

# Effectiveness of Individualized-Contextualized Academic Reading Exercises (I-CARE)

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**Abstract:** The study explored on the effectiveness of the individualized-contextualized academic reading exercises in English V taking into account the perception of the English teachers as to the format, content and organization of I-CARE and the reading performance of pupils being the end-user of the material during the field testing. The study employed the descriptive-evaluative research design and was conducted at Tandag City Division during the S.Y 2017-2018. The field try-out of the material was conducted at Tandag Pilot Elementary School being the biggest and lead school of Tandag City. Findings of the study revealed that teachers found the material to be outstanding as revealed in their descriptive rating in the feedback form while pupils' reading performance was satisfactory for the material was utilized by the whole class and not by their reading level. It was also found out that a significant relationship existed in the perception of teachers and pupils relative to the I-CARE based on its format, content and organization.

**Keywords:** Academic, Contextualized, Effectiveness, Individualized, Reading Exercises, Reading Performance

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The trajectory of a learner's success begins in the elementary years. When these learners experience deficiencies, they may begin to disengage from school, especially as they move towards the upper academic years where they are faced with a multitude of academic and social challenges (Dynarski et al., 2008). However, the typical curriculum—usually centered on printed materials—is designed for a homogeneous group of students and is not able to meet different learner needs. Ralabate, P. K. (2011). Such a kind of design puts the burden on learners to adapt to inflexible curricula. In the implementation of the K-12 Program, providing these learners with individualized and contextualized reading material with instructional guidance has become a necessity to make them engaged learners. This is to guarantee that the materials utilized to reinforce the teaching and learning process appropriately address the learners' needs. To attain this, materials need to be aligned with the curriculum and should be designed to suit the learners' level. Access to reading materials is a key to learning outcomes, especially in developing countries. To develop automaticity, children need to be exposed to sufficient and appropriate text, and they need to be afforded the time and opportunity to practice reading in school and at home (Knowles & Smith, 2007). Suitable materials are necessary to give learners multiple means of representation of concepts, multiple means of engagement in learning the concepts, and multiple means of expression for them to demonstrate what they have learned. Appropriate design of reading materials will facilitate the learning process, support classroom instruction, and promote independent learning (Marinelli, 2011), provided that the content of the materials is appropriate for the context, as well as the age and reading level of the student. Content and readability are critically important to facilitating the learning process as well. In context with the present reading level of the learners in the locale of the study, the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PhilIRI) for S.Y. 2015–2016 in Tandag City Division revealed that the number of frustrated readers and the number of non-readers in elementary pupils were increasing.

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It was also found out that the scarcity of developmentally appropriate reading materials is one of the clamors of the teachers in the field with regards to the implementation of their reading program. This was based on an action research conducted in 2015 by the DepEd Tandag City Learning Resource Management and Development Section on the implementation of the DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), a reading program prescribed by the Department of Education (LRMDS Action Research, 2016). Hence, this study was instigated. The study is significant to the elementary school sector because it will give individualized-contextualized academic reading selections with the readability level indicated in each passage. Teachers and school administrators will benefit from the study as it identifies the comprehension level of each pupil. The study's findings may provide quality-assured reading material to supplement the scarcity of available reading materials. For the school reading coordinators, the findings and recommendations of the study may help them attain their goals in terms of maximization and utilization of the reading materials appropriate to their learners' needs.

## II- METHODS

This study used a descriptive-evaluative research design because it is an appraisal by nature, and the judgement of the three groups of respondents towards the material is the focus of this study. Descriptive research is the collection of data describing some phenomenon that may or may not be quantifiable, such as close-ended scales, open-ended survey questions, observation, and interviews. The purpose of the research is to evaluate or measure the results against some known or hypothesized standards. Hubbard (2016). The study included preliminary field testing of the material to test its effectiveness. A feedback form for the pupils was used to gather the perceptions of the learners as the end users of the material. The quantified results were utilized by the researcher in offering sound conclusions and recommendations as the basis for the enhanced I-CARE material. The I-CARE or Individualized – Contextualized Academic Reading Exercises is the proposed intervention materials in reading for Tandag City Division. All of the reading passages are arranged from level 1 to level 5

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according to its complexity guided with the Fog Index Readability Scale. In order to suit the learner's culture and environment, most of the reading passages are contextualized with emphasis on the local heritage and settings. To sustain the materials authenticity, illustrations and images are illustrated by select illustrators and artist with a contract of agreement with the researcher being the material's developer. The material also includes the Reading response journal for every learner to provide feedback on every reading activity. This is to test whether the selected reading passage is just right, too easy or too difficult for them to read. In the reading response journal, the learner has to record his/her performance level by indicating the score he/she obtained in every assessment after a reading passage been read. Aside from its reading performance score, the user will also give feedback on every selection whether it is best read with his/her friend, group, teacher, parent of him/her alone.

### III- RESULTS

Table 1 of the study presents the mean percentage scores of the learners who used the materials based on their reading response journal data. As underscored in Table 1, the overall reading performance of the learners in the following levels is as follows: level 1 has a 75.00% MPS with its descriptive category of satisfactory, level 2 MPS is 56.40% with its descriptive category of poor, level 3 passages have an MPS of 70.60% with its descriptive category of nearing mastery, while level 4 has an overall MPS of 87.00% with its descriptive category of very satisfactory. However, level 5 resulted in the poor descriptive category with an overall MPS of 56.00%. This simply means that the passages in levels 1 and 5 could not be fully understood by the whole class, being the end users of the materials, and need to be improved.

