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"READS" Feedback on Tri-Component Skills in Resuscitating Learners' Reading Ability

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ABSTRACT

This article reports the findings of a reading comprehension test (pre-test) consisting of the tri-component skills namely literal, reorganisation and inferential, conducted among students of a public secondary school in the central state of Malaysia. READS (Reading Evaluation and Decoding System) was utilised to capture students' reading ability and comprehension skills and introspectively made sense of students' actual reading ability in terms of what they could and could not do. Precisely, with a standard Reading Matrix table which was previously developed, the English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers were able to tell their students' reading abilities by conveniently referring to the Performance Standards of READS so to ascertain whether their students were at *meet standard*, *below standard*, *above standard* or at *academic warning* status in terms of the tri-component skills. Subsequently, a series of intervention lessons were developed based on the READS feedback and immediately conducted to resuscitate and revive the learners' shortcomings. Results of the post-test indicated an increase in students' overall test scores. Consequently, the findings suggest that the deployment of READS has the potentiality in improving students' reading and comprehension ability.

Keywords: ESL teachers, performance standards, reading comprehension, reading matrix

INTRODUCTION

"The task of the excellent teacher is to stimulate 'apparently ordinary' people to unusual effort. The tough problem is not in identifying winners: it is in making winners out of ordinary people."

K. Patricia Cross

Indeed, it is a tough problem to transform ordinary students to winners. We believe the first step in trying to do so is to make sense and predict students' ability. The essence of making people winners is reading; and consequently reading ability among language learners have become an important element of concern in recent years. In line with a country such Malaysia, as pointed out by the previous premier; Malaysian is born today and in the years to come will be the last generation who will be living in a country that is called 'developing' as we are embarking to be a fully developed nation by the year 2020 (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991). A quick review of the Vision 2020 document, it was found that the development that Malaysia is striving to achieve is not primarily developed in the sense of infrastructural but rather taking into account other humanistic elements such cognitive, social and affective aspects.

It is apparent, in our views, that the need to celebrate and enhance reading is no longer important but necessary. Why reading? Ultimately, reading is an essential part of everyone's life in order to survive and participate in daily worldly affairs. In addition, reading itself is a complex cognitive skill (Dubin *et al*., 1986), which requires a great deal of cognitive interactions. Reading is a matter of fact an active and purposeful endeavour which is dependent on the prior knowledge and expectations of the reader (Nuttall, 1982; Eskey & Grabe, 1986; Goh & Wee, 2002). Reading complexity is further substantiated by Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension (Barrett, 1972;

Barrett & Smith 1974, 1979, as cited in Dechant, 1982 & in Alderson & Urquhart, 1984) which classified the comprehension skills required by reading into five important reading skills such as literal comprehension, reorganisation comprehension, inferential comprehension, evaluation and appreciation. Precisely in this study, the researchers focused on three sub-skills of reading, namely, literal comprehension, reorganisation comprehension and inferential comprehension, in conjunction with the Malaysian public examination requirements for the section on reading comprehension.

Many secondary school teachers assume that students who can read words can also comprehend from text simply by reading. ESL teachers often neglect teaching students how to approach text to better understand it using the correct reading strategies. In the conventional reading lesson, the teacher basically selects a passage for the students to read, introduces the reading selection to the students, gets the students read it, and then questions them to see if they have understood it (Croft, 1980, p. 348).

According to Edmonds *et al*. (2009), reading instruction for secondary students with reading difficulties is rarely provided, and this has widened the gap between their reading achievement and that of their grade-level peers. As such, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) has triggered schools to improve reading instruction for all students, including students in middle and high schools.

According to Allerson and Grabe (as

cited in Dubin, Eskey & Grabe, 1986), accurate assessments have to be carried out to identify the reading difficulties that students face. The urgency in identifying students with reading difficulties is further stressed by Stanovich (1986) who feels that children who face reading difficulties early in the learning tend to slack behind their peers with the passing of time. As such, early detection would enable teachers to predict current and latent reading achievements as well as to find out the students who need help in reading. Consequently, a quick care step to resuscitate students and revive them needs to be taken so that they can survive in an inclusive classroom along with their other peers. Recent research also suggests that majority of children's reading problems are preventable if they receive additional support in the form of intervention (Pikulski, 1994; Wasik & Slavin, 1993). School-based preventive efforts should be engineered to maintain growth in reading skills throughout the schooling period. Due to the importance of reading abilities to succeed in life, both during and beyond school, it is important for school systems to conduct reading intervention programmes. Similarly, based on the principles of management as advocated by management gurus (such as Dessler, 1998, pp. 528-529), those who fall below standards can be given remedial or corrective actions in order to ensure improvement of their abilities.

