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Reading Comprehension Levels of First Grade Learners: Basis for Remediation Strategies

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Abstract:

This quantitative-descriptive study assessed the reading comprehension levels of 89 first-grade learners at Detroit Edison Public School Academy during school year 2024-2025, examined the problems teachers encountered in teaching reading in English, and proposed remediation strategies grounded in the findings. Learner proficiency was classified from reading assessment results as independent, instructional, frustration, or non-reader, while teacher-perceived problems were measured with a researcher-constructed questionnaire using a five-point seriousness scale and interpreted through weighted means. Results showed that 40 learners (44.94%) were instructional readers, 26 (29.21%) were independent readers, 15 (16.86%) were frustration readers, and 8 (8.99%) were non-readers. Thus, almost three in four learners could read at or above the instructional level with support, but one in four remained at risk because frustration-level and non-reader status signals that grade-level text was inaccessible without intensive intervention. Teachers rated four problems as very serious: learners not being able to sufficiently register or think about ideas or information while reading (weighted mean = 4.38), difficulty determining the most important details or concepts in a passage (4.17), inability to hold what was read in mind (3.83), and not understanding word meanings or being confused by words with different meanings (3.62). The remaining eight problems were moderately serious, with an overall weighted mean of 3.37. The pattern indicates that the central bottleneck was not merely decoding, but the cognitive work of attending to, holding, selecting, and constructing meaning from text. In response, this paper proposes a tiered remediation program organized around word recognition, reading speed, reading comprehension, word study, fluency, and vocabulary, with explicit strategy instruction, guided and partner reading, graphic organizers, phonemic awareness and decoding work, repeated and assisted reading, and vocabulary development. The study concludes that whole-class instruction alone is insufficient for the at-risk quarter of the cohort and that early, diagnostic, small-group remediation, supported by school leadership, teacher training, materials, and family engagement, is necessary to move learners from learning to read toward reading to learn.

Keywords: reading comprehension; first-grade learners; reading proficiency; frustration level; remediation strategies; early literacy

Introduction:

Reading is the gateway skill of schooling. It is the process through which learners make and get meaning from printed words and symbols, combining sensation, perception, comprehension, application, and integration. Because most school knowledge is delivered through text, reading is not merely one subject among others; it is the prerequisite for learning across subjects. A learner who cannot read with understanding is therefore disadvantaged in mathematics word problems, science instructions, social studies texts, and every assessment that assumes literacy. In the Philippines, this foundational role is formally recognized in the Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP), in the Department of Education (DepEd) vision of Filipinos who realize their full potential, and in the constitutional mandate in Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution and Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001) to provide quality, accessible basic education to all. Reading failure in the early grades is thus not a private difficulty; it is a public, systemic concern.

The urgency is sharpened by the developmental window of Grade 1. In the early grades, children are expected to move from learning to read toward reading to learn. If they are not independent readers by the end of Grade 3, research and classroom experience suggest that they are unlikely to catch up easily, and that their difficulties compound as texts become longer, more abstract, and more vocabulary-dense. A child who fails to develop reading skill at the expected

level often finds reading boring and difficult, becomes inattentive, irritable, or passive, develops a negative attitude toward schooling, and falls behind in content areas even when intelligence and motivation are present. The first-grade classroom is therefore the right place to diagnose, not merely to wait and hope. Diagnosis must precede prescription: it is impossible to provide good reading instruction without knowing each child's present level of achievement and the level to which the child may progress.

At Detroit Edison Public School Academy, teachers observed precisely this problem during school year 2024-2025. Despite general forms of instruction, a considerable number of first graders had not acquired basic reading skills. Some struggled to recognize words, some could decode but could not retain or explain meaning, and some could not yet read at all. The school thus faced a practical question that this study was designed to answer: how many learners were reading independently, how many could succeed only with teacher support, how many were frustrated by grade-level text, and how many were non-readers, and what problems did teachers encounter that made reading instruction difficult? Without answers to these questions, remediation risks being generic, mistimed, or aimed at the wrong skill.

This study therefore pursued three objectives. First, it determined the profile of first-grade learners in terms of reading proficiency as independent readers, instructional readers, frustration readers, and non-readers. Second, it identified the problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading in English and the seriousness of each problem. Third, it proposed reading remediation strategies to improve the reading performance of first-grade learners. The study was anchored on Gunning's theories of reading comprehension, namely Schema Theory, Mental Models, and Proposition Theory, as cited by Shehu (2015), which together explain comprehension as an interaction between the reader's prior knowledge and the text, the construction of a mental representation of meaning, and the building of a hierarchical macrostructure of main ideas. Its conceptual logic followed an Input-Process-Output model, in which learner profiles and teacher problems were the inputs, assessment and survey analysis were the process, and a proposed remediation program was the output. The significance of the work lies in its usefulness: administrators can use it to plan training and programs, teachers can use it to match instruction to learners' levels, learners and parents can use it to target support, and future researchers can use it as a baseline for wider, longitudinal, or intervention studies.

The remainder of this paper is organized in IMRAD format. The Literature Review synthesizes theory and prior Philippine and international evidence on reading levels, comprehension processes, teacher challenges, and remediation. The Methodology describes the design, participants and data sources, instruments, data collection, and analysis. The Results and Discussion presents the proficiency profile and teacher-rated problems in tables and figures, interprets each finding, connects it to theory and prior studies, and develops the proposed remediation program in detail. The Conclusion summarizes the answers, states their implications, and offers recommendations for practice and future research.

Literature Review:

Reading as meaning-making. Reading is widely understood not as mere oral reproduction of print but as the construction of meaning. Miñoza and Montero (2019) emphasized that reading pervades daily life, noting that a large share of everyday tasks involves reading, from street signs and menus to medicine dosages and recipes. Tomas and Villaros (2021), citing the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, linked literacy to working life and academic achievement and argued that training individuals who can comprehend and question what they read is a central goal of contemporary education. In this view, a good reader is not one who only retrieves facts but one who can derive, analyze, and apply meaning. Idulog et al. (2023) made a similar point for Filipino learners: identifying the main idea is a fundamental comprehension skill that allows learners to discriminate vital from nonessential information, build a deeper grasp of a subject, and engage more fully with society. The present study adopted this meaning-centered definition, which is why its proficiency categories and teacher-problem items extend beyond accuracy to comprehension, retention, and idea selection.

Theoretical foundations: schema, mental models, and propositions. This study was anchored on three interrelated theories of reading comprehension attributed to Gunning and cited by Shehu (2015). Schema Theory holds that written text does not carry meaning by itself; it provides directions for readers to retrieve or construct meaning from previously acquired knowledge. A schema is organized knowledge about people, places, things, and events, arranged hierarchically from the most general to the most specific. When learners encounter new information, they relate it to

existing schemata; when the relevant schema is absent, thin, or misleading, comprehension falters even if decoding succeeds.

Mental Models Theory extends this account by proposing that readers build a mind movie of the text, especially in narrative, focusing on the main character and updating the model as circumstances change while keeping important elements in the foreground. Misconceptions reflect misleading mental models, and teachers can surface and repair them through analogy, discussion, picturing, and questioning. Proposition Theory adds that readers construct a main idea or macrostructure as they process text, organizing propositions hierarchically with the most important ideas given the highest priority for memory. The three theories are intertwined: schema is the most basic comprehension tool, mental models build on schemata during reading, and propositional macrostructures represent the most complex, continuously updated organization of meaning. Together they predict the pattern later observed in this study: learners may decode words yet fail to register, hold, prioritize, or integrate ideas, precisely because comprehension requires more than word recognition.

