

Examining the Macro Skills of Education Students at Siena College of Taytay for the Modification of Language Courses in Preparation for Teaching

Josefina Vera-Calado^{1*}, Daisy Jane C. Calado¹ and Joseph B. Serpajuan¹

¹Siena College of Taytay

*joveracalado0225@gmail.com

Date Submitted:

April 16, 2026

Date Accepted:

May 28, 2026

Date Published:

June 09, 2026

DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.20612372

ABSTRACT

This diagnostic study examined the macro skills of education students at Siena College of Taytay as a basis for strengthening language courses in preparation for teaching. It assessed listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking, and writing among 30 participating students across four year levels: six freshmen, 12 sophomores, five juniors, and seven seniors. A descriptive diagnostic design was used. Listening and reading tasks were adapted from the Bader Reading and Language Inventory, while speaking and writing were assessed through timed prompts and performance outputs. Scores, output completion, and recurring patterns in student responses were reviewed by year level. The findings revealed uneven skill development across the cohort. Listening comprehension required particular attention among freshmen and sophomores, while reading performance

generally improved at the junior and senior levels but remained variable. Oral and written outputs showed that several students, especially at the lower year levels, needed further support in following instructions, organizing ideas, developing coherent responses, and applying language conventions. The stronger outcomes observed among upper-year students suggested that continued exposure to language-focused coursework contributed to skill development. The study concludes that a structured first-year primer, reinforced by regular diagnostic assessment, targeted language activities, and post-assessment monitoring, can provide a practical foundation for curriculum realignment. The findings may guide the modification of language courses so that pre-service teachers progressively develop the communication skills needed to model accurate and effective language use in the classroom.

Keywords: *Bader assessment tool; curriculum realignment; language macro skills; learning poverty; pre-service teachers; teacher education*

INTRODUCTION

Foundational language competence remains central to educational quality because learners rely on reading, listening, speaking, and writing to access content, participate in classroom interaction, and communicate understanding. The World Bank defines learning poverty as the inability to read and understand a simple text by age 10 and emphasizes that reading is a gateway to learning across subject areas (World Bank, 2021). In the Philippines, the World Bank's 2024 learning poverty brief and a subsequent 2026 education support announcement continued to identify foundational literacy as an urgent concern, with approximately nine in ten 10-year-olds unable to read and understand an age-appropriate text (World Bank, 2024, 2026). Although these indicators refer to children in basic education, they have direct implications for teacher preparation: future teachers must be able to model, explain, and scaffold the language skills that learners need to overcome persistent literacy gaps.

The concern is also reflected in international assessment evidence. In the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 country note, students in the Philippines performed below the OECD average in reading, mathematics, and science, while the average reading performance in 2022 remained broadly similar to the country's 2018 result (OECD, 2023). These findings reinforce the need to strengthen the preparation of teachers who will support learners across different subject areas. Communication competence is not limited to English teachers. Every teacher needs to listen carefully, provide clear oral explanations, interpret texts, construct coherent written materials, and model appropriate language use during instruction.

Teacher education programs are therefore expected to develop both pedagogical knowledge and the communication capacities needed for classroom practice. Commission on Higher Education policies for teacher education emphasize the preparation of competent graduates who can facilitate learning effectively and communicate appropriately in professional contexts (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2017a, 2017b). The relationship between teacher knowledge and classroom practice has long been recognized in language teacher education: what pre-service teachers know and can perform shapes the quality of learning opportunities they create for their students (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Richards, 1990).

At Siena College of Taytay, faculty members observed that education students displayed potential and willingness to learn but varied in their ability to produce accurate spoken and written outputs and to retrieve information from listening and reading tasks. These observations prompted a diagnostic assessment across the four macro skills. The purpose was not to label students but to identify skill areas requiring curricular attention. By examining the performance patterns of education students from the freshman to senior levels, the study sought to provide an evidence-based basis for modifying language courses, designing bridging activities, and monitoring students' progress as they prepare for the teaching profession.

Specifically, the study assessed the listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking, and writing performance of education students across year levels; identified recurring strengths and difficulties evident in their responses; and proposed curricular directions that could strengthen language courses and support the progressive development of pre-service teachers' communication competence.

Literature Review

Macro Skills and the Preparation of Pre-Service Teachers

Language competence involves the coordinated development of receptive skills, particularly listening and reading, and productive skills, particularly speaking and writing. These skills reinforce one another. Listening supports the processing of oral information and classroom directions, while reading enables learners to retrieve, interpret, and evaluate written information. Speaking and writing allow learners to organize ideas, express meaning, and demonstrate understanding. Language learning is therefore strengthened when these skills are taught and assessed as interconnected competencies rather than as isolated tasks (Council of Europe, 2020; Nation & Newton, 2009).

For pre-service teachers, macro skills are professional tools. Classroom teaching requires the ability to explain concepts clearly, ask purposeful questions, interpret learners' responses, prepare written materials, and provide accurate language models. Gutierrez and Espique (2020) observed that the competencies of pre-service language teachers are affected by the distribution of course content and the amount of time provided for practice and mastery. Their findings support the need to revisit curricular opportunities for deliberate language development rather than assume that tertiary students have already mastered foundational communication skills.

Earlier studies likewise show that communication competence among pre-service teachers is not uniform. Kana (2015) reported differences in communication skills according to selected student characteristics and educational experiences. Mufidah (2019) identified challenges in teaching performance related to content mastery, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy. These findings are relevant because teachers are expected to model appropriate language while facilitating learning. Continuous practice remains important: communication skills can be developed, but improvement must be reinforced through repeated application and feedback (Aspegren, 1999).

Foundational Literacy, Reading, and Listening Comprehension

Reading is a foundational skill that supports learning across the curriculum. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) emphasized that meaningful learning involves the ability to transfer understanding across situations. This transfer depends partly on learners' capacity to comprehend texts, identify relevant information, and connect ideas. Grabe and Stoller (2020) similarly explain that effective reading requires purposeful processing and the strategic use of comprehension skills. For future teachers, these capacities are essential because they must interpret academic materials and guide learners toward increasingly independent comprehension.

Listening comprehension is equally important in educational settings. Classroom participation requires learners to process oral explanations, follow instructions, identify details, and retain information. Nation and Newton (2009) stress that listening development benefits from structured exposure, focused practice, and opportunities to respond meaningfully to spoken language. Diagnostic listening activities are particularly useful because they reveal whether students can retrieve information and construct meaning after hearing a text, rather than merely recognize isolated words.

Local research also supports the need for sustained intervention. Mapalad and Bautista (2021) reported challenges in English macro skills among senior high school students in Balayan, Batangas and recommended the strengthening of programs designed to develop these competencies. Such findings matter for higher education because incoming pre-service teachers bring varied prior learning experiences. A teacher education institution may therefore need diagnostic assessment and bridging support to address uneven preparation at entry.

Speaking, Writing, and Curriculum Responsiveness

Speaking and writing require learners to transform ideas into coherent, accurate, and audience-appropriate messages. Oral communication involves more than fluency; it also requires organization, clarity, vocabulary control, and the ability to respond to a task within a given context. Writing similarly involves planning, sentence construction, vocabulary choice, grammar, mechanics, and revision. Hyland (2019) emphasizes that writing instruction must provide learners with meaningful tasks, explicit guidance, and feedback that supports development over time.

The development of productive skills is especially relevant for pre-service teachers because teaching involves frequent oral explanation and written communication. Students who struggle to organize ideas, follow task requirements, or apply language conventions may experience difficulty when they prepare lesson materials or communicate classroom content. Structured performance tasks, rubrics, guided practice, and feedback can help make these areas visible and teachable. A curriculum that responds to diagnostic findings can allocate practice where students need it most rather than rely solely on general course coverage.

This study addresses a practical gap by using an initial diagnostic assessment to inform course modification at Siena College of Taytay. Instead of treating macro-skill development as a peripheral concern, it positions communication competence as a continuing responsibility of teacher education. The assessment results provide a local basis for planning a first-year primer, differentiated activities, and periodic monitoring that can support students as they progress through the program.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive diagnostic design with quantitative and qualitative elements. Quantitative data consisted of students' scores and task-completion patterns in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Qualitative review focused on recurring characteristics of the oral and written responses, including coherence, depth of content, compliance with task instructions, and the application of basic language conventions. The design was appropriate because the study aimed to identify current skill patterns and use them as a basis for curricular improvement rather than test a causal relationship.

Research Locale and Participants

The study was conducted at Siena College of Taytay. Assessment activities were administered over two weeks through face-to-face and online arrangements. The participants were education students from the freshman to senior levels. Total population sampling was intended so that students across year levels could participate in the diagnostic assessment. A total of 30 students completed at least part of the assessment: six freshmen, 12 sophomores, five juniors, and seven seniors. The freshman group consisted of six participants from an identified cohort of eight students.

Table 1. Distribution of participating education students by year level

Year Level	Number of Participants	Percentage
Freshman	6	20.00%
Sophomore	12	40.00%
Junior	5	16.67%
Senior	7	23.33%
Total	30	100.00%

Research Instruments

Listening and reading comprehension were assessed using level-appropriate passages adapted from the Bader Reading and Language Inventory (Bader & Pearce, 2013). Passage levels were assigned according to year level, with more advanced passages provided to upper-year students. For listening comprehension, the text was read aloud and students answered questions based on the information heard. For reading comprehension, students read assigned passages and responded to comprehension questions.

Speaking and writing were evaluated through performance tasks. For speaking, students prepared and delivered a short response on a selected topic. For writing, students produced a brief written composition based on a chosen prompt. The tasks were reviewed in relation to completion, clarity of ideas, coherence, and compliance with instructions. These outputs served as diagnostic evidence of students' productive language skills.

Data Gathering Procedure

The assessment was administered in four sessions to accommodate students who were unable to participate during the initial schedule. Students completed the receptive and productive skill tasks assigned to their year level. Oral outputs were submitted through recorded responses when necessary, while written outputs and comprehension answer sheets were collected for review. The researchers organized the scores by year level and examined recurring response patterns to identify areas for curricular reinforcement.

Data Analysis

Frequency distributions, score patterns, and task-completion information were used to describe student performance. Because the study involved a small diagnostic cohort and the listening and reading passages varied by year level, the analysis emphasized within-level patterns and instructional implications rather than direct statistical comparisons across all year levels. Speaking and writing outputs were also reviewed qualitatively to identify recurring difficulties in following instructions, organizing ideas, and applying language conventions.

Ethical Considerations

The assessment was undertaken for academic and curricular improvement purposes. Students' results were reviewed in aggregate form to identify program-level needs. Individual performance should be treated confidentially and used constructively to guide support, differentiated instruction, and future monitoring. The results should not be used to stigmatize students or make high-stakes decisions without additional validated assessment evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Listening Comprehension

Listening performance varied across year levels. Among the six freshmen, two students obtained a score of 5, three obtained 4, and one obtained 1. The distribution indicated that most freshmen retrieved some information from the oral text, but one student experienced substantial difficulty even though the text was read twice and delivered at a pace intended to support processing. Among sophomores, scores ranged from 2 to 8. Four students obtained 8, three obtained 7, two obtained 5, two obtained 3, and one obtained 2. This pattern showed that a considerable portion of the group performed relatively well, while several students still needed support in retaining and retrieving details from spoken texts.

Junior listening scores ranged from 5 to 8, with most results clustered between 6 and 8. Senior performance was more dispersed, ranging from 2 to 11. The wide variation among seniors suggested that progression to a higher year level did not automatically ensure consistent listening comprehension for all students. These results support the inclusion of explicit listening activities across the curriculum, such as guided note-taking, oral retelling, identification of key details, and response tasks after lectures or recorded texts. As Nation and Newton (2009) explain, listening develops through purposeful exposure and structured opportunities to process spoken language.

Table 2. Reported listening comprehension score distribution by year level

Year Level	Reported Maximum Score	Score Distribution (Score: Number of Students)
Freshman (n = 6)	5	5: 2; 4: 3; 1: 1
Sophomore (n = 12)	10	8: 4; 7: 3; 5: 2; 3: 2; 2: 1
Junior (n = 5)	10	8: 1; 7: 1; 6: 2; 5: 1
Senior (n = 7)	11	11: 1; 9: 1; 7: 1; 4: 1; 3: 1; 2: 2

Reading Comprehension

Reading performance generally showed stronger outcomes among junior and senior students, although variation remained within the groups. The junior students obtained scores of 11, 9, and 8, with two students obtaining 11. Among the seven seniors, one student obtained 11, two obtained 10, and the remaining students obtained 9, 8, 7, and 5. The pattern suggested that upper-year students had developed stronger reading comprehension, but the presence of lower scores also indicated that continued reinforcement remained necessary.

The lower-year results were more uneven. Freshman scores ranged from 0 to 8, with two students obtaining 7 and one obtaining 8, while other students obtained 3, 1, and 0. Sophomore results were clustered largely in the middle range. These findings support a structured first-year reading intervention that develops strategic comprehension, including identifying main ideas, retrieving supporting details, making inferences, and monitoring understanding. The results are consistent with the broader argument that reading competence must be taught deliberately and strengthened through repeated practice (Grabe & Stoller, 2020).

Table 3. Reported reading comprehension score distribution by year level

Year Level	Reported Passage Maximum	Score Distribution (Score: Number of Students)
Freshman (n = 6)	8*	8: 1; 7: 2; 3: 1; 1: 1; 0: 1
Sophomore (n = 12)	10	8: 1; 7: 1; 6: 2; 5: 5; 4: 1; 3: 1; one record for validation
Junior (n = 5)	11	11: 2; 9: 2; 8: 1
Senior (n = 7)	11	11: 1; 10: 2; 9: 1; 8: 1; 7: 1; 5: 1

Speaking and Writing Performance

The productive-skill tasks showed a developmental pattern but also revealed areas requiring closer curricular attention. Freshman speaking scores ranged from 6 to 10 among the five students who submitted a recorded response, while one student did not submit a speaking output. In writing, the freshmen encountered difficulty following the task requirement: although they were instructed to produce several sentences, the submitted responses were largely limited to a single sentence. This pattern indicated a need for foundational support in

interpreting instructions, expanding ideas, constructing connected sentences, and applying basic writing conventions.

The sophomore group showed promising oral performance in the narrative records, with most submitted speaking outputs receiving high scores, but incomplete submissions remained a concern. The junior and senior groups generally demonstrated stronger speaking and writing task completion. Among seniors, five students obtained a speaking score of 10, one obtained 9, and one obtained 7; in writing, six obtained 10 and one obtained 7. The upper-year results suggest that continued exposure to literature, speech, and writing activities may support development. However, some students still required additional time and confidence to complete communication tasks, indicating that productive skills should be reinforced throughout the program rather than concentrated in a single course.

Table 4. Conservative summary of speaking and writing patterns by year level

Year Level	Speaking Pattern	Writing Pattern
Freshman (n = 6)	Five submissions; scores ranged from 6 to 10; one missing output.	Outputs largely did not meet the required sentence length.
Sophomore (n = 12)	Narrative record indicates strong submitted outputs, with incomplete submissions noted.	Uneven task completion and incomplete submissions were reported.
Junior (n = 5)	All submitted; narrative scores ranged from 7 to 9.	All submitted; stronger performance reported, subject to raw-record confirmation.
Senior (n = 7)	All submitted; scores ranged from 7 to 10.	All submitted; six scored 10 and one scored 7.

Implications for Language Course Modification

The findings indicate that curriculum strengthening should begin at entry level and continue across the program. The greatest need is a first-year primer that reinforces listening comprehension, strategic reading, sentence development, grammar, writing conventions, and oral expression. Such a course can provide common foundations for students who enter teacher education with different prior learning experiences. It can also reduce the likelihood that later language courses must devote excessive time to foundational remediation.

The results also support periodic diagnostic assessment. A pre-assessment at the beginning of the academic year can guide differentiated instruction, while a post-assessment can determine whether targeted activities have improved performance. Macro skills should be integrated across relevant courses through purposeful listening tasks, reading-to-write activities, oral presentations, reflective writing, and feedback cycles. As Gutierrez and Espique (2020) observed, mastery is difficult to achieve when the time allotted for language competencies is insufficient. Curriculum realignment should therefore include sustained practice and monitoring rather than a one-time intervention.

Table 5. Proposed directions for language-course strengthening

Priority Area	Recommended Curriculum Response	Suggested Monitoring Evidence
Listening comprehension	Integrate oral retelling, guided note-taking, detail-retrieval activities, and response tasks after lectures or recorded texts.	Pre- and post-listening tasks; comprehension checks; retelling rubrics.
Reading comprehension	Provide a first-year primer on main ideas, supporting details, inferencing, vocabulary-in-context, and strategic reading.	Level-appropriate reading diagnostics; portfolio of reading responses.
Speaking	Increase short oral presentations, classroom simulations, peer feedback, and repeated practice using the medium of teaching and learning.	Speaking rubric; recorded performance tasks; reflective self-assessment.
Writing	Strengthen sentence development, paragraph coherence, grammar, mechanics, and revision through scaffolded writing tasks.	Writing rubric; before-and-after writing samples; error-pattern tracking.

Priority Area	Recommended Curriculum Response	Suggested Monitoring Evidence
Program monitoring	Administer regular diagnostic assessments and use results to adjust language courses and differentiated activities.	Annual diagnostic profile; course-level intervention reports; post-assessment results.

CONCLUSION

The diagnostic assessment showed that education students at Siena College of Taytay possessed developing macro skills but demonstrated uneven performance across listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Listening comprehension required particular reinforcement among lower-year students, while reading outcomes generally improved among junior and senior students but remained variable. Speaking and writing tasks showed that several students needed further support in following instructions, organizing ideas, developing coherent responses, and applying language conventions. The stronger performance observed among many upper-year students suggests that continued exposure to language-related coursework contributes to development, but progression alone does not ensure mastery for every learner.

The study affirms the value of using diagnostic evidence to guide curriculum modification. Strengthening language courses is not simply a remedial measure; it is a professional preparation strategy. Pre-service teachers need sufficient opportunities to practice and demonstrate accurate, confident, and context-appropriate communication so that they can model effective language use and facilitate learning across subject areas.

Recommendation

Siena College of Taytay may develop a structured first-year language primer that integrates listening comprehension, strategic reading, oral communication, grammar, and writing conventions. The primer should include scaffolded tasks, clear performance criteria, and opportunities for repeated practice and feedback. Language-focused courses may also be reviewed to ensure that macro skills are progressively reinforced across year levels rather than addressed only in isolated subjects.

The College of Education may administer regular pre-assessments and post-assessments to monitor development and guide differentiated instruction. Faculty members may use assessment profiles to identify students who need additional coaching, peer support, or enrichment. Oral and written tasks may be embedded in professional education courses so that students practice communication in contexts similar to actual teaching.

Before the manuscript is submitted for publication, the researchers should reconcile the original scoring sheets for the sophomore and junior speaking and writing distributions and verify the unmatched sophomore reading record. Future research may implement the proposed course modifications and compare baseline and post-intervention results using a larger cohort and clearly standardized scoring procedures.

References

- Aspegren, K. (1999). BEME Guide No. 2: Teaching and learning communication skills in medicine - A review with quality grading of articles. *Medical Teacher*, 21(6), 563-570. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421599978979>
- Bader, L. A., & Pearce, D. L. (2013). *Bader reading and language inventory (7th ed.)*. Pearson.
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school (Expanded ed.)*. National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/9853>
- Commission on Higher Education. (2017a). CMO No. 74, series of 2017: Policies, standards and guidelines for Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd).
- Commission on Higher Education. (2017b). CMO No. 75, series of 2017: Policies, standards and guidelines for Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd).
- Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment - Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(3), 397-417. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588114>
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2020). *Teaching and researching reading (3rd ed.)*. Routledge.

-
- Gutierrez, J. C., & Espique, F. P. (2020). Competencies of pre-service language teachers: Towards developing a language training program. *Philippine Education Research Journal*, 2020(1-2), 11-28.
- Hyland, K. (2019). *Second language writing* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kana, F. (2015). Investigation of pre-service teachers' communication skills. *The International Journal of Educational Researchers*, 6(3), 34-42.
- Mapalad, E., & Bautista, A. M. (2021). Macro skills in English of Grade 11 senior high school students in Balayan, Batangas: A guided learning. *Instabright International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(1).
- Mufidah, N. (2019). The development of pre-service teachers' teaching performance in the teaching practice program at English Department of State Islamic University of Antasari Banjarmasin. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 19(1).
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). *PISA 2022 results (Volumes I and II) - Country notes: Philippines*. OECD Publishing.
- Richards, J. C. (1990). *The language teaching matrix*. Cambridge University Press.
- World Bank. (2021, April 28). *What is learning poverty?*
- World Bank. (2024). *Philippines - Learning poverty brief 2024*.
- World Bank. (2026, April 3). *World Bank backs better learning for 21 million Filipino students*.