In daily English as Second Language classes in the Malaysian context, it is an uncontested matter that English language teachers may have sufficient knowledge of their students' different reading abilities based on the comprehension tests they conduct either formatively or summatively. Consequently, from the test grades data, teachers can easily identify their learners' reading comprehension ability in terms of their normative standings. However, teachers may have difficulty to precisely identify the kinds of weak readers in the pool of students they are dealing with.

At this point, teachers may have the passion to design appropriate intervention classes to assist students and consequently elevate them to be better readers. The first step is to comprehensively make sense and predict reading ability among second language learners by administering a standardised generic reading comprehension test (pre-test) that has carefully been constructed by taking into account the requirements of the Malaysian English Language curriculum, syllabus, textbook, workbook and the relevant theories underpinning the construction of any reading comprehension test instrument.

In addition, teachers will probably need to collaborate and plan, organise, review, implement and reflect on the reading instructions for the intervention activities to bring about the desired and required changes in the students' reading ability. According to Mokhtari, Thoma and Edwards (2009), teachers' collaboration, analysis and all the efforts based on the data and information collected normally lead to substantive change in reading instruction, as suggested by the researcher in which the students are categorised into groups, time-table being

blocked to enable the interventions to be implemented.

Consequently, this study aimed at incorporating READS (Reading Evaluation and Decoding System) developed in an earlier study (Abdul Rashid, Lin & Shaik Abdul Malik, 2010) to provide teachers with students' true reading ability in terms of their apparent weaknesses. Accordingly, with a single Reading Matrix table, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers would be able to understand their students' reading abilities and to be informed whether their students are at *meet standard, below standard, above standard* or at *academic warning* status in relation to three out of the five areas of reading comprehension skills; namely literal, reorganisation and inferential. Subsequently, a series of intervention classes was conducted over a period of 5 months for all the students from Form 1 to Form 5. A post-test was also conducted afterwards to gauge the students' progress. Additionally, the purpose of the study was to investigate the practical ways of helping secondary school students' reading skills. Thus, the interventions were conducted in the selected school after the ESL teachers had identified the specific reading ability of the students. In order to achieve the research purpose, a research question was raised, i.e. 'How did the students perform in the posttest after the interventions?'

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design of the study involved two tests, which were conducted before and after the interventions, and respectively referred to as the pre-test and post-test. The findings of both the tests were analysed using SPSS version 16.

The Participants

The researchers conducted the intervention in a semi rural school in Perak. A total of 1430 students from Form 1 to Form 5 participated in this Reading Initiative Programme. In specific, 307 students were from Form 1, 298 students from Form 2, 332 students from Form 3, 248 students from Form 4 and 245 students from Form 5.

Procedure

The reading abilities of all the students in the school were assessed using the Standardised Generic Reading Comprehension Test (SGRCT) at the beginning of the year (February) as the pre-test. Based on the test scores obtained from the SGRCT, the researchers developed Reading Initiative Programme as an intervention to help the students improve their learning. After 5 months of carrying out the intervention, the students were retested in July.

The researchers administered the SGRCT as the pre-test to determine where to begin instruction. According to Morris (2008, p. 72), "the pre-test establishes the child's starting rung on a ladder, and the post-test shows how many rungs he or she has been able to climb up". At the beginning of the school year (February), the students from Form 1 to Form 5 sat for the pre-test at the same time on the same day as it was a closed test to identify the students' reading ability. The time allocated for the test was

70 minutes. This test provided information about students' approximate reading ability and allowed us to group students according to their reading needs.

The Reading Evaluation and Decoding System (READS) was used to identify the students' reading ability. The system comprises of three components, namely, the Encoder (Test Instrument), the Analyser (Reading Matrix) and the Decoder (Reading Performance Indicators). The main instrument of data gathering was the SGRCT. The Test Instrument or Encoder is a generic test which can be used to measure the ESL reading performance of secondary school students from Form 1 to Form 5. The test items of the standardised reading comprehension test were 60 multiple choice questions which comprised of literal, reorganisation and inferential comprehension questions set at different levels of difficulty, i.e., Primary School Assessment (UPSR) level, Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR) level and Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) level, as shown in Table 1.