Reading levels: independent, instructional, frustration, and non-reader. The classification used in this study follows the classic informal reading inventory tradition. At the independent level, the learner reads with ease, with very few errors, about 95% word accuracy or better, and excellent comprehension, and can read alone with confidence. At the instructional level, the learner needs teacher, parent, or tutor support, reads with about 90 to 95% accuracy, and comprehends at least about 80% on simple recall questions; this is where new vocabulary is introduced and where the greatest progress in reading is often said to occur. At the frustration level, accuracy falls below 90%, errors are numerous, rhythm is unnatural, and the text is too difficult for productive learning; no learner should be asked to read habitually at this level, though the teacher must know that it exists for that learner. Non-readers lack the fundamental skills to recognize and sound out letters and words, blend sounds, or understand meaning. This four-way distinction matters because it converts a vague label such as poor reader into an instructional decision: independent text for wide, self-selected reading; instructional text for guided teaching; frustration text for avoidance or heavy scaffolding; and foundational instruction for non-readers. Gabejan and Quirino (2021), as cited in the original thesis, linked reading proficiency to academic performance, reinforcing that the level at which a learner reads is not a mere label but a predictor of success across subjects.

Philippine evidence and the early-grades problem. Philippine studies converge on a sobering picture: many learners can decode or read aloud yet struggle to comprehend, analyze, and apply what they read. Miñoza and Montero (2019) examined reading comprehension among intermediate learners and underscored that comprehension, not only oral reading, must be assessed. Paz (2018) investigated reading comprehension levels in English among Grade 7 students and highlighted how early gaps persist into secondary schooling if they are not addressed. Umali (2016), cited in the original thesis, documented reading difficulties among Grade III pupils and the risk that children who do not become independent readers early will fall behind. Tomas and Villaros (2021) identified perceived challenges in reading as a basis for school reading programs, pointing to the need for school-level diagnosis before program design. Idulog et al. (2023) synthesized challenges and potential areas for improvement in Filipino students' reading abilities and stressed main-idea identification as a core skill. Taken together, these studies justify a school-based, grade-level assessment in Grade 1 rather than a generic national claim: the local profile determines the local response.

Why comprehension breaks down: attention, working memory, vocabulary, and decoding. The teacher-problem items in this study map directly onto mechanisms identified in the literature. First, comprehension requires attention and working memory. As learners read, words and meanings are held briefly in short-term memory before being moved into active working memory, where they can be related to prior knowledge and personal experience. If decoding is slow or effortful, processing capacity is consumed by individual words and little remains for comprehension. If the reader does not register or think about ideas while reading, information is crowded out by incoming words before it can be integrated.

Second, comprehension requires selection: every passage contains chunks of information that must be taken in, analyzed for meaning, and combined with prior knowledge, with good readers processing each chunk for relevance. Learners who cannot determine the most important details or concepts therefore retain fragments without a macrostructure.

Third, comprehension requires vocabulary and semantic knowledge. Initially learners deal with concrete objects and meanings; comprehension becomes more complex as they must construct meaning from abstract concepts, technical vocabulary, and words with multiple meanings. Learners must therefore expand and diversify vocabulary as they advance.

Fourth, comprehension requires decoding automaticity, phonological awareness, and syntax. Learners who are not automatic with decoding read in a choppy, effortful way; learners who struggle with phonological awareness have difficulty with rhymes and playing with sounds; learners who cannot blend syllables or map sounds to symbols cannot sound out words; and learners confused by syntax changes may misinterpret meaning even when individual words are known. These mechanisms explain why a single intervention, such as more oral reading alone, is insufficient: different learners fail at different points in the chain.

Teachers' challenges in teaching reading. Teaching reading is not as simple as it appears. Teachers face inadequate training, lack of resources, diverse student needs, and difficulties in assessing comprehension. They must simultaneously teach decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to learners who differ widely in readiness, while also maintaining engagement. Learners often lack interest in lengthy passages when material feels too challenging, boring, or disconnected, and difficulty with vocabulary, grammar, or text structure further reduces motivation.

Learners who do not use reading strategies may lack direct instruction in strategies, insufficient practice with diverse materials, or a failure to connect strategies to real purposes. These challenges are not signs of teacher failure; they are predictable consequences of teaching a complex, multi-component skill to a heterogeneous class without diagnostic grouping, targeted materials, and sustained professional support. The present study therefore treated teacher reports not as complaints but as diagnostic data: the problems teachers rated as most serious point to the instructional priorities that remediation must address.

Remediation: principles and strategies. Remedial programs are designed to close the gap between what a learner knows and what the learner is expected to know. Effective remediation is diagnostic, targeted, and sensitive to individual needs; it shores up basic skills so that struggling readers can catch up to peers, and it is delivered with extra time, smaller groups, and explicit instruction rather than mere repetition of the same whole-class lesson. The literature supports several complementary strands. Word recognition and word study build phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, syllabication, spelling patterns, and high-frequency word knowledge. Fluency work, including modeled fluent reading, assisted and guided oral reading, partner reading, repeated reading, choral reading, text chunking, and readers theater, builds accuracy, rate, and prosody.

Comprehension work uses context clues, graphic organizers, guide questions before reading, read-alouds, leveled questioning, and brainstorming of synonyms and antonyms. Vocabulary work teaches academic and content-specific vocabulary, word parts, and morphology. Reading speed and wide reading provide volume and practice, but only when the text is at the right level; easy material, teacher modeling, echo reading, and tape-assisted practice can scaffold fluency before speed is emphasized. An effective remedial instructor is therefore not only a completer of subject matter but a monitor of outcomes, one who is extra sensitive to each learner's needs and who adjusts grouping, text level, and strategy accordingly. The remediation program proposed in this paper was built from these principles and from the specific profile and problems found in this school.

Synthesis and research gap. The literature establishes that reading comprehension is a meaning-making process dependent on prior knowledge, mental models, and macrostructure; that proficiency levels have instructional implications; that Philippine learners often struggle most with comprehension, main-idea identification, and vocabulary; and that teacher challenges and learner difficulties are multi-component. What remains scarce is school-level, grade-specific evidence that links a complete proficiency profile to a ranked set of teacher problems and then to a concrete, implementable remediation plan for that same cohort. This study fills that gap for one school and one cohort. It does not claim national generalizability; it claims local usefulness. Its contribution is the chain from diagnosis to decision: the profile shows who needs what, the teacher ratings show which comprehension processes to prioritize, and the proposed strategies show how the school can respond with the resources and structures it can realistically mobilize.

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Methodology:

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive research design. The design was appropriate because the aim was to describe, not to manipulate, the current state of reading proficiency and teacher-perceived problems in a specific school and cohort. The study determined the reading proficiency level of first-grade learners in terms of independent, instructional, frustration, and non-reader levels, examined the problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading, and, based on the findings, proposed reading remediation strategies to improve reading performance. No intervention was tested in this phase; the proposed strategies are the evidence-based output of the descriptive diagnosis, to be implemented and evaluated in a subsequent phase.

Participants and Data Sources

The sources of data were the first-grade learners and the teachers of Detroit Edison Public School Academy during school year 2024-2025. The learner data covered the complete first-grade cohort assessed in the school, comprising 89 learners, whose reading assessment results were analyzed to classify each learner into one proficiency level. Because the cohort was enumerated rather than sampled, the percentages reported are population descriptions for this school and year, not sample estimates for a larger population. Teacher data came from the teachers who taught reading and who completed the questionnaire on problems encountered in teaching reading. The study was delimited to first-grade learners and to reading in English in this school; it did not cover other grade levels, other subject areas, or learners' home literacy environments, which are acknowledged as relevant contextual factors for future research.

