

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2023, Vol. 4, No. 12, 4473 – 4480

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.12.23>

---

## Research Article

### Improving Reading Literacy Rate of ALS (Alternative Learning System) Students Through Casaup-Literacy Program

Ruby T. Galang\*, Cecile B. Batu, Joyce Arrozal, Leila Cortez

College of Arts and Sciences - Language Department

---

#### Article history:

Submission September 2023

Revised December 2023

Accepted December 2023

#### \*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

[rtgalang@dhvsu.edu.ph](mailto:rtgalang@dhvsu.edu.ph)

#### ABSTRACT

One of the imminent programs the government instituted for this concern is the Alternative Learning System (ALS) which aims at providing opportunities for students who are not succeeding in the traditional classroom setting to obtain academic credit, career exploration activities, and extended teacher/peer support in an alternative setting where the ultimate goal is that obtaining a diploma. The study aimed to determine the reading levels of the respondents before and after the administration of a reading intervention program. The Reading program was conceptualized as an extended service to enhance the reading abilities of the ALS students. It employed the descriptive type of research to gather facts and information regarding the reading performance levels of the respondents. The respondents of the study consisted of 70 students from ALS Program of the DepEd ALS Program. The researchers utilized the Functional Literacy Test (FLT) a standardized reading assessment tool which was administered before the intervention and after the reading program. T-test was used in the treatment of the data. Based on the findings; generally, the respondents' age ranges from 15-23 with a minimal percentage of the ages 42-51. This shows that students tend to stop their education after attending basic education. The mean results of the pre-test which is 4.0294 are far behind the results of the post-test, which is 9.4411 mean, this indicates a highly significant difference is evident in the statistical treatment. A t-value of -29.583 resulted and a p-value of 0.000 was obtained from the data. This proves a high significance is displayed in the results and that the intervention program has proven its effectiveness in the reading performance of the ALS Students.

**Keywords:** *Alternative Learning System, Department of Education, Literacy rate, Reading, Reading program*

---

#### How to cite:

Galang, R. T., Batu, C. B., Arrozal, J., & Cortez, L. (2023). Improving Reading Literacy Rate of ALS (Alternative Learning System) Students Through Casaup-Literacy Program. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 4(12), 4473 – 4480. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.04.12.23

## **Introduction**

Education plays a vital role in the development and advancement of an individual, family, and country. A country with a lot of educated and professionals is proof of a progressive nation. According to the study by Bhardwaj (2016), education is important because it brings confidence to a person, ensures a bright future, builds character that makes a better citizen, and develops proper values. In the Philippines, the population of dropouts, out-of-school youth, and even individuals who do not go to formal schooling are significant in recent years.

The term 'out-of-school' children and youth are defined as the population between the ages of 3-25 years who do not attend schools or who have studied in schools but dropped out before completing their compulsory or basic education. This also includes handicapped children or children from families living in poverty who do not have the opportunity to attend school (Vayachuta, et. al, 2015). According to Vito, et. al (2018), out-of-school youth are a susceptible population with numerous needs. Many faces dim employment and uncertain futures. UNESCO (2018) stated that there are about 258 million children and youth are out of school. This includes 59 million children of primary school age and 62 million of lower secondary school age and 138 million of upper secondary age. In the Philippines, out-of-school youth refers to people aged 15 to 24 who are not attending school, have not finished any college or post-secondary course, and not working (2013 FLEMSS & 2016 APIS, PSA). About 4 million children and youth were out-of-school in 2016 (2016, APIS, PISA). Based on the 2016 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS), the top 3 reasons for out-of-school youth not attending school were marriage/ family matters, insufficient family income, and lack of personal reasons. For these reasons, the literacy problem becomes one of the concerns of the education system. In line with this, the Philippine government adopted the massive global education initiative and its goal called Education For All (EFA) 2015. However, the country still continuously suffers from high dropouts, thus, promulgating the Republic Act 9155 in 2001 or the Governance Act of Basic Education that

provides provisions for the Alternative Learning System (ALS) that will address illiteracy and promote continuing education.

Apparently, one of the imminent programs the government instituted for this concern is the Alternative Learning System (ALS) which aimed at providing opportunities for students who are not succeeding in the traditional classroom setting to obtain academic credit, career exploration activities, and extended teacher/peer support in an alternative setting where the ultimate goal is that obtaining a diploma.

The implementation of ALS has given marginalized groups like children, women, people with special needs, indigenous people communities, and the out-of-school-youths who were not able to finish their basic education because of economic and financial reasons the right to education and the right to finish basic education. More so, according to different researches, ALS became an avenue for the out-of-school-youth and others to learn not only the basics but also life skills that will help them to cope and easily adjust in the rapid and continuous changes in the environment and in society.

Literacy has been an issue anywhere in the world for various reasons. According to UNESCO (2018), literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO, 2004; 2017).

Literacy can pull us out of poverty, as stated in the central goal of the Philippine Education for All (2015), it is the tool that opens to the understanding of the world around you. Literacy allows us to read and understand every idea that our environment offers us. Improved literacy skills benefit not only the struggling readers but everyone in the community regardless of gender and race.