The test comprised of 3 parts. Part A consists of 15 UPSR level questions constituting 25% of the test questions, Part B consists of 30 PMR level questions constituting 50% of the test questions and Part C consists of 15 SPM level questions constituting 25% of the test questions, as stipulated by Mok (2000). According to Mok (2000), the distribution of the difficulty of test should be 25% easy, 50% average and 25% difficult. The time allocated for the standardised reading comprehension test is 70 minutes.

Specific sub-skills of reading required to answer the reading comprehension questions were selected from the Malaysian English Language syllabus in the light of Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension. Five content experts examined each item based on a scale of 1 (least suitable) to 5 (most suitable). The findings indicated that the content validity of the test questions is high and thus the questions were appropriate. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the test instrument. The KR20 of the instrument was found to be within the range of 0.78 to 0.85 for all the educational levels (Form 1 to Form 5 students).

After the students had completed the tests, the ESL teachers analysed the results. The researchers used the test results to categorise the students into Performance Bands (Band 1 to Band 6). The cut scores for the Performance Bands were developed

TABLE 1
Number of Literal, Reorganisation and Inferential Comprehension Questions

Classifications of comprehension abilities	Number of UPSR level questions	Number of PMR level questions	Number of SPM level questions
Literal Comprehension	5	10	5
Reorganisation comprehension	6	12	6
Inferential comprehension	4	8	4
Total number of questions	15	30	15

based on z-scores. Negative z-scores indicate that the students scored below the mean, whereas positive z-scores indicate that the students scored above the mean. The students were classified into the various Performance Bands according to their reading performance, as shown in Table 2.

After the pre-test, every ESL teacher completed a form to tabulate the results of the test scores. An analysis was carried out to tabulate the results at the macro level, which included class level and school level. At the micro level, the ESL teachers could match the test scores to the Reading Matrix to identify the individual student's level of reading ability. In the development of the reading matrix, the cut scores for the Performance Bands needed to be determined. The scores cannot be constructed arbitrarily as it will not reflect the precise reading ability of the students. Consequently, we looked at several ways of establishing the cut scores for the reading matrix. Finally, the z-score seems to be

fitting with this kind work that we are doing as z-score is capable of transforming a raw score into a standardised score that provides useful information about how far the raw score relates to the mean (Gronlund, 2006).

The results provided the teachers with an idea about students who needed help, and consequently the ESL teachers could tailor their teaching materials and instruction to meet their students' needs.

The respondents' reading scores were matched against the Reading Matrix or Analyser which acted as a reading indicator to indicate the reading abilities of the learners at a particular educational level, i.e. from Form 1 to Form 5 and then correlated to the Performance Standards and Reading Performance Indicators ranging from Band 1 to Band 6.

Table 3 illustrates the mechanics of the Performance Standards. For example, students in Form 4 who are in Band 5 would be classified as 'meet standard'. If a Form 4 student is in Band 6, he would be classified

TABLE 2
Range of Scores for the Performance Bands

Bands	Band 6	Band 5	Band 4	Band 3	Band 2	Band 1
Scores	54 - 60	42 - 53	30 - 41	19 - 29	7 -18	0 - 6

TABLE 3
Working of Performance Standards

Education Levels	Performance Standards			
	Exceed Standard	*Above Standard*	*Below Standard*	*Academic Warning*
Form 5		Band 6	Band 5	Bands 4,3,2,1
Form 4	Band 6	Band 5	Band 4	Bands 3,2,1
Form 3	Band 5,6	Band 4	Band 3	Bands 2,1
Form 2	Band 4,5,6	Band 3	Band 2	Band 1
Form 1	Band 3,4,5,6	Band 2	Band 1	

as 'above standard'. Students in Form 4 who are in Band 4 would be classified as 'below standard' and students who are in Band 1, Band 2 and Band 3 would be classified as at 'academic warning'. This also applies to other educational levels as shown in Table 3.

There are four levels of reading performance that were specifically developed to suit the Malaysian secondary school students adapted from the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), (Illinois State Board of Education, 2004).

The idea of Progression through the levels advocated by the Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT) Report (1988, cited in Horton, 1990 & Masters, 2006), in which the criteria of levels of proficiency and age were taken into consideration in gauging the learners' progress, was adopted to develop the Reading Matrix.