Instruments and Data Collection

Two data sources were used. First, the results of reading assessment tests were analyzed to determine each learner's proficiency level. The classification used the operational cut-offs stated in the original thesis and consistent with informal reading inventory practice: independent level, about 95% word accuracy or better with excellent comprehension and confident independent reading; instructional level, 90 to 95% accuracy with at least 80% comprehension on simple recall questions and need for teacher, parent, or tutor support; frustration level, accuracy below 90%, with numerous errors and evident struggle; and non-reader, lacking the fundamental skills to recognize, sound out, blend, or comprehend written text. Second, a researcher-constructed questionnaire assessed the problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading in English and how serious each problem was. The questionnaire contained 12 indicators covering interest, main-idea identification, registering and thinking about ideas, holding what was read in mind, decoding automaticity, syntax, word meaning, abstract concepts, strategy use, rhyming and playing with sounds, blending syllables, and sound-symbol correspondence. Each indicator was rated on a five-point scale: 5, Highly Serious; 4, Very Serious; 3, Moderately Serious; 2, Slightly Serious; and 1, Not a Problem. Upon completion, the questionnaire was presented to the researcher's adviser; suggestions were incorporated to improve the instrument. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the teachers for easy retrieval. Ethical care was observed by treating responses with confidentiality, reporting only grouped results, and using learner data in anonymized, aggregate form.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the proficiency profile: for each level, f was the number of learners classified at that level and % was f divided by 89 and multiplied by 100. Weighted mean (WM) was used to summarize teacher ratings for each problem indicator, using the formula $WM = \Sigma fx / N$, where Σfx is the sum of the products of the frequency of each response and its assigned weight (5 to 1), and N is the total number of respondents. The overall weighted mean was the mean of the 12 indicator means. Interpretation followed the scale in Table 1. The proposed remediation strategies were then developed by aligning each priority problem and each proficiency group with a targeted strategy strand, rather than by proposing a single generic program for all learners.

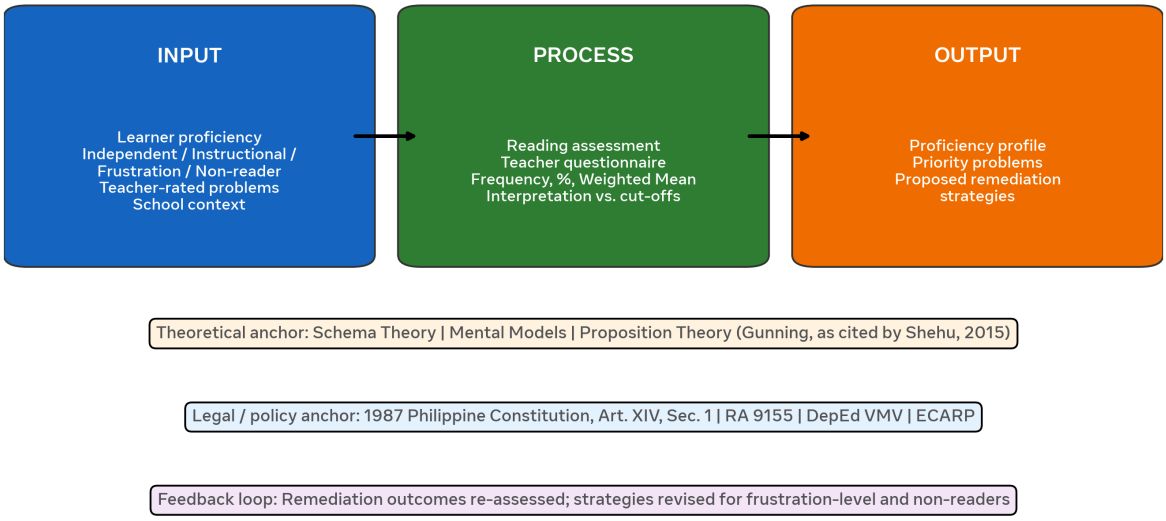
Table 1. Scale for interpreting weighted means on teacher problems

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Point value	Statistical limit	Descriptive equivalent
5	4.50-5.00	Highly Serious (HS)
4	3.50-4.49	Very Serious (VS)
3	2.50-3.49	Moderately Serious (MS)
2	1.50-2.49	Slightly Serious (SS)
1	1.00-1.49	Not a Problem (NP)

Figure 1. Input-Process-Output conceptual framework

Figure 1. Input-Process-Output conceptual framework



Note. Inputs are the learner profile and teacher problems; the process is assessment, survey, and descriptive analysis; the output is the proposed remediation program, anchored on Schema Theory, Mental Models, and Proposition Theory and on the constitutional, statutory, and DepEd policy mandates for quality basic education.

Limitations

Three limitations should be kept in mind when reading the results. First, the design is descriptive and single-school, so it establishes the profile and priorities for this cohort but does not support causal claims about why learners are at a given level or whether a particular strategy will work until it is implemented and evaluated. Second, teacher problems are self-reported perceptions on a single questionnaire; they are valuable as practitioner diagnosis, but they were not triangulated in this phase with classroom observation, learner interviews, or home-literacy data. Third, the original thesis did not report the number of teacher respondents, reliability coefficients, or item-level frequencies for the questionnaire, so the weighted means are reported as given and the overall mean is interpreted as a summary of the 12 indicators, not as a latent trait score. These limitations do not invalidate the descriptive findings, but they bound the claims that can be made and shape the recommendations for validation and follow-up.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents the data gathered and their analysis and interpretation to answer the three research questions. It is organized in three parts. The first part presents and interprets the reading proficiency profile of the 89 first-grade learners. The second part presents and interprets the problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading, ranked by seriousness. The third part develops the proposed reading remediation strategies, showing how each strategy strand follows from the profile and the ranked problems, and how the strands fit together as a tiered program. Throughout, results are read against the theoretical anchors of Schema Theory, Mental Models, and Proposition Theory, and against

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the Philippine literature reviewed earlier, so that description is not left as a list of numbers but is converted into instructional decisions.

Reading Proficiency Profile of First-Grade Learners

Table 2 and Figure 2 present the profile of first-grade learners in terms of reading proficiency. Of the 89 learners, 26 (29.21%) were independent readers, 40 (44.94%) were instructional readers, 15 (16.86%) were frustration readers, and 8 (8.99%) were non-readers. The distribution is therefore unimodal and centered on the instructional level: the largest group is the group that can succeed with support, the second largest is the group that can succeed alone, and the smallest groups are those that struggle or cannot yet read. The modal finding is instructionally encouraging, because it means that the typical first grader in this school is not failing; the typical learner is teachable at the instructional level, where new vocabulary is introduced and where the greatest progress in reading is often expected to occur. At the same time, the tail of the distribution is instructionally urgent, because 23 learners, or 25.85% of the cohort, were at frustration level or were non-readers, and for those learners grade-level text, as ordinarily presented, is not a learning opportunity but a source of error, tension, and failure.

Table 2. Profile of first-grade learners in terms of reading proficiency (N = 89)

Proficiency level	f	%	Instructional implication
Independent readers	26	29.21	Wide, self-selected reading; enrichment
Instructional readers	40	44.94	Guided teaching at instructional level
Frustration readers	15	16.86	Easier text; heavy scaffolding; small-group support
Non-readers	8	8.99	Foundational phonics and phonemic awareness
Total	89	100.00	Tiered, differentiated instruction

