are insufficient printed materials, visual aids, or assessment tools, which can delay or complicate the process. Not all teachers feel fully confident in administering and interpreting CRLA, especially that proper training or orientation is limited."

Theme 4. Administrative and Logistical Issues. Administrative and logistical issues further complicate implementation. Teachers face challenges in accurately recording and tracking learners' data. Moreover, learners often find the CRLA approach unfamiliar and challenging, as they are more accustomed to traditional testing methods. These issues are compounded by conflicts in schedules, timelines, and insufficient staff, leading to the observation: "Conflict in schedules, timelines and insufficient staff or need local school board teacher".

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the use of the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) had a significant and positive effect on the reading performance of Grade 2 learners at Talifugo Elementary School. Prior to the intervention, learners in Mother Tongue (Ilocano) were distributed only between Low Emerging and Transitioning levels, while Filipino readers ranged from Developing to Transitioning, with no learner reaching grade-level proficiency in either subject. After the CRLA-guided intervention, 79.17% of learners in both Mother Tongue and Filipino advanced to the At Grade Level category, and the paired samples t-test confirmed a highly statistically significant improvement in reading fluency, with mean words-per-minute scores increasing by 22.55 WPM in Ilocano and 25.17 WPM in Filipino. These results affirm that the CRLA is not merely a diagnostic instrument but an effective foundation for designing targeted, differentiated instruction that meaningfully advances early grade literacy. However, its full potential can only be realized when the accompanying challenges, including time constraints, learner diversity, inadequate training, and logistical difficulties, are addressed through institutional support, sufficient resources, and capacity-building initiatives for teachers.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge that I have not used ChatGPT or Copilot for refining some of the sections in the document.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

Statement of ethical approval

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the college. No ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the respondents' privacy and confidentiality

Statement of informed consent

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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