The Reading Performance Indicators or Decoder acts as the indicators to inform the teachers which reading sub-skills the learners can or cannot do. North's 'Reading Scale for the Council of Europe Framework' cited in Alderson (2000, pp. 132-134) was adopted as the model to develop the Descriptors of Reading Abilities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

How did the students perform in the pre-test?

Table 4 displays the analysis of the pre-test results at the macro level, i.e. students' reading ability at school level from Form 1 to Form 5. The data showed that majority of the students in each educational level were either *below standard* or *academic warning*.

Interventions

Based on READS feedback, a series of intervention classes were then conducted to students of all levels. The intervention, teaching instruction and reading materials to meet the needs of the students were conducted for a period of 5 months (February to June). The students were streamed according to their reading abilities, i.e. according to their Performance Bands (Band 1 to Band 6). The researchers used two structures in conducting the intervention programme. The first structure was named as Reading Lessons Structure A and the second structure was named as Reading Lessons Structure B.

TABLE 4
Analysis of the Pre-test of Secondary School Students' Reading Ability

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
Form 5	22.2%	18.1%	12.7%	24.3%	13.3%	*9.4%
Form 4	43.3%	22.3%	6.4%	15.5%	*6.9%	5.6%
Form 3	39.3%	21.5%	10.9%	*15.9%	7.2%	5.7%
Form 2	47.0%	23.0%	*12.7%	15.6%	0.2%	1.5%
Form 1	60..2%	*11.8%	12.1%	11.1%	0.9%	0.9%
READING MATRIX						

key: * = meet standard

Reading Lessons Structure A: Precise Level

In Reading Lessons Structure A, the reading comprehension lesson for all Form 3 students was conducted once a week, double period (70 minutes) at the same time on the same day. The Form 3 students had their reading lesson from 8.10 am to 9.20 a.m. every Wednesday. Six ESL teachers taught at the same time. All the students in each Performance Band were taught by an ESL teacher using reading materials suitable for students of that particular level. In this case, all the students who were classified as in Band 1 to Band 6 were placed in different classes. Form 3 students were selected for Structure A as the school made special request due to classroom organisation and the number of English language teachers in that school.

Reading Lessons Structure B: Main Stream Level

In Reading Lessons Structure B, all the students in the other educational levels (Form 1, 2, 4 and 5) had their reading comprehension lesson once a week, double period (70 minutes), but these students followed the normal timetable (whereby not every class had the reading comprehension lesson at the same time on the same day). The reading comprehension lessons were taught by their respective ESL teachers.

Just like the Reading Lessons Structure A, the ESL teachers used the reading materials according to the students' reading ability. The only difference was that due to the varied reading ability of the students

in each class, the teachers therefore taught based on the reading level of the majority of the students in their class. For example, if the majority of the students in a Form 2 class were classified as Band 1, the teacher would then use the reading materials suitable for Band 1.

Ideally, teachers should use texts suitable for Form 2. However, in this case, since Band 1 students could/can hardly comprehend UPSR text, logically the teachers might want their students to have a strong grasp of UPSR texts prior to moving forward to higher level texts. As for the students in other Performance Bands (such as Band 4) in the same class, the teacher could provide those students with PMR texts. The teacher used UPSR texts to teach students who were classified as Band 1, while the other students with better band levels were given guidance to work on higher level texts.

Reading Materials

The tasks of preparing the reading texts and the reading comprehension questions were divided equally among the ESL teachers. The ESL teachers in the school prepared three categories of reading materials comprising of reading texts and reading comprehension questions at UPSR, PMR and SPM levels. Form 1 ESL teachers prepared the reading materials for UPSR levels, while Form 2 and Form 3 ESL teachers prepared reading materials for PMR level and Form 4 and Form 5 ESL teachers prepared reading materials for SPM level. Each level of reading text consists

of three levels of reading comprehension questions of Barrett's Taxonomy of Reading Comprehension, i.e. literal, reorganisation and inferential comprehension questions in line with the sub-skills of reading stated in the Malaysian English Language syllabus. Table 5 indicates the reading texts allocated for each category of students who had been classified according to their Performance Bands.