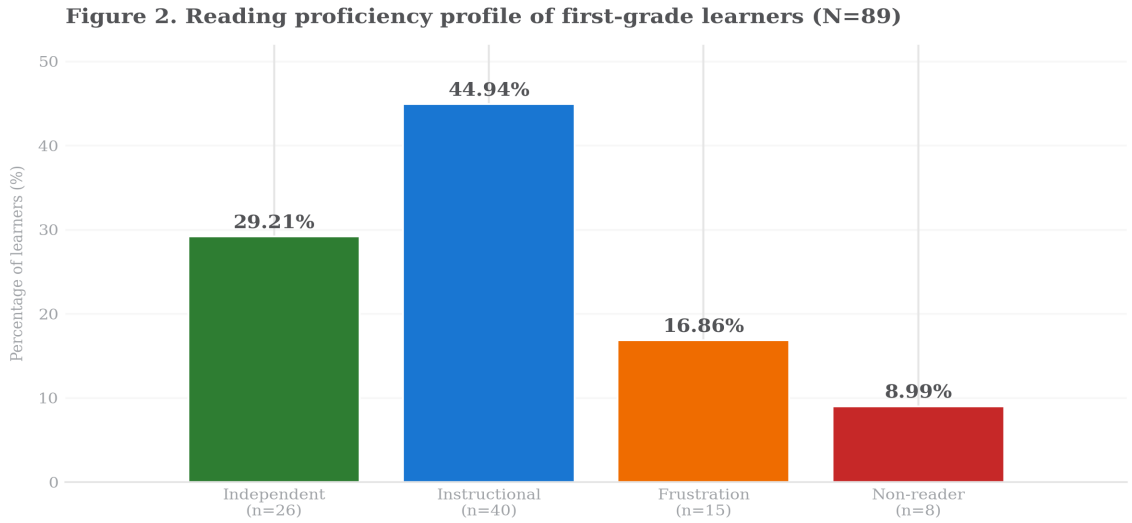


Figure 2. Reading proficiency profile of first-grade learners (N = 89). Instructional readers form the largest group; one in four learners is at frustration level or is a non-reader.

The independent readers, 29.21% of the cohort, deserve a precise interpretation. Independent reading level is the highest level at which a reader has adequate background knowledge for the topic and can access text very quickly and with very few errors. In the operational definition used here, this meant about 95% word accuracy or better, excellent comprehension of a story, and confident reading alone. These learners read orally in a natural tone, free from tension,

and their silent reading is faster than their oral reading. In schema terms, they bring sufficient prior knowledge to the text, so the text's directions for meaning construction find schemata ready to be activated. In mental-model terms, they can build and update a coherent representation of characters, events, and ideas without being derailed by decoding. In propositional terms, they can form a macrostructure and retain the most important ideas. The practical implication is not that these learners need no teaching, but that they need a different kind of teaching: wide reading of assorted materials, choice, discussion, vocabulary expansion, and tasks that demand inference, evaluation, and application, rather than repetition of decoding drills they have already mastered. Independent reading, as Mitchell (2018) argued in the original thesis, helps increase reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling facility, understanding of grammar, and knowledge of the world. The school should therefore protect time for independent reading and ensure that these learners have access to books at their level that are interesting enough to sustain volume, because volume is itself a driver of further growth.

The instructional readers, 44.94% of the cohort, are the center of gravity of the first-grade classroom and the group for whom high-quality core instruction matters most. Instructional reading level is the highest level at which a reader is not yet independent but has adequate background knowledge for a topic and can access text quickly and with no or few errors, typically no more than one word-recognition error in approximately 20 words, with comprehension of about 75% or more. At this level, the learner reads orally, after silent study, without tension, and silent reading is faster than oral reading. These learners are the ones who, in the original thesis, were stretched in thinking and reading by teachers who actually taught them. In theoretical terms, instructional readers have enough schema to benefit from teacher mediation: the teacher can activate prior knowledge, pre-teach vocabulary, model a strategy, ask a guide question, and help the learner form a mental model and a macrostructure that the learner could not yet form alone. This is the classic zone in which guided instruction pays off. The implication is that the school's core program should be pitched, much of the time, at the instructional level, with texts that are challenging enough to require teaching but not so difficult that errors overwhelm meaning. If core instruction is pitched too high, instructional readers slide into frustration; if it is pitched too low, they stagnate. Differentiation within the instructional group is still necessary, because 40 learners will not share the same vocabulary, background knowledge, or decoding automaticity, but the group as a whole should be the primary beneficiary of well-planned, guided reading lessons.

The frustration readers, 16.86% of the cohort, are the clearest signal that whole-class, one-text instruction is failing a minority. Frustration level includes text for which a reader does not have adequate background knowledge for a topic and cannot meet the criteria for instructional accuracy and rate. The frustration level is marked by a book in which the learner obviously struggles to read, errors are numerous, and the learner reads without a natural rhythm and in an unnatural voice. Accuracy below 90% means that roughly one word in ten is missed, which, in working-memory terms, is catastrophic: processing capacity is consumed by word recognition, short-term memory is crowded out by incoming words, and little capacity remains to register, hold, or integrate ideas. The learner's mental model becomes fragmented, and the propositional macrostructure never stabilizes, because the reader cannot retain enough of the text to know what is most important. The original thesis correctly notes that no learner should be asked to read habitually at frustration level, though the teacher needs to know that this level exists for that learner. The implication is twofold. First, frustration readers need easier text, not more of the same difficult text. Second, they need small-group, diagnostic teaching that identifies whether the barrier is primarily decoding, vocabulary, background knowledge, or a combination, and that intervenes at that barrier. Frustration is not a character trait; it is a mismatch between text demand and learner readiness, and it can be reduced by changing the match.

The non-readers, 8.99% of the cohort, are the smallest group but the one that requires the most intensive and most urgent response. Non-readers, as defined in this study, lack the fundamental skills to read and comprehend written text. They may be unable to recognize and sound out letters and words, blend sounds, or understand the meaning of what they read, and they struggle with basic literacy skills including phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. For these eight learners, comprehension strategies such as graphic organizers or main-idea instruction, on their own, would be premature, because there is no decoded text to comprehend. In schema terms, they may have rich oral language and world knowledge, but they cannot yet use print to access it; in mental-model terms, they cannot build a model from text because the text is not yet accessible; in propositional terms, there is no macrostructure because there are no propositions to organize. The implication is that non-readers need a foundational program that is systematic, explicit, and patient: phonemic awareness work on segmenting, blending, and manipulating phonemes orally before moving to print; explicit letter-sound correspondence and word-pattern instruction; high-frequency word work; syllabication;

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and spelling integrated with reading. This work should be delivered in very small groups or individually, with frequent checks, praise for self-correction, and materials that allow early success, so that the learner's identity shifts from non-reader to beginning reader.

When the four levels are collapsed into two broader bands, the policy picture becomes even clearer, as shown in Figure 4. Secure readers, defined here as independent plus instructional readers, comprise 66 learners (74.15%). At-risk readers, defined as frustration plus non-readers, comprise 23 learners (25.85%). The secure majority justifies confidence in the school's core program: most learners are progressing. The at-risk quarter justifies a structured remediation system: one in four learners cannot succeed with core instruction alone. This 74-26 split is the central management fact of the study. It means that a school that only improves whole-class teaching will still leave a quarter of its cohort behind, while a school that only runs remediation for a few learners will miss the scale of the need. The school needs both: strong core instruction for the 74% and a tiered, small-group system for the 26%, with movement between tiers as learners progress. The finding also contradicts the study's first basic assumption, which premised that most learners would belong to the frustration level. In fact, most belonged to the instructional level. The assumption was not supported, and that is good news: the problem is real and concentrated, not universal, which makes it more tractable.