Literacy is essential to be successful in today's world, particularly in collegiate programs and new professions and workplaces. It will be applicable in all academic subjects throughout the student's life in solving problems,

comprehension, socialization, and dealing with the challenges that may come with working in a globally competitive environment. Functional literacy is one of the important things that is promoted among ALS (Alternative Learning System) students and ALS enrollees are given an initial placement test called (FLT) Functional Literacy Test, to assess their current education level. This FLT is a tool that determines students' readiness for a higher level. It consists of a pre-test and post-test to compare students' acquired skills after the program. This tool also identifies the appropriate ALS level.

Reading deficiencies usually lead to deficiencies in other subject matters, due to the inability to understand the word or set of words. Difficulties in reading especially in reading English text will become a hindrance to effective performance in all disciplines or subjects. In order to achieve reading literacy development for the ALS, teachers needed to focus and plan a program that will lead to the development of the learner's reading and comprehension skills.

One of the beneficiaries of the ALS Program is some of the Out-of-school students enrolled in Sta. Rita District, which has been made the benefactor for the extension project, CASAUP (Care Awareness Service: An ALS Uplifting Project) being administered by the Department of Languages, College of Arts and Sciences of DHVSU. The project is aimed at providing assistance to improve the literacy skills of the students enrolled in Sta. Rita District who were placed under ALS Program. The program was initiated for the call of the ALS coordinator to further assist the ALS students in their English and Filipino competencies primarily in reading comprehension and composition writing. This request was made due to the pre-test results of alarming very low-level English and Filipino competencies.

The project has started, and English Teachers participated and shared their expertise in helping the participants improve further their language skills. Now, after the project implementation, it is the aim of this study to determine whether the beneficiaries/training participants' literacy skills have improved. The results of the inquiry will be used as inputs to the program design that will be developed as an output of the study.

## **2. Literacy Program**

The CASAUP Reading Program was conceptualized due to the call of the ALS coordinator for an extended service that the College of Arts and Sciences - Languages faculty members could offer through webinar series about grammatical structures, reading comprehension, and composition reading. Through our extension office, this reading program was conceptualized after the needs analysis was administered. The Extension coordinator developed three stages for implementing the extension program; the Planning stage; wherein the least learned competencies were identified, and through this identification, topics were selected to meet the needs. Resource speakers and the delivery platform were also identified in this stage. The topics were distributed among the resource speakers and the matrix of the program was created. Two dates were made for the webinar series, which is to accommodate the discussion of the identified least-learned skills. For the Implementation Stage, a post-test was administered for monitoring and evaluation. The effectiveness of the reading program was also identified after the administration of the post-test. To further sustain what has been learned the proponent created modules that will serve as enrichment materials for the ALS students. The module was distributed among students are kept safe by the ALS teacher.

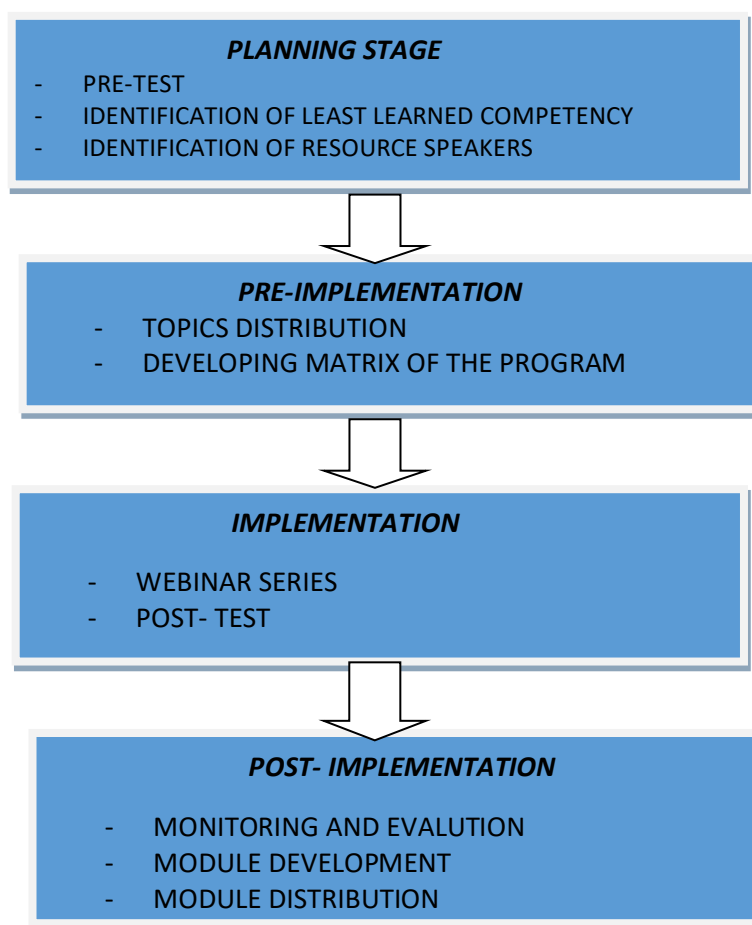


Figure 1: CASAUP Literacy Program

### 3. Objectives

The study aimed to determine if there is a significant difference between the reading levels of the respondents before and after the administration of the Literacy program.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. What is the reading level of the respondents before the reading programs?
2. What is the reading level of the respondents after the reading programs?
3. Is there a significant difference in the reading level of the respondents before and after