Reading Comprehension Lessons

As part of the intervention programme, the ESL teachers in the school attended a series of workshops on how to execute the intervention programmed and integrate assessment into instruction (formative assessment). Besides, the ESL teachers were also trained to teach the reading skills and reading strategies involved in comprehending the texts as well as how to use the relevant reading strategies to answer the reading comprehension questions. The students were taught the sub-skills of reading involved in answering the literal comprehension questions such as scanning for details, identifying main ideas in a simple text and identifying supporting details in a simple text. As for answering reorganisation comprehension questions, which include analysing, synthesising and organising information that has been stated explicitly, the students were taught

how to extract supporting details, acquire the meaning of words by understanding contextual clues and identify simple cause and effect . The students were also taught the sub-skills of reading required to answer inferential comprehension questions such as making inferences and drawing conclusions.

From the analysis of the pre-test results, many students from Band 1 to band 5 had difficulty answering inferential comprehension questions. For reinforcement activities, teachers can use various texts to help students make inferences. Below is a sample of how students can be guided to make an inference by reading a short text. Get students to read the following text:

"When Fatimah's mother returned home after working overtime, the only light that she saw in the hall was from the television. From the porch, she could hear Fatimah's grandfather's snores coming from his favourite rocking chair."

Next, get students to identify the details in the text. Details from the text include:

Fatimah's mother came home late. The television is still on. Fatimah's grandfather's is asleep on his rocking chair.

TABLE 5
Reading Materials

Performance Bands	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
Difficulty level of Texts	UPSR	UPSR/PMR	PMR	PMR	SPM	SPM

Then, ask the students to relate the details to their experiences. Details according to students' experience:

> *Usually people will sleep on their rocking chair with the television still on because they are tired.*

Finally, ask the students what they can infer from the text. Students' inference from text:

> *Based on the text and their experiences, they concluded that Fatimah's grandfather may have fallen asleep while waiting for Fatimah's mother to come back.*

Besides reading the texts carefully selected for students in the various bands, the teachers can include different types of text for teaching different sub-skills of reading. Not all texts can develop all the different types of sub-skills of reading. The following section explains a sample of a case description based on READS feedback.

Initial Diagnostic Results

As disclosed in Table 6, Ali was in Band 2. Based on the reading matrix, students in Form 4 should correspond to Band 5 to 'meet standard'. This denotes that Ali is at 'academic warning' status.

Ali was a Form 4 student who struggled with reading comprehension. He obtained a low score in the pre-test. Even though he was in Form 4, he managed to correctly answer only 2 out of 30 comprehension questions at the PMR level (see Table 7). It appeared that he could not answer the reorganisation and inferential comprehension questions correctly even at the UPSR level. Based on the findings of the 'Structured Interview', he said that he had guessed the answers for the comprehension questions which he could not understand. It was evident that he lacked the sub-skills of reading to answer the reorganisation and inferential comprehension questions at the PMR level. As a Form 4 student, he should know how to apply the appropriate sub-skills of reading to answer the comprehension questions at SPM level. In this case, the English teachers should only expose him to Form 4 reading

TABLE 6
Ali's Reading Performance (Form 4)
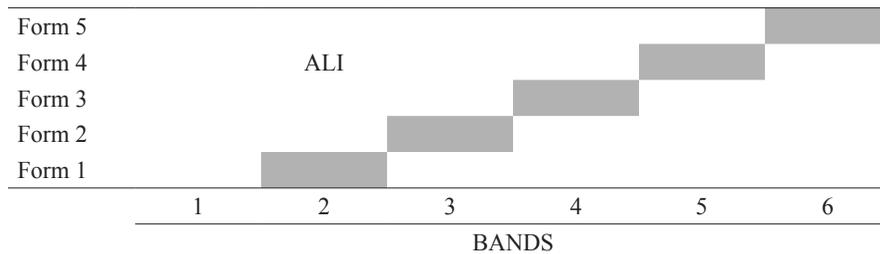
Key: shaded area indicates 'meet standard' for that educational level

materials when he is ready. A closer look at Ali's reading performance in Table 8 will inform us the sub-skill of reading that Ali needs more guidance with.

Analysis of Post-test

Table 9 indicates the analysis of the students' results of the post-test after the interventions. How did the students perform in the post-test?