Figure 4. Secure versus at-risk readers among first-grade learners

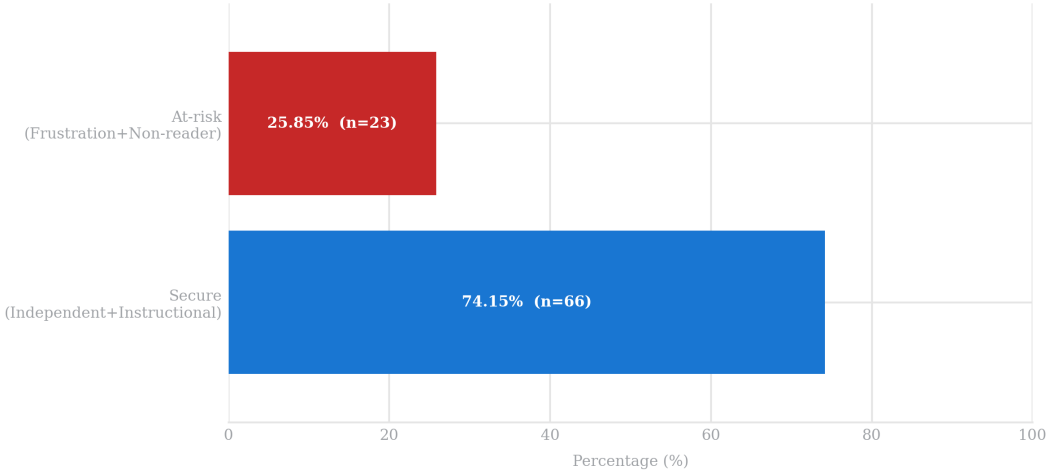


Figure 4. Secure versus at-risk readers. The at-risk quarter (frustration + non-reader, n = 23) is the priority cohort for tiered remediation.

The profile should also be read against the Philippine literature. The pattern found here, a large instructional group, a substantial independent group, and a persistent frustration and non-reader minority, is consistent with the picture painted by Miñoza and Montero (2019), Paz (2018), Tomas and Villaros (2021), and Idulog et al. (2023): many Filipino learners can read aloud or decode, but a meaningful minority struggle to comprehend, and early gaps, if unaddressed, persist. The present study adds a precise, school-level quantification to that general picture, and it adds the teacher-problem data that explain, from the practitioner's perspective, why the minority struggles. The profile also aligns with Gabejan and Quirino's (2021) link between reading proficiency and academic performance: if one in four first graders cannot access grade-level text, their performance in other subjects that depend on reading will also be depressed, not because they lack intelligence, but because the medium of instruction is inaccessible. Early intervention is therefore not only a reading intervention; it is an intervention for the whole curriculum.

A further interpretive point concerns what the profile does and does not prove. It proves that, at the time of assessment, learners differed in proficiency in the proportions shown. It does not prove that frustration readers or non-readers lack ability, that their families are at fault, or that they will remain at that level. Proficiency is a state, not a trait, and it is responsive to instruction, text match, and time. The profile is a snapshot for decision-making, not a label for sorting children permanently. The school should therefore use the levels to group flexibly, to assign texts, and to allocate

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support, and it should re-assess regularly so that learners can move from non-reader to frustration to instructional to independent as they progress. The goal is movement, not classification. A remediation system that does not re-assess is a system that cannot know whether it is working.

Problems Encountered by Teachers in Teaching Reading

Table 3 and Figure 3 present the problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading in English. The overall weighted mean was 3.37, interpreted as Moderately Serious. That single number, however, conceals a meaningful split: four problems were rated Very Serious, with weighted means from 3.62 to 4.38, and eight problems were rated Moderately Serious, with weighted means from 2.62 to 3.38. No problem was rated Highly Serious, Slightly Serious, or Not a Problem. In other words, teachers did not report a crisis in which every indicator was extreme, nor did they report a trivial situation in which problems were absent. They reported a differentiated pattern in which a small set of comprehension processes stood out as the most serious bottlenecks, while foundational decoding and strategy problems were present but less severe on average. That pattern is the key to prioritization: remediation should start with the four Very Serious problems, while still addressing the eight Moderately Serious problems in a second wave or through differentiated grouping.

Table 3. Problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading in English

Problem indicator	WM	DE
Learners are not able to sufficiently register or think about ideas or information while reading	4.38	Very Serious
Learners have difficulty determining the most important details or concepts in a passage	4.17	Very Serious
Learners are not able to hold what they have read in their mind	3.83	Very Serious
Learners do not understand the meaning of words and may be confused by words that have different meanings	3.62	Very Serious
Learners are often confused by syntax changes	3.38	Moderately Serious
Learners have difficulty putting syllables or sounds together to make a word	3.38	Moderately Serious
Learners often lack the interest necessary to read lengthy passages	3.21	Moderately Serious
Learners have difficulty making rhymes in playing with sounds in words	3.21	Moderately Serious
Learners are not automatic with decoding skills, making their reading choppy or effortful	3.17	Moderately Serious
Learners have difficulty understanding abstract concepts when reading	2.83	Moderately Serious
Learners do not use reading strategies when reading	2.62	Moderately Serious
Learners do not know sound-symbol correspondences and cannot sound out individual words	2.62	Moderately Serious
Overall weighted mean	3.37	Moderately Serious

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Figure 3. Seriousness of problems encountered by teachers in teaching reading

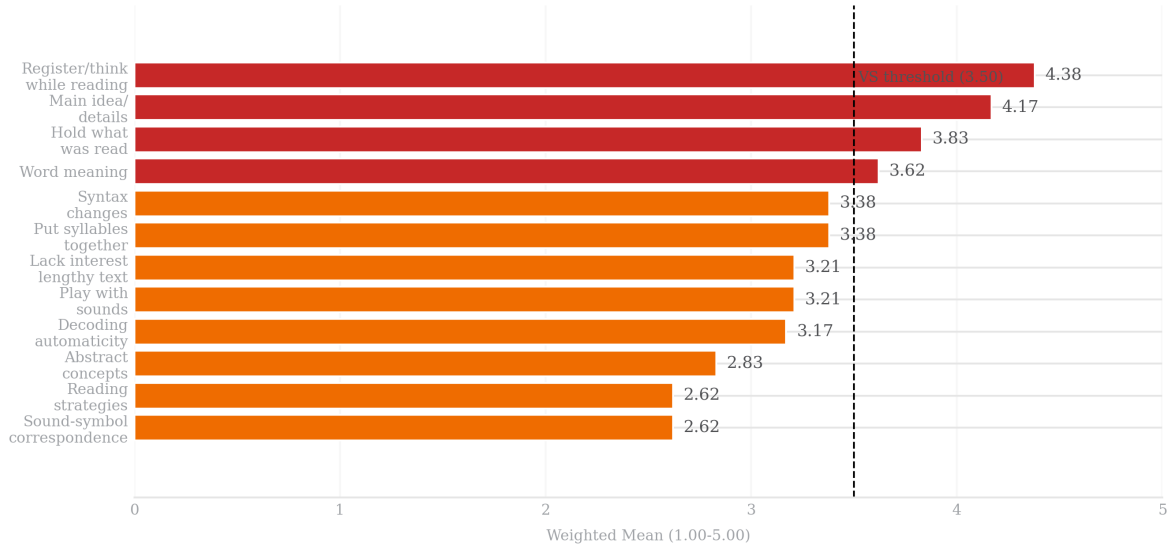


Figure 3. Seriousness of problems encountered by teachers. Red bars are Very Serious (WM at or above 3.50); orange bars are Moderately Serious. The highest-rated problem is registering and thinking about ideas while reading.

The highest-rated problem, with a weighted mean of 4.38, was that learners are not able to sufficiently register or think about ideas or information while reading. This is the most theoretically revealing finding in the study. It does not say that learners cannot decode, that they lack interest, or that they do not know letters. It says that, during reading, ideas are not being registered and thought about. In cognitive terms, as the original thesis explained, words and their meanings are held for a very brief time in short-term memory before new words crowd out the old information. If the reader does not move information from short-term memory into active working memory, where it can be thought about in relation to personal experience and existing knowledge, then comprehension cannot occur, even if each word was pronounced correctly. In schema terms, the reader is not connecting new information to existing schemata in real time. In mental-model terms, the model is never built, because the reader is not pausing to picture, predict, question, or connect. In propositional terms, no macrostructure is formed, because propositions are not being selected and organized. The instructional implication is that teachers must teach learners to stop, think, and register meaning during reading, not only after reading. Strategies such as think-alouds, where the teacher models what a good reader thinks while reading, pause-and-retell routines, partner talk before, during, and after reading, and guide questions given before the passage, all directly address this problem. They externalize the invisible work of registering ideas, make it audible and visible, and then gradually transfer it to the learner.

