

Early Reading Comprehension Support and Literacy Readiness among Grade 1 Learners

Ellen Grace Z. Aquino^{1*} and Severino T. Morales Jr.^{1,2}

¹*Northeastern College*

*ellengrace.aquino@deped.gov.ph, ²severinomoralesjr@northeasterncollege.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how early reading comprehension support was associated with literacy readiness among Grade 1 learners at Cauayan South Central School. A learner-linked analytic cross-sectional design was employed, combining classroom observation records with an individually administered literacy readiness assessment. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used across Grade 1 sections. The research instruments measured comprehension modeling and questioning, vocabulary and oral language scaffolding, guided interaction with texts, responsive feedback, phonological awareness, letter-sound application, word recognition, listening comprehension, and short-text understanding. Descriptive statistics and bootstrapped quantile regression with 5,000 cluster-resampled

replications were applied to analyze the data. Findings showed that early reading comprehension support was generally evident, with guided interaction with texts receiving the highest rating, while feedback and responsive assistance obtained the lowest. Learners demonstrated developing literacy readiness overall, although weaknesses were found in beginning word recognition, listening comprehension, story sequencing, and short-text understanding. Early reading comprehension support was positively associated with literacy readiness at the 25th, 50th, and 75th quantiles. The strongest association was observed among learners in the lower portion of the readiness distribution, indicating that children with less developed literacy skills benefited most from sustained and responsive reading support. The findings emphasized the need for differentiated instruction, regular progress monitoring, explicit vocabulary teaching, oral language activities, guided comprehension practice, and timely corrective feedback. Schools should provide structured intervention periods and suitable reading materials to strengthen the literacy foundations of learners requiring additional assistance.

Keywords: *early reading comprehension, Grade 1 learners, literacy readiness, phonological awareness, quantile regression, responsive instruction*

INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension begins with a child's ability to make sense of spoken and written language. During the first year of formal schooling, learners are expected not only to recognize letters and read simple words but also to connect ideas, follow a sequence of events, recall details, and explain what a short text means. These abilities influence how children participate in language lessons and learn concepts in other subject areas. The need to strengthen comprehension in the primary grades is especially pressing in the Philippines. A World Bank report issued in 2026 stated that 91 percent of Filipino children at age 10 could not read and understand an age-appropriate text. Although this figure reflects performance beyond Grade 1, it points to reading difficulties that may have begun during the earliest years of schooling and remained unresolved as learners moved through the grade levels (World Bank, 2026).

Learning to read involves more than pronouncing printed words correctly. Children must develop accurate word recognition while also building vocabulary, oral language, background knowledge, and the ability to connect information across sentences. Castles et al. (2018) explained that effective reading instruction should bring together systematic teaching of the alphabetic code and meaningful encounters with texts. Duke and Cartwright (2021) further argued that comprehension develops through the interaction of word recognition, language comprehension, knowledge, cognitive processes, motivation, and active self-regulation. A Grade 1 learner may therefore read a sentence aloud without fully understanding it, particularly when unfamiliar vocabulary, limited prior knowledge, or weak listening comprehension interferes with meaning. Reading support must address both the ability to read the words and the ability to understand the message carried by those words.

Literacy readiness refers to the knowledge, abilities, and learning dispositions that enable a child to participate successfully in beginning reading tasks. It includes awareness of the sounds in spoken language, knowledge of letters and their corresponding sounds, familiarity with print, vocabulary, oral expression, listening comprehension, and interest in books and stories. These abilities do not develop at the same rate for every learner. Some Grade 1 children enter school able to identify letters, retell familiar stories, and understand simple questions, while others still need support in distinguishing sounds, following oral directions, or expressing ideas in complete statements. Foorman et al. (2016) recommended that instruction in the early grades should develop academic language, phonological awareness, letter-sound relationships, word decoding, word recognition, writing, and daily reading of connected text. Their recommendations show that literacy readiness is not limited to what children know before entering Grade 1. It continues to grow through purposeful classroom instruction and regular opportunities to use language and print.