According to the results of the post-test in Table 8, there was an increase in the students' test scores and their ability to handle the three reading comprehension skills amicably. The percentage of the students who *meet standard* at each educational level increased in the post-test. The percentage of the students who were *above standard* also increased slightly after the interventions in July when compared to the percentage of the students at *meet standard* and *above standard* in the pre-test conducted in February. On the other hand, the percentage of students at *below standard* and *academic warning* decreased. This probably shows that the interventions have

TABLE 7
Number of Questions Answered Correctly

Types of questions	Levels		
	UPSR	PMR	SPM
Literal	3	1	1
Reorganisation	1	1	0
Inferential	0	0	0

Scores:
UPSR: 4/15   PMR: 2/30   SPM: 1/15
Total Score: 7/60

TABLE 8: The Analysis of Ali's Reading Performance

Correct Question	Content	sub-skills	answer	student X
1	Identifying main ideas in simple texts.	literal	B	/
2	Read and understand simple texts for supporting details.	reorganisation	B	A
3	Read simple texts and make inferences.	inferential	A	C
4	Read and understand simple texts for supporting details.	reorganisation	C	B
5	Draw conclusions in simple texts.	inferential	C	D
6	Identifying supporting details in texts.	literal	D	A
7	Read and understand cause and effect relationships.	reorganisation	C	/
8	Identifying supporting details in texts.	literal	D	/
9	Read and understand simple texts for supporting details.	reorganisation	C	D
10	Read simple texts and make inferences.	inferential	A	B

Total Score of student (Ali: 7/60)   Performance band: 2

a positive impact on the students' reading performance. There was some improvement when compared to the performance in the February pre-test.

A review of the data obtained from READS, following the reading lessons from a school's initiative to improve the reading scores, showed some improvements in the students' reading performance from Form 1 to Form 5. An analysis of the data describing improvements in students' reading performance is as follows:

The percentage of Form 1 students who *meet standard* on reading comprehension rose to 14.3% in the post-test (July) from merely 11.8% in the pre-test (February). Meanwhile, the percentage of Form 2 students who *meet standard* on reading comprehension rose to 14.0% in the post-test from 12.7% in the pre-test. As for those in Form 3, 26.2% of the students who sat for the post-test *meet standard* on reading comprehension as compared to 15.9% in the pre-test. In Form 4, about 9.1% of the students who sat for the post-test *meet standard* on reading comprehension as compared to only 6.9% in the pre-test. In Form 5, about 12.5% of the students who sat for the post-test *meet standard* on reading

comprehension as compared to 9.4% in the pre-test.

Overall, there was a slight improvement in the reading performance of Forms 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 students. Some factors that might have contributed to only a slight improvement were that the teachers were not ready to teach the different sub-skills of reading and some of them had the tendency to use the traditional method of teaching reading where the teachers asked their students to take turns to read, followed by merely giving answers to the comprehension questions. However, it was interesting to note that there was a significant improvement in the reading performance of the Form 3 students. The percentage of Form 3 students who *meet standard* in the posttest increased by 10.3% as compared to the pre-test. One of the possible factors the researchers predicted contributed to the significant changes in Form 3 students' reading performance was by teaching students who were classified in the same performance band in the same class via Structure A. Accordingly, teachers can teach the students using the relevant materials for that particular level and at the same time, focus on the sub-skills of reading that they are lacking. However, in

TABLE 9: Analysis of the Post-test of Secondary School Students' Reading Ability

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
Form 5	19.1%	14.8%	12.1%	27.1%	14.4%	*12.5%
Form 4	35.7%	16.1%	10.8%	19.0%	*9.1%	9.3%
Form 3	33.4%	13.8%	10.1%	*26.2%	8.1%	8.4%
Form 2	40.1%	19.7%	*14.0%	18.5%	5.5%	2.2%
Form 1	41.2%	*14.3%	17.1%	19.7%	4.4%	3.3%
READING MATRIX						

key: * = meet standard

the Reading Lessons in Structure B, the teacher had to cater to the students in the other performance bands as well. The only problem in the Reading Lessons in Structure A was that there were too many students in Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4. Therefore, it was quite difficult for respective teachers to teach such a large group. Predictably, there were only a small number of students in Bands 5 and 6.

CONCLUSION

As it was intended, READS potency was put to test to tackle reading instruction for secondary school students with reading difficulties and consequently, instructional plans were designed to improve reading instruction for students. In more specific, students who were identified as below standard or at academic warning were administered the right intervention to avoid further disparity in relation to their reading proficiency. After completing the intervention process that was administered by ESL teachers, the overall results showed some impressive improvements in the reading performance of all the secondary students tested. Apparently, READS, used in combination with the Reading Matrix, Performance Standards and Descriptors of Reading Abilities, can provide a potent and accurate account of learners' reading proficiency. It is believed that this minor innovation that ESL teachers may now add to their daily reading comprehension instruction and testing initiatives can make a difference in the lives of students' and their reading skills development.

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