The second highest-rated problem, with a weighted mean of 4.17, was difficulty determining the most important details or concepts in a passage. This is the main-idea problem identified by Idulog et al. (2023) as a fundamental comprehension skill. Every passage contains chunks of information that must be taken in, analyzed for meaning, and combined with prior knowledge, and good readers process each chunk for relevance or irrelevance. Learners who cannot do this retain a flat, undifferentiated mass of details: everything seems equally important, so nothing is remembered as the main idea. The consequence is that they may be able to answer a literal question about a detail but cannot summarize, cannot distinguish the most significant idea from subordinate details or examples, and cannot build the hierarchical macrostructure that Proposition Theory describes. The remediation implication is explicit and practical: teach main-idea identification directly. Use graphic organizers that separate main idea from supporting details, teach learners to ask what the passage is mostly about, use text chunking with slash marks to show phrase and idea boundaries, give guide questions before reading that prime attention to the main idea, and ask questions arranged by difficulty so that learners move from literal recall to main-idea and inferential thinking. The school should also ensure that passages used for this work are at the instructional level, because main-idea work on frustration-level text will fail for reasons that have nothing to do with main-idea skill.

The third Very Serious problem, with a weighted mean of 3.83, was that learners are not able to hold what they have read in their mind. This is the retention and working-memory problem. Learners take in every letter, word, sentence, and punctuation mark in order to comprehend the author's intended meaning, and good readers also use personal experience and existing knowledge as they read. They move information out of short-term memory into active working memory, where they can think about it. Learners who cannot hold what they have read may read a paragraph and, by the end, have lost the beginning. They may answer a question about the last sentence but not about the passage as a whole. They may seem to have understood during reading but cannot retell afterwards. The remediation implication is to reduce memory load and to build retelling and summarization routines. Shorter passages, chunked reading, stop-and-retell after each paragraph, visual supports such as story maps and sequence charts, and partner retelling all help learners hold and organize meaning. Repeated reading of the same passage, at the right level, also helps, because familiarity frees working-memory capacity for comprehension. For the teacher, the implication is to check retention during reading, not only after, and to teach learners to monitor whether they still remember what they just read and to re-read when they do not.

The fourth Very Serious problem, with a weighted mean of 3.62, was that learners do not understand the meaning of words and may be confused by words that have different meanings. Semantics relates to meaning, and reading comprehension becomes more complex as learners must construct meaning from concepts beyond direct sensory experience, such as abstract concepts or technical vocabulary. Learners must therefore expand and diversify vocabulary as they advance. The finding that word meaning is Very Serious, while abstract concepts alone were rated only 2.83, suggests that the problem is not primarily philosophical abstraction but everyday polysemy and vocabulary breadth: words that have different meanings in different contexts, words that are unfamiliar, and words whose meaning cannot be guessed from context alone. The remediation implication is to teach vocabulary explicitly and in context, not only through word lists. Teachers can model and explain the vocabulary used to discuss narrative and informational texts, teach academic vocabulary and the different technical meanings of words in informational texts, select genres and topics that include content-specific vocabulary, and teach word parts, inflectional endings, base words, prefixes, and suffixes, and how they can be combined or broken down to understand meaning. Context-clue instruction, synonym and antonym brainstorming, and personal word banks all help learners become word-conscious and strategic about unknown words, rather than skipping them or guessing wildly.

The eight Moderately Serious problems, with weighted means from 2.62 to 3.38, should not be dismissed as unimportant; Moderately Serious still means that the problem is present and felt in the classroom. They form a second tier of priorities that can be addressed through differentiated grouping and through the same program strands that address the Very Serious problems, because many strategies serve multiple problems at once. Confusion by syntax changes (3.38) and difficulty putting syllables or sounds together to make a word (3.38) are the highest of this second tier. Syntax confusion reflects unfamiliarity with new rules, difficulty in translating between languages, and misinterpretation when syntax is incorrect, and it can lead to confusion and frustration. Syllable blending difficulty reflects a phonological and decoding gap that, for a subset of learners, will block fluency and comprehension until it is addressed through explicit syllabication work, teaching the six syllable types, and breaking longer multisyllabic words into readable chunks. Lack of interest in lengthy passages (3.21) and difficulty making rhymes and playing with sounds (3.21) are next. Lack of interest is often a consequence, not a cause: when material is too challenging, boring, or disconnected, or when vocabulary and grammar are too difficult, interest falls. The response is not to exhort learners to be interested, but to provide texts at the right level, with choice, with purpose, and with success experiences that rebuild motivation. Rhyming and playing with sounds reflect phonological awareness, which should be taught through oral games, songs, jazz chants, and rap before moving to print, especially for non-readers and frustration readers.

The remaining Moderately Serious problems complete the diagnostic picture. Learners not being automatic with decoding skills, making reading choppy or effortful (3.17), reflects insufficient phonics instruction, lack of practice, or underlying phonological processing difficulty, and it consumes the capacity needed for comprehension. The response is fluency work: modeled fluent reading, assisted reading, guided oral reading, partner reading, repeated reading, and prosody instruction on intonation, volume, stress, smoothness, phrasing, and expression. Difficulty understanding abstract concepts (2.83) reflects lack of concrete examples, limited vocabulary, and cognitive challenges, and the response is to use concrete examples, visual aids, and breaking down of complex ideas, and to

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connect abstract ideas to learners' experience. Not using reading strategies (2.62) reflects lack of direct instruction on strategies, insufficient practice with diverse materials, and failure to connect strategies to real purposes, and the response is to teach a small set of strategies explicitly, model them, practice them in small groups, and name them so learners can use them independently. Not knowing sound-symbol correspondences and not being able to sound out individual words (2.62) is the most foundational problem in the list, and although its mean is the lowest, it is the most decisive for the non-reader subgroup: for those learners, this is not a moderate problem but the problem. The response is explicit decoding instruction, letter-sound correspondence, and word-pattern work, delivered in small groups with frequent feedback.

Reading the two sets of results together yields a coherent causal story that is more useful than either set alone. The proficiency profile shows that most learners can decode enough to be instructional readers, but one in four cannot access grade-level text. The teacher-problem ratings show that the most serious bottlenecks are not, on average, letter knowledge or even decoding automaticity, but the higher-order work of registering, selecting, holding, and understanding meaning. This combination suggests that many learners in this cohort have crossed the threshold of basic decoding but have not yet built the comprehension routines that turn decoding into understanding. They can read words, but they do not yet reliably think while reading, pick out the main idea, hold the meaning, or know the words. That is precisely the pattern that Schema Theory, Mental Models, and Proposition Theory would predict when prior knowledge is not activated, mental models are not built, and macrostructures are not formed. It also explains why the second basic assumption of the original thesis, that teachers would report serious problems in teaching reading, was supported in a qualified sense: problems were serious, but they were Very Serious for comprehension processes and Moderately Serious for foundational skills, with an overall mean of 3.37 that is Moderately Serious, not Highly Serious. The school's response should therefore be balanced: it should not panic into a purely phonics program that ignores comprehension, nor should it ignore the foundational needs of the non-reader subgroup by offering only comprehension strategies.

The results also have a measurement and interpretation caveat that should be stated plainly. The teacher questionnaire was a single instrument, and the original thesis did not report the number of teacher respondents or the distribution of responses, so the weighted means cannot be tested for statistical significance or for differences between teacher subgroups. The ranking of problems should therefore be treated as a practitioner priority ranking for this school, not as a precise estimate of population parameters. The fact that four problems crossed the 3.50 threshold for Very Serious, while the next highest was 3.38, just below the threshold, should not be over-interpreted as a sharp qualitative break: syntax and syllable blending at 3.38 are close to Very Serious and should be treated as near-priority problems. Similarly, the overall mean of 3.37 is close to the Very Serious threshold and should be read as Moderately Serious leaning toward Very Serious, not as a comfortable moderate. The school should therefore act as if the comprehension problems are urgent, even though the overall average is moderate.

Proposed Reading Remediation Strategies

Remedial programs are designed to close the gap between what a learner knows and what the learner is expected to know. They often target reading skills, and remedial instruction can help struggling readers shore up basic skills and catch up to peers. Many learners require the extra help that remedial programs can provide, because reading opens the door to opportunities for growth and development. On the part of teachers, an effective remedial instructor is expected to be always extra sensitive to the needs of every learner, and, apart from completing subject matter, to be concerned with the outcome of teaching. The program proposed here is therefore not a single activity, but a tiered, multi-strand program that is matched to the profile and to the ranked problems. It is organized in six strands drawn from the original thesis: word recognition, reading speed, reading comprehension, word study, fluency, and vocabulary. Table 4 summarizes the alignment between each strand, the learners it serves most, the problems it addresses, and the core activities. The paragraphs that follow elaborate each strand, explain how it should be delivered, and state how its success should be monitored. The program should be implemented as a school-supported, time-protected intervention, not as an optional add-on, and it should be evaluated by re-assessing proficiency after a defined period.

Table 4. Proposed remediation program: alignment of strands, learners, problems, and activities

Strand	Priority learners	Priority problems (WM)	Core activities

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Word recognition	Frustration, non-readers	Syllable blending (3.38); sound-symbol (2.62)	Partner reading; cloze; spelling patterns; word bank; self-correction
Reading speed	Instructional, frustration	Decoding automaticity (3.17); interest (3.21)	Wide reading; timed fluency drills; echo and choral reading
Reading comprehension	All, esp. instructional and frustration	Register ideas (4.38); main idea (4.17); hold meaning (3.83)	Context clues; graphic organizers; guide questions; read-alouds
Word study	Non-readers, frustration	Sound-symbol (2.62); rhyming (3.21); syllables (3.38)	Phonemic awareness; decoding; high-frequency words; syllabication; spelling
Fluency	Instructional, frustration	Decoding automaticity (3.17); syntax (3.38)	Modeled, assisted, guided, partner reading; prosody
Vocabulary	All, esp. instructional and frustration	Word meaning (3.62); abstract concepts (2.83)	Academic vocabulary; word parts; genre vocabulary; synonyms/antonyms

Word recognition. Word recognition is the ability to identify words accurately and, increasingly, automatically, so that capacity is freed for comprehension. For frustration readers and non-readers, the program should seat struggling readers near proficient readers who display positive models and behaviors in relation to reading, because peer modeling provides a live demonstration of fluent, confident reading and of self-correction. It should provide time to talk before, during, and after reading in small-group experiences, because talk activates schema, builds mental models, and allows learners to register ideas. It should use partner reading, either with another student or with an adult, so that the struggling reader hears the text, practices it, and receives immediate feedback. It should use cloze activities, in which learners fill in missing words from context, to build the habit of using meaning and syntax to predict words. It should develop knowledge of spelling patterns, root-word sight vocabulary, and adding common prefixes and suffixes, so that learners can recognize word families rather than memorizing isolated words. Each learner should have a personal word bank, a growing collection of words the learner can read and use, which makes progress visible and provides a resource for writing and review. The teacher should reinforce and praise the use of self-correcting in oral reading, because self-correction is evidence that the learner is monitoring meaning, not merely pronouncing. Tape-recording learners' reading, allowing them to hear errors, lack of fluency, and lack of expression, can also help learners hear what the teacher hears and set goals for improvement. Progress in word recognition should be monitored by running records, word-accuracy checks, and self-correction rates, not only by end-of-term tests.

Reading speed. Reading speed, in this program, is not speed for its own sake but fluent, meaningful reading at a rate that supports comprehension. Struggling learners should read silently most of the time, because silent reading builds volume and allows learners to process at their own pace, but silent reading should be structured with purpose, choice, and accountability, not left as unstructured time. The program should provide opportunities for wide reading of assorted materials, because volume across genres builds vocabulary, background knowledge, and fluency. It should provide opportunities to practice fluency through timed drills, but timed drills should be used as short, low-stakes practice with easy material, not as high-pressure testing. A useful routine is to tape-record a paragraph, listen to the tape, record it again with attention to units of meaning, and listen for improvement, repeating the process until fluency is reached; this routine makes the learner's own progress audible and teaches the learner to attend to phrasing. Learners should read a paragraph silently and underline groups of words that go together, which is text chunking and which directly supports the main-idea and holding-meaning problems. The teacher should model the way a text should be read, and commercial or teacher-made story tapes may be used. The learner should imitate or echo the teacher's oral rendition, one sentence or phrase at a time. Choral reading, in which less fluent readers are grouped with fluent readers as they read a selected passage in unison, provides support and confidence. Text chunking, in which learners read aloud a passage marked with slash marks to show phrase boundaries, builds phrasing. Readers theater, in which each learner is assigned a role to dramatize a story presented to classmates, builds prosody, motivation, and repeated reading. Reading different genres to create different moods and show voice, choosing easy material to start with when

beginning speed work, and performing jazz chants and rap all build fluency through rhythm, repetition, and enjoyment. Speed should be monitored by words correct per minute on instructional-level text, together with a comprehension check, so that speed is never pursued at the expense of meaning.

Reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is the central strand, because the four Very Serious problems are comprehension problems. The program should teach learners to use context clues to infer word meaning and to predict and confirm meaning while reading. It should use graphic organizers, such as main-idea and details charts, story maps, sequence charts, and compare-and-contrast organizers, to make the macrostructure visible: the learner can see what is most important, what supports it, and how ideas are ordered. It should use brainstorming with other learners of lists of synonyms and antonyms, which builds vocabulary and semantic networks and helps learners see that words with different meanings can be related. It should provide reading centers, special places organized in the classroom for learners to work in small groups or pairs, cooperatively or individually, so that comprehension work is not only whole-class recitation but guided, collaborative practice. It should give guide questions before reading the passage, so that learners read with a purpose, activate schema, and know what to register and hold. It should use the read-aloud strategy, in which the teacher reads aloud while learners follow, think, and discuss, modeling the think-aloud that addresses the highest-rated problem. It should ask questions arranged according to their level of difficulty, moving from literal recall to main-idea, inferential, and evaluative questions, so that learners learn that comprehension is layered. In addition, the program should include explicit think-alouds, pause-and-retell routines, and summarization practice after each paragraph, because these routines directly teach learners to register, hold, and select ideas. Comprehension progress should be monitored by retelling rubrics, main-idea identification checks, and short comprehension probes on instructional-level text, not only by oral reading accuracy.

Word study. Word study is the foundational strand that serves non-readers and frustration readers most directly, and it should be systematic and explicit. Phonemic awareness should provide opportunities for learners to segment, blend, and manipulate phonemes presented orally before moving to print, because learners who cannot play with sounds orally will struggle to map sounds to symbols. Decoding should instruct learners on letter-sound correspondences and word patterns, and learners should apply that knowledge when decoding as they segment and blend letter sounds to form words. High-frequency words should be taught through discrete lessons from regular phonics lessons, so that learners know that some words should be committed to memory when reading sentences, because high-frequency words appear so often that automatic recognition of them frees capacity for comprehension. Syllabication should teach the six syllable types and have learners break down longer multisyllabic words into syllables and readable chunks, directly addressing the syllable-blending problem rated at 3.38. Spelling should be explicitly taught through spelling patterns and complemented with spelling tools, because spelling and reading reinforce each other. Word study should be delivered in small groups, with multisensory routines, with frequent cumulative review, and with immediate feedback, and it should be connected to real reading and writing, not taught as isolated drill alone. Progress should be monitored by phonemic awareness checks, decoding probes, and spelling inventories.

Fluency. Fluency is accuracy plus rate plus prosody, and it is the bridge between decoding and comprehension. The program should use modeled fluent oral reading, teacher-led and audio, in which learners listen to the text read aloud by the teacher or through audiobooks and eBooks that emphasize expressive reading and intentional pausing. It should use assisted reading, in which learners listen to a modeled reading, either teacher-led or at a computer station, and are actively reading aloud the same text at the same time, so that the learner's voice is supported by the model. It should use guided oral reading, in which learners read a text aloud with feedback and explicit guidance from the teacher, so that errors are corrected promptly and strategies are named. It should use partner reading, in which learners read a section of text and a partner reads the next section in an alternating fashion, which provides practice, peer modeling, and social motivation. It should include explicit prosody development, because learners need to focus beyond recognition and rate: prosody elements include intonation, volume and stress, smoothness, phrasing, and expression. Prosody should be taught through modeling, echo reading, choral reading, readers theater, and feedback on phrasing, not assumed to develop on its own. Fluency progress should be monitored by timed oral reading probes on instructional-level text, with accuracy, rate, and a prosody rating, and with a comprehension check to ensure that fluency is serving meaning.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary is the strand that addresses the Very Serious word-meaning problem and the Moderately Serious abstract-concept problem. Teachers can model and explain the vocabulary used to discuss narrative and

informational texts, including organizing and then discussing the actions in a story shared during oral reading time, so that learners learn not only word meanings but the language for talking about texts. Academic vocabulary should be taught where learners may not understand the different technical meanings of words used in informational texts or content-area books, because a word that is familiar in everyday conversation may have a different meaning in science or mathematics. Different genres and topics that include content-specific vocabulary should be selected to expand learners' understanding of concepts, because vocabulary grows through volume and variety, not through a single textbook. Learners should be taught the word parts that carry meaning, inflectional endings, base words, prefixes, and suffixes, and how they can be combined to form words or broken down to understand meaning, because morphology gives learners a tool for inferring unknown words. In addition, the program should use context-clue instruction, personal word banks, synonym and antonym work, and repeated encounters with target words in reading, discussion, and writing, because a single encounter is rarely enough for retention. Vocabulary progress should be monitored by word-meaning probes, by learners' use of target words in retelling and writing, and by comprehension checks on passages containing taught vocabulary.

Implementation, grouping, and monitoring. The six strands will only work if they are implemented with a clear structure. The school should adopt a tiered model. Tier 1 is strong core instruction for all learners, pitched at the instructional level, with daily guided reading, vocabulary, and comprehension routines. Tier 2 is small-group remediation for frustration readers, delivered for a protected period each day or each week, with texts at the learner's instructional level, with a focus on the comprehension and fluency strands, and with progress monitored every two to three weeks. Tier 3 is intensive, very small-group or individual intervention for non-readers, with a focus on word study and word recognition, with daily sessions, with frequent monitoring, and with a clear exit criterion for moving to Tier 2. Grouping should be flexible: learners should move between tiers as they progress, and groups should be re-formed after each re-assessment. The teacher should keep a simple progress record for each learner: proficiency level, strand focus, text level, and probe scores, so that decisions are based on data, not impression. The school should protect time for remediation, provide materials and books at multiple levels, and provide professional development for reading teachers through trainings, seminars, workshops, and related activities, as recommended in the original thesis. Parents should be engaged as partners, with guidance on how to support reading at home through partner reading, talk before and after reading, and access to books, without turning home support into pressure or punishment. The program should be evaluated after one term by re-assessing proficiency with the same classification, by re-administering the teacher questionnaire, and by comparing the new profile and problem ratings to the baseline reported here. If the at-risk share falls, if the Very Serious problems fall below the threshold, and if learners move from frustration and non-reader levels to instructional and independent levels, the program is working; if not, the school should revise grouping, text levels, or strand emphasis rather than continuing the same routine.

The proposed program also answers the study's third basic assumption, which premised that the proposed strategies can improve reading performance. That assumption is not proven by this descriptive study, because the strategies were proposed, not tested. It is, however, made plausible by the alignment shown here: each strategy strand addresses a specific, measured problem, each strand is supported by the literature reviewed, and each strand is tied to a monitoring routine that will allow the school to know whether it is working. The honest statement is therefore that the program is evidence-informed and ready for implementation and evaluation, not that it is already proven effective in this school. The school should treat the first implementation as a pilot with evaluation, not as a final solution, and it should document what works for which learners so that the program can be refined.

Conclusion:

This study assessed the reading comprehension levels of 89 first-grade learners at Detroit Edison Public School Academy during school year 2024-2025, examined the problems teachers encountered in teaching reading, and proposed remediation strategies based on the findings. The profile showed that 40 learners (44.94%) were instructional readers, 26 (29.21%) were independent readers, 15 (16.86%) were frustration readers, and 8 (8.99%) were non-readers. The most important conclusion is therefore that most learners were teachable at the instructional level, but one in four was at risk because frustration-level and non-reader status meant that grade-level text was inaccessible without intensive support. The study's first assumption, that most learners would be at frustration level, was not supported; the problem is concentrated, not universal, and that makes it more tractable. The school should celebrate the

instructional majority while acting urgently for the at-risk quarter, because early gaps that are not addressed will compound as texts become longer and more demanding.

The teacher-problem findings showed that the most serious bottlenecks were comprehension processes, not merely decoding. Four problems were Very Serious: learners not being able to register or think about ideas while reading (weighted mean = 4.38), difficulty determining the most important details or concepts (4.17), inability to hold what was read in mind (3.83), and not understanding word meanings or being confused by words with different meanings (3.62). The remaining eight problems were Moderately Serious, with an overall weighted mean of 3.37. The conclusion is that remediation must teach learners to think while reading, to select the main idea, to hold and organize meaning, and to know words, while still providing foundational decoding and phonemic awareness work for the non-reader subgroup. Whole-class instruction alone, pitched at a single text level, cannot do this work for a heterogeneous cohort; it must be complemented by diagnostic grouping, texts matched to proficiency, and explicit strategy instruction.

The proposed remediation program, organized around word recognition, reading speed, reading comprehension, word study, fluency, and vocabulary, translates these conclusions into action. Its value lies in its alignment: each strand addresses a measured problem, each strand is delivered at the right text level for the right learners, and each strand includes a monitoring routine so that the school can know whether learners are moving from non-reader to frustration to instructional to independent. The program should be implemented as a tiered, time-protected, school-supported intervention, with professional development for teachers, adequate materials and books, and engagement of parents as partners. It should be evaluated after one term by re-assessing proficiency and teacher problems against the baseline reported here, and it should be revised based on that evidence.

For practice, the recommendations are clear. School administrators should consider the proposed strategies for implementation, include the development of thinking abilities in the curriculum across grade levels by incorporating reading materials in all lessons, develop a reading intervention program specifically for frustration-level and non-reader learners, provide professional development for reading teachers through trainings, seminars, and workshops, and allocate budget for reading programs, events, materials, and books. Teachers should use the proficiency levels to group flexibly, to assign texts at the instructional level, to teach comprehension strategies explicitly, and to monitor progress frequently. Parents should support reading at home through talk, partner reading, and access to books. For future research, similar studies should be undertaken on a wider scope, with larger and more diverse samples, with triangulation through observation and learner interviews, with reliability reporting for the questionnaire, and, most importantly, with an intervention design that tests whether the proposed remediation program actually moves learners between proficiency levels. The present study provides the baseline for that work: it shows where this cohort started, what stood in the way, and what the school should do next. If the school acts on that baseline, it can help its first graders move from learning to read toward reading to learn, and it can give every child the literacy foundation that the Constitution, Republic Act No. 9155, and the Department of Education promise.

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