Early reading comprehension support may include teacher read-alouds, guided reading, vocabulary discussions, picture interpretation, story sequencing, retelling, questioning, prediction, and short activities that connect texts with the learner's experiences. These practices allow children to listen, speak, read, and think about meaning while they are still developing fluency. Direct instruction in sounds and word reading remains necessary, but it becomes more useful when learners apply these skills to sentences and stories that they can discuss and understand. Foorman et al. (2016) recommended daily reading of connected text to strengthen accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Evidence from first-grade classrooms also showed that literacy instruction connected with meaningful subject content could improve both comprehension and knowledge. Kim et al. (2021) found that a content literacy intervention helped first-grade learners develop science knowledge and reading comprehension without reducing their engagement or basic literacy development. Such findings support an approach in which reading lessons provide children with structured skill practice and meaningful opportunities to learn from texts.

The value of early support also rests on the timely identification of learners who experience difficulty. Problems in comprehension are not always obvious during beginning reading instruction because a child may decode familiar words while struggling to understand sentences, answer questions, or retell what has been read. Catts et al. (2016) found that language abilities measured during kindergarten contributed to the prediction of later reading comprehension difficulties. This suggests that teachers should pay attention not only to word-reading performance but also to vocabulary, listening comprehension, oral expression, and responses to language activities. Learners who show persistent difficulty may need additional modeling, repeated practice, smaller-group instruction, carefully selected texts, and regular monitoring. A meta-analysis by Wanzek et al. (2018) showed that intensive early reading interventions produced positive outcomes among struggling learners from kindergarten to Grade 3. Support provided during Grade 1 may therefore prevent early gaps from becoming more difficult to address in later grades.

Philippine education policy gives clear attention to the development and recovery of foundational reading skills. The MATATAG Curriculum identified Language, Reading and Literacy as a major learning area in the early grades and sought to give greater instructional attention to essential competencies through a less congested curriculum. Its implementation reflects the need for young learners to establish firm foundations before they encounter more demanding academic tasks in the succeeding grade levels (Department of Education, 2024). The passage of Republic Act No. 12028 further established the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program

as a national intervention for learners who are below the required proficiency levels. The law covers reading competencies from Grades 1 to 10, gives priority to learners from Kindergarten to Grade 6, and calls for organized tutorial sessions, appropriate assessment, trained learning facilitators, and learner-centered intervention plans. These provisions recognize that reading difficulties require planned support based on the actual needs and progress of learners rather than a single activity applied to an entire class (Congress of the Philippines, 2024).

Despite national programs and established instructional principles, the quality and frequency of reading support may differ across classrooms. Grade 1 teachers work with learners who vary in language exposure, preschool experience, confidence, attention, vocabulary, and access to reading materials at home. A support practice that helps one learner may require adjustment for another. Teachers must therefore make daily decisions about the texts to use, the questions to ask, the grouping of learners, and the amount of guidance needed during reading activities. Examining these practices alongside the literacy readiness of Grade 1 learners can provide a clearer picture of the support children receive and the skills they demonstrate at the beginning of formal reading instruction.

This study examine early reading comprehension support and the literacy readiness of learners at Cauayan South Central School. It is grounded in the view that reading readiness grows through suitable instruction, meaningful interaction with texts, and responsive assistance from teachers. By identifying the forms of support provided and the literacy abilities demonstrated by Grade 1 learners, the study may offer evidence for improving classroom reading activities, selecting appropriate learning materials, organizing supplementary instruction, and assisting children who require closer guidance. The findings may also help teachers develop reading experiences that are structured enough to build foundational skills while remaining engaging, understandable, and appropriate for young learners.

Literature Review

Foundational Literacy Skills and Reading Readiness

Literacy readiness among Grade 1 learners rests on a group of connected abilities that prepare children to understand how spoken language relates to printed text. These abilities include phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, vocabulary, rapid naming, and the capacity to retain and process verbal information. Phonological awareness allows children to notice and manipulate parts of spoken words, while letter-sound knowledge helps them connect these sounds with written symbols. When these abilities are weak, learners may struggle to decode words accurately, which can limit the attention they give to meaning during reading. In a longitudinal study involving linguistically diverse children, Wealer et al. (2022) found that phonological awareness was the strongest unique predictor of Grade 1 reading and spelling performance, followed by letter-sound knowledge. Their findings indicate that readiness should not be judged only by whether a child can recite the alphabet or recognize familiar words. Teachers need to examine how well learners can identify sounds, blend phonemes, connect letters with sounds, and apply these abilities while reading. Such information can guide the selection of suitable activities, including sound games, letter matching, guided decoding, and short connected texts. Strengthening these basic abilities gives Grade 1 learners a more stable foundation for reading words and understanding simple passages.

Interactive Story Reading and Comprehension Development

Interactive story reading provides young learners with opportunities to express ideas, examine illustrations, answer questions, and construct meaning with guidance from the teacher. Instead of allowing children to remain passive listeners, the teacher may pause during a story to ask what happened, why a character acted in a particular way, or what might happen next. Questions of this kind help learners distinguish stated information from ideas that must be inferred. Picture books are particularly useful in Grade 1 because illustrations can support children who are still developing word-reading accuracy. Grolig et al. (2020) conducted a cluster-randomized intervention using dialogic reading and wordless picture books. The intervention improved children's literal and inferential narrative comprehension as well as the breadth and depth of their vocabulary. The effect on inferential

comprehension was still evident when the children entered formal reading instruction. This finding suggests that comprehension can be developed even before learners become independent readers. In a Grade 1 classroom, interactive reading may include prediction, picture interpretation, sequencing, retelling, vocabulary explanation, and questions about characters, events, causes, and outcomes. These practices help children develop coherent mental representations of stories and encourage them to explain their understanding using their own words rather than merely repeat memorized details.

Home Literacy Environment and Family Support

The reading development of Grade 1 learners is influenced by the literacy experiences available beyond the classroom. A supportive home literacy environment may include access to age-appropriate books, storytelling, conversations about school lessons, shared reading, assistance with simple reading tasks, and encouragement from parents or caregivers. The presence of books alone, however, does not guarantee that children will develop strong comprehension. The manner in which adults participate in literacy activities and communicate expectations can have a greater influence than the number of materials found at home. Dong et al. (2020), through a meta-analysis of 59 studies, identified a moderate positive relationship between the home literacy environment and children's reading comprehension. Parental involvement in literacy activities and parental expectations showed stronger relationships with comprehension than the availability of home literacy resources. This distinction is important for schools serving families with varying access to printed materials. Effective home support does not always require expensive books or formal tutoring. Parents may discuss pictures, listen to a child retell a story, ask questions about a short passage, practice familiar words, or connect a story with everyday experiences. Communication between teachers and families can also help ensure that home reading activities are manageable, age-appropriate, and consistent with the learner's needs. Family involvement therefore becomes more useful when it is active, purposeful, and responsive to the child's developing abilities.

Progress Monitoring and Responsive Reading Support

Grade 1 learners enter school with different levels of language exposure, print knowledge, vocabulary, decoding ability, and confidence. Because these differences may change during the school year, reading support should be informed by regular evidence of learner progress. Progress monitoring may include brief checks of letter-sound knowledge, word reading, oral reading, vocabulary, listening comprehension, retelling, and responses to literal and inferential questions. The purpose is not simply to record scores but to determine which learners are progressing, which skills remain difficult, and what type of support should follow. Xuan et al. (2022) synthesized 48 studies involving 116,051 learners and found that formative assessment had a positive, although modest, effect on reading achievement. The effect was also stronger when formative assessment was combined with differentiated instruction, showing the value of using assessment evidence to adjust teaching. At the Grade 1 level, this may involve regrouping learners, simplifying or increasing text difficulty, providing additional modeling, repeating vocabulary instruction, or offering more guided practice. Francotte et al. (2023) added that reading-monitoring tools must be useful and flexible without placing an unreasonable workload on teachers. Assessment practices are therefore more likely to support learning when they are simple enough for regular classroom use and detailed enough to reveal specific reading needs. Consistent monitoring can help teachers provide timely assistance before early reading difficulties become firmly established.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a learner-linked analytic cross-sectional design. This design connected two forms of evidence gathered during the same data collection period. The first consisted of documented reading comprehension support received by each participating learner during classroom reading sessions, while the second consisted of literacy readiness demonstrated through an individual performance-based assessment. No

instructional condition was introduced or withheld, and the existing reading practices of the Grade 1 classes were allowed to proceed without experimental manipulation. The design moved beyond a conventional perception survey because the main variables were measured through direct observation, instructional records, and learner performance rather than through self-reported responses from young children. It permitted the researcher to determine whether differences in the amount and quality of early reading comprehension support were associated with differences in literacy readiness. The use of a nonexperimental quantitative structure was suitable because the study examined naturally occurring conditions and estimated relationships without assigning participants to treatment groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Locale

The investigation was conducted at Cauayan South Central School, located along Mabini Street, District 1, Cauayan City, Isabela. The school served as the single research site because the inquiry was specifically concerned with the reading experiences and literacy readiness of its Grade 1 learners. Classroom observations were completed during the regular reading periods assigned by the teachers, while individual literacy assessments were administered in a quiet and familiar area within the school. Conducting the assessment inside the school reduced the need to transfer young learners to an unfamiliar setting and allowed the researcher to gather evidence under conditions close to their ordinary learning environment. Coordination with the school administration ensured that the activities did not interrupt major examinations, school programs, or essential classroom instruction.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were Grade 1 learners who were officially enrolled at Cauayan South Central School during the conduct of the study. Teachers assisted in coordinating schedules and confirming instructional records, but they were not treated as respondents, and no personal or professional profile of teachers or learners was included in the analysis. Proportionate stratified random sampling was applied, with each Grade 1 section serving as a separate stratum. The official class registers were used as the sampling frame, and the proportion selected from each section reflected its share of the total Grade 1 enrolment. Learners were chosen through computer-generated random numbers after the required parental consent forms had been secured. Eligibility required regular participation in classroom reading activities, written permission from a parent or legal guardian, and the learner's verbal or written assent. Learners who were absent during the scheduled assessment were given reasonable make-up opportunities. Records that lacked either the reading support measure or the literacy readiness assessment were not entered into the relationship analysis.

Research Instrument

The study used the Learner-Linked Early Reading Support and Readiness Battery, which was developed for the specific constructs examined in the investigation. It contained two complementary instruments. The first was the Early Reading Comprehension Support Record, which documented the support received by each learner during scheduled reading activities. Its indicators covered comprehension modeling and questioning, vocabulary and oral language scaffolding, guided interaction with texts, and feedback or responsive assistance. Each indicator was rated through a four-point evidence scale based on the consistency and quality with which the support was observed. The record was completed across more than one reading session so that the score did not depend on a single classroom encounter.

The second component was the Grade 1 Literacy Readiness Performance Assessment. It contained oral and print-based tasks that measured phonological awareness, letter-sound application, beginning word recognition, oral vocabulary, listening comprehension, story sequencing, and understanding of short age-appropriate texts. Items were scored using predetermined criteria. A score of zero indicated that the learner did not demonstrate the required response, a score of one reflected a partially correct response or a response produced with prompting, and a score of two indicated an accurate and independent response. Instructions were delivered

orally, and practice items were provided to ensure that the learners understood the required task before the scored items were administered.

The initial instruments were reviewed by a panel composed of specialists in early literacy education, Grade 1 instruction, language teaching, and educational measurement. The validators examined the relevance, clarity, developmental suitability, and alignment of every item with the study variables. Their ratings were summarized through the Item-Level Content Validity Index and the Scale-Level Content Validity Index using the average method. The item-level values ranged from .83 to 1.00, while the scale-level content validity index was .95 for the reading support record and .96 for the literacy readiness assessment. These results indicated that the retained indicators adequately represented the intended constructs. Comments from the validators also led to the simplification of several directions, replacement of unfamiliar words, and revision of illustrations that could have produced ambiguous responses. Content validation was completed systematically because a favorable reliability coefficient alone could not establish that an instrument represented the intended domain (Yusoff, 2019).

A pilot test was conducted in another public elementary school with characteristics comparable to those of the research locale. The learners who joined the pilot administration were not included in the main study. The pilot process examined the clarity of directions, suitability of the vocabulary, administration time, scoring procedures, and ability of the items to distinguish different levels of performance. The Early Reading Comprehension Support Record produced an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92, with domain coefficients ranging from .84 to .90. The Grade 1 Literacy Readiness Performance Assessment yielded an overall Cronbach's alpha of .89, while its component coefficients ranged from .81 to .88. These coefficients showed satisfactory internal consistency, although alpha was interpreted together with the content structure and item review rather than as the sole evidence of instrument quality (Taber, 2018).

Two trained raters independently coded a portion of the pilot classroom observations to examine the consistency of observational scoring. A two-way random-effects intraclass correlation coefficient based on absolute agreement was calculated. The resulting ICC of .87 indicated good agreement between the raters. Differences in scoring were discussed during a calibration meeting, and the scoring guide was refined before the main observations began. The form of ICC and its interpretation were specified because different ICC models reflected different assumptions about raters and measurement agreement (Koo & Li, 2016).

Data Gathering

Written authorization was obtained from the appropriate school authorities before any contact with the participants. After approval had been granted, the researcher met with the Grade 1 teachers to explain the purpose of the study, the classroom observation procedure, the assessment schedule, and the limits of their participation. Parents or legal guardians received an information sheet and consent form written in clear language. The learners were also given an age-appropriate explanation of the activities and were asked whether they were willing to participate.

Before the main collection period, the observers completed training sessions using sample classroom situations and the finalized scoring guide. Practice ratings were compared, discussed, and corrected until the observers applied the criteria consistently. Reading support was then recorded during regular classroom reading periods. Observations were conducted on separate school days to reduce the likelihood that an unusual lesson or temporary classroom condition determined the support score. The researcher maintained a learner-linked coding sheet so that the instructional support received by each sampled learner could be matched with the corresponding literacy assessment without writing the learner's name in the analysis file.

The literacy readiness assessment was administered individually. The researcher established rapport before beginning the scored tasks and allowed the learner to complete the practice items first. Directions were repeated when necessary, but no assistance was given that revealed the correct answer. Short pauses were permitted when the learner showed fatigue or discomfort. The assessment ended when a learner expressed a clear desire to stop. Completed instruments were checked on the same day for missing entries, unclear markings, and

scoring inconsistencies. Data were entered using assigned identification codes, and a second review of the electronic file was completed against the original scoring sheets to minimize encoding errors.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed a distribution-sensitive approach. Initial screening examined missing paired records, impossible values, score ranges, floor effects, ceiling effects, and the shape of the readiness score distribution. The reading support and literacy readiness results were summarized through the median, interquartile range, mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, and bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals. The median and interquartile range received greater emphasis because literacy assessment scores were bounded and could show clustering at the lower or upper ends of the scale.

Bootstrapped quantile regression served as the principal inferential treatment. This method estimated the relationship between early reading comprehension support and literacy readiness at the 25th, 50th, and 75th conditional quantiles of the readiness distribution. The 25th quantile represented learners performing toward the lower portion of the readiness distribution, the median represented learners near the middle, and the 75th quantile represented those performing toward the upper portion. The method therefore determined whether reading support had the same association across readiness levels rather than reducing the entire result to a single average effect. Quantile regression was selected because it remained informative when the outcome was non-normal, contained unequal variation, or showed different patterns across its distribution (Konstantopoulos et al., 2019).

Grade 1 section was treated as the clustering unit because learners from the same classroom shared instructional experiences and could not be regarded as entirely independent observations. Cluster-resampled bootstrapping with 5,000 replications was applied when estimating the standard errors and confidence intervals. This procedure preserved the classroom grouping during resampling and reduced the risk of overly narrow confidence intervals arising from the nested structure of the data. Cluster bootstrapping offered a defensible alternative when educational data contained a limited number of naturally occurring groups (Huang, 2018).

The analysis reported the unstandardized quantile regression coefficient, bootstrap standard error, 95 percent confidence interval, and pseudo coefficient of determination for each quantile. A relationship was interpreted as statistically supported when the bootstrap confidence interval for the coefficient did not include zero. Differences among the coefficients at the three quantiles were also examined through a bootstrap slope-equality test. This comparison showed whether the association between reading support and literacy readiness was stronger among learners with lower, middle, or higher readiness scores. No profile variables were introduced as covariates because personal characteristics were outside the stated purpose of the study.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed safeguards appropriate for research involving young children. Participation began only after institutional authorization, written parental or guardian consent, and learner assent had been obtained. Parents and learners were informed that participation was voluntary and that refusal or withdrawal carried no effect on grades, class standing, access to reading activities, or relationship with the school. The teachers were not informed of individual assessment results while classroom grading was in progress, which prevented the research scores from influencing academic marks.

The assessment tasks were brief, age-appropriate, and limited to activities ordinarily associated with beginning literacy. No learner was subjected to embarrassment, public comparison, or negative labeling based on performance. Assessments were conducted individually, and feedback was expressed in encouraging and neutral language. When a learner appeared tired, anxious, or unwilling to continue, the session was paused or discontinued without penalty.

Names were removed from the working dataset and replaced with identification codes. Consent forms were stored separately from observation records and assessment scores. Electronic data were kept in a password-protected file accessible only to the researcher and authorized research personnel, while printed materials were secured in a locked storage area. Results were reported in aggregate form so that individual learners, teachers, and sections could not be identified. Research files were retained only for the period required by the approving

institution and were disposed of securely after that period. Any learner who appeared to require additional reading assistance was referred through the appropriate school process without attaching a diagnostic label or disclosing the learner's result to unauthorized persons.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Level of Early Reading Comprehension Support Received by Grade 1 Learners*

Reading Support Dimension	Median	IQR	Mean	SD	95% Bootstrap CI	Interpretation
Comprehension modeling and questioning	3.31	0.50	3.27	0.45	3.18 to 3.36	Consistently evident
Vocabulary and oral language scaffolding	3.12	0.56	3.10	0.48	3.00 to 3.20	Evident
Guided interaction with texts	3.35	0.44	3.32	0.41	3.24 to 3.40	Consistently evident
Feedback and responsive assistance	2.84	0.63	2.87	0.55	2.76 to 2.98	Evident
Overall reading comprehension support	3.22	0.53	3.14	0.47	3.06 to 3.22	Evident

Note. Scale interpretation: 3.25 to 4.00 = Consistently evident; 2.50 to 3.24 = Evident; 1.75 to 2.49 = Partly evident; 1.00 to 1.74 = Rarely evident. IQR = interquartile range; SD = standard deviation; CI = confidence interval.

Table 1 shows that early reading comprehension support was evident overall, with a mean of 3.14 and a median of 3.22. The relatively narrow confidence interval indicated that the observed level of support was reasonably stable across the participating learners. The result suggested that the learners commonly experienced teacher-guided reading practices, although the support was not equally strong across all dimensions.

Guided interaction with texts obtained the highest mean of 3.32. This indicated that teachers regularly involved learners in activities such as discussing illustrations, answering questions, sequencing story events, making predictions, and retelling short texts. Comprehension modeling and questioning also received a high mean of 3.27, showing that teachers frequently demonstrated how meaning could be constructed from a story or passage. These results reflected a classroom environment in which reading was not confined to recognizing or pronouncing printed words.

Feedback and responsive assistance received the lowest mean of 2.87 and the largest standard deviation of 0.55. Although it was still interpreted as evident, this result indicated that individualized correction, additional prompting, repeated explanation, and adjustment of support were less consistently experienced by some learners. The variation suggested that learners who answered slowly or showed difficulty might not always have received the same depth of follow-up assistance as learners who responded more readily.

The results showed that the classroom reading program had a sound base in guided text interaction but required stronger learner-specific feedback. First-grade literacy instruction often involves differences in the time, materials, and instructional routines available across lessons, which may result in uneven opportunities for individualized support (Pilonieta et al., 2024). An integrated approach is particularly important for struggling learners because comprehension, decoding, vocabulary, and fluency need to be taught together rather than as unrelated skills. Learners who do not respond sufficiently to whole-class instruction may require more focused and data-informed assistance within the classroom (Solari et al., 2017).

Table 2. *Literacy Readiness Performance of Grade 1 Learners*

Literacy Readiness Component	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile	Mean	SD	95% Bootstrap CI	Interpretation
Phonological awareness	61.00	73.00	83.00	71.46	15.28	68.39 to 74.42	Developing as expected
Letter-sound application	68.00	79.00	86.00	76.83	14.05	74.01 to 79.50	Developing as expected

Beginning word recognition	51.00	64.00	76.00	63.27	16.44	59.98 to 66.46	Emerging
Oral vocabulary	58.00	70.00	77.00	68.92	14.87	65.91 to 71.78	Developing as expected
Listening comprehension	48.00	62.00	72.00	61.58	17.36	58.05 to 64.91	Emerging
Story sequencing and short-text understanding	46.00	60.00	71.00	59.74	18.11	56.03 to 63.17	Emerging
Overall literacy readiness	55.30	67.00	77.50	66.97	16.02	64.12 to 69.57	Developing as expected

Note. Instrument-based interpretation: 80.00 to 100.00 = Highly developed; 65.00 to 79.99 = Developing as expected; 50.00 to 64.99 = Emerging; below 50.00 = Requiring focused support. The classifications were used for instructional interpretation and were not diagnostic labels.

The overall literacy readiness mean was 66.97, which was interpreted as developing as expected. The median score of 67.00 was close to the mean, suggesting that the middle of the distribution was not greatly distorted by exceptionally high or low scores. However, the interquartile results showed a meaningful difference between learners. The lower quarter had overall readiness scores of approximately 55.33 or below, while the upper quarter obtained scores of approximately 77.50 or above. Thus, the average result did not mean that all learners had reached a similar level of readiness.

Letter-sound application emerged as the strongest component, with a mean of 76.83. The learners generally demonstrated the ability to connect familiar printed letters with their corresponding sounds. Phonological awareness also obtained a developing level, indicating that many learners could identify, separate, or combine sounds in spoken words. These skills gave learners an important basis for decoding simple printed words.

Beginning word recognition obtained a lower mean of 63.27. This finding indicated that some learners could identify letters and sounds but experienced difficulty applying this knowledge quickly and accurately when reading complete words. Knowledge of an individual sound did not always result in successful blending, automatic word recognition, or sustained reading across a sentence.

The weakest results appeared in story sequencing and short-text understanding, with a mean of 59.74, followed by listening comprehension, with a mean of 61.58. These findings showed that the more serious difficulty was not limited to print recognition. A considerable group of learners also struggled to organize story events, recall relationships between ideas, identify causes and outcomes, and explain the meaning of a short passage. Learners could therefore show partial mastery of letter sounds while remaining unprepared for comprehension tasks that required oral language, memory, vocabulary, and integration of information.

This pattern supported the need to examine both code-related and meaning-related skills when determining literacy readiness. Longitudinal evidence has shown that word decoding and listening comprehension jointly contribute to reading comprehension, although their relative influence can vary as children develop (Lervåg et al., 2018). The lower performance in listening and short-text comprehension indicated that phonics instruction alone would not be sufficient for the learners who had difficulty making sense of connected language. Vocabulary conversations, oral retelling, teacher read-alouds, sequencing activities, and explicit comprehension questions remained necessary alongside word-reading instruction.

Table 3. *Bootstrapped Quantile Regression of Literacy Readiness on Early Reading Comprehension Support*

Readiness Quantile	Regression Coefficient, B	Bootstrap SE	95% Cluster-Bootstrap CI	p-value	Pseudo R ²	Decision
25th quantile	9.72	2.29	5.26 to 14.11	.001	.21	Significant
50th quantile	7.96	1.78	4.46 to 11.39	.002	.24	Significant
75th quantile	4.41	1.52	1.39 to 7.34	.012	.13	Significant

Note. The coefficients represented the expected change in literacy readiness percentage points for every one-point increase in early reading comprehension support. Estimates were based on 5,000 cluster-resampled bootstrap replications. Section membership was preserved during resampling. A coefficient was considered statistically supported when its 95% confidence interval did not include zero.

Table 3 demonstrates that early reading comprehension support had a positive and statistically significant association with literacy readiness at all three examined quantiles. Each confidence interval remained above zero, showing that the relationship was supported among learners in the lower, middle, and upper portions of the readiness distribution.

At the 25th quantile, a one-point increase in reading comprehension support was associated with a 9.72-point increase in the conditional literacy readiness score. This was the largest coefficient among the three quantiles. The result indicated that stronger reading support was particularly important among learners situated toward the lower end of the readiness distribution. These learners appeared to gain the greatest advantage from clear modeling, guided text interaction, vocabulary assistance, questioning, and responsive feedback.

At the median, a one-point increase in support corresponded to an estimated 7.96-point increase in literacy readiness. The median model also produced the highest pseudo R^2 of .24, indicating that reading comprehension support accounted for a meaningful portion of the differences in readiness among learners near the center of the distribution. Although other factors still contributed to readiness, classroom support was an important instructional condition associated with learner performance.

The coefficient at the 75th quantile remained positive and significant but was smaller at 4.41. Learners in the upper portion of the distribution already possessed stronger literacy foundations. Additional support was still beneficial, but their readiness scores showed less variation associated with support than the scores of learners who began with weaker or moderate readiness.

The quantile-specific findings provided more information than a single mean regression coefficient would have produced. Quantile regression allows an educational relationship to be examined at different parts of an outcome distribution and can reveal that the same predictor does not operate equally among lower-performing and higher-performing learners (Konstantopoulos et al., 2019). Reading-related predictors have also been found to differ in their usefulness across learner performance levels, which supports the examination of distributional rather than average relationships alone (Cho et al., 2018).

The findings did not establish that reading support alone caused higher readiness because the research design was nonexperimental and both variables were measured during the same period. Nevertheless, the consistency of the positive coefficients across the three quantiles provided strong evidence that learners who received more sustained and responsive comprehension support tended to demonstrate stronger literacy readiness.

Table 4. *Bootstrap Tests of Differences Between Quantile Regression Coefficients*

Quantile Comparison	Difference Between Coefficients	Bootstrap SE	95% Cluster-Bootstrap CI	p-value	Interpretation
25th versus 50th quantile	1.76	1.55	-1.24 to 4.88	.247	Not significant
25th versus 75th quantile	5.31	2.13	1.12 to 9.44	.014	Significant
50th versus 75th quantile	3.55	1.63	0.39 to 6.80	.031	Significant

Note. Omnibus bootstrap slope-equality test: Wald $\chi^2(2) = 7.84, p = .020$.

The omnibus test was statistically significant, indicating that the association between early reading comprehension support and literacy readiness was not equal across all parts of the readiness distribution. The comparison between the 25th and 50th quantiles was not significant. This indicated that support had a comparably strong association among learners with lower readiness and those near the middle of the distribution.

The difference between the 25th and 75th quantiles was significant. The coefficient at the lower quantile was 5.31 points larger than that at the upper quantile. The difference between the median and the 75th quantile was also significant. These results confirmed that reading comprehension support was more strongly associated with readiness among learners who had not yet reached the upper portion of the performance distribution.

The stronger lower-quantile result was the most educationally important finding of the study. It indicated that improvements in classroom support were associated with the largest readiness differences among learners who were most likely to experience difficulty. These learners needed more than the general presence of reading activities. They required explicit modeling, repeated oral language practice, closely guided reading, corrective feedback, manageable texts, and frequent opportunities to explain their understanding.

The finding also helped explain why feedback and responsive assistance, the weakest support dimension in Table 1, deserved attention. Lower-performing learners were the group most strongly associated with increased support, yet individualized assistance was the least consistent practice observed. Strengthening this dimension could therefore address both the principal instructional weakness and the group showing the greatest need. Integrated first-grade reading support should combine foundational instruction and comprehension while using learner performance to decide when additional or more intensive assistance is required (Solari et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

Early reading comprehension support was positively associated with the literacy readiness of Grade 1 learners, with the strongest relationship observed among those who performed at the lower end of the readiness distribution. Although the learners generally demonstrated developing literacy readiness, weaknesses remained in beginning word recognition, listening comprehension, story sequencing, and understanding short texts. Classroom support was evident, particularly in guided interaction and comprehension questioning, but feedback and individualized assistance were less consistently provided. It was therefore recommended that teachers sustain whole-class reading instruction while strengthening differentiated support for learners who require closer guidance. Reading sessions should include explicit vocabulary teaching, repeated oral language activities, guided retelling, sequencing tasks, short-text comprehension exercises, and immediate corrective feedback. Regular progress monitoring should also be used to adjust learner grouping, pacing, text difficulty, and intervention activities. The school may further support teachers by providing suitable beginning reading materials, structured intervention time, and professional development on responsive literacy instruction so that learners with emerging skills receive timely and focused assistance before their difficulties become more persistent.

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