**Table 2. Reading Performance of the Learners based on the Individualized Contextualized Academic Reading Exercises**

Level 1	MPS	Descriptive Category
Passage 1	90.00	Very Satisfactory
Passage 2	77.00	Satisfactory
Passage 3	89.00	Very Satisfactory
Passage 4	78.00	Satisfactory
Passage 5	45.00	Poor
Overall MPS	75.00	Satisfactory
Level 2	MPS	Descriptive Category
Passage 1	80.00	Satisfactory
Passage 2	47.00	Poor
Passage 3	59.00	Poor
Passage 4	36.00	Poor
Passage 5	60.00	Nearing Mastery
Overall MPS	56.40	Poor
Level 3	MPS	Descriptive Category
Passage 1	60.00	Nearing Mastery
Passage 2	55.00	Poor
Passage 3	55.00	Poor
Passage 4	100.00	Excellent
Passage 5	83.00	Satisfactory

Overall MPS	70.60	Nearing Mastery
Level 4	MPS	Descriptive Category
Passage 1	76.00	Satisfactory
Passage 2	100.00	Excellent
Passage 3	79.00	Satisfactory
Passage 4	95.00	Excellent
Passage 5	85.00	Satisfactory
Overall MPS	87.00	Very Satisfactory
Level 5	MPS	Descriptive Category
Passage 1	65.00	Nearing Mastery
Passage 2	81.00	Satisfactory
Passage 3	45.00	Poor
Passage 4	36.00	Poor
Passage 5	53.00	Poor
Overall MPS	56.00	Poor

The result of the study was supported by the remarks in the reading response journal of the learners where in some of the pupils reflected that the reading passage is easy, while others wrote in their response journal that the passage was just right and some quoted it as hard. This only proved that not all passages are appropriate to the level of understanding of the pupils.

**Table 3. Level of Effectiveness of Individualized Contextualized Academic Reading Exercises as perceived by the teacher implementers**

The English Grade V Teachers who were tapped as respondents of the study in Table 2 also gave I-CARE an outstanding rating as manifested by the overall weighted mean of 4.92. This result implies that these teachers found the material to be relevantly substantial in terms of the identified indicators. This further denotes that they considered the material to be authentic in terms of the defined indicators having given it an outstanding adjectival rating. As one teacher remarked that the contents found in I-CARE are contextualized and localized therefore it aroused the interest of the learners to read independently for it gave them the opportunity to connect to real life setting. As purported by the study of Waguey and Hufana (2) class time should be devoted to opportunities for learners to explore the language. According to them, instructional materials are helpful in developing students' confidence, skills and proficiency in English language. This is also supported by the assertion of Pearson (2010) who claimed that contextualized instruction aims to teach basic skills for the purpose of meaningful application which is a necessary step toward critical-thinking about the content (Pearson, 2010).

**Table 4. Correlation between the Learners' Reading Performance and Teachers' Perception on the level of effectiveness of the I-CARE**

Source of Variance	Computed	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
	0.844	0.042		

Learners' Reading Performance	0.539	0.001	Reject Ho	Positive
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Teachers' Perception as to format, organization and content				Relationship
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Result shows that the computed  $r$  is .0.844 at  $p = 0.042$  which is less than the set level of correlation which is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a positive relationship on the learners' reading performance and on the perceptions of English VI teachers on I-CARE on its format, organization and content. Both groups of respondents found the material to have positive relationship when evaluated according to the two identified components of the instrument. It can be inferred from the result that these validators put high regard for quality materials to be utilized in the classroom as a scaffold for language learning. The greatest challenge for contextualized instruction is the selection of the context. It is most cost-effective to segment the lessons according to the skills of the learners and to their interests. Ofodu (2012) in her study purported that for any subject to be taught properly in the classroom, the teacher must employ instructional resources that supplement his verbal instruction. She further stressed that these materials are vital for effective language teaching especially when used generously.

#### IV-FINDINGS

From the analysis of the data presented in this study, the researcher discovered the following findings: The learners' reading performance on the I-CARE had a descriptive category of satisfactory; hence, some passages have to be improved. The perception of the English V teachers on the I-CARE as to format, organization, and content was outstanding, as evidenced by its overall weighted mean of 4.92 with an adjectival rating of outstanding. There was a significant relationship between the learners' reading performance and the perceptions of English V teachers on the I-CARE as to its format, organization, and content. Although the respondents found the I-CARE material to be outstanding, there are some areas that need to be improved based on the observations of the teacher-respondents and student-respondents.

#### V- CONCLUSIONS

I-CARE supports the program of the Department of Education in the implementation of the K-12 Curriculum with its emphasis on the contextualization/localization of any reading materials. It also provides the learner the opportunity to read at their own pace and time independently. The teacher-validators rated the I-CARE outstanding because, being directly in contact with their pupils, these teachers know the kind of materials that will motivate the interest and participation of their learners in the utilization of an instructional material. The result indicates that the teacher-validators find the content to be relevant to the development of the critical thinking skills of the learners. It also infers that the teacher-validators find the format to be significant to the overall package of the I-CARE, hence giving it an outstanding rating. The result of the hypothetical question revealed a significant outcome. It can be inferred that the two groups of validators found the material to be relevant in terms of content and format. In addition, it can be noted that the

researcher was able to incorporate the necessary highlights that are integrated in the content and format of the I-CARE, earning the support and approval of both groups of respondents. The proposed improved I-CARE is geared towards the modification of some passages to best fit the level of understanding of every learner and gives emphasis on the administration of the material in the class so that each learner shall be given an appropriate passage at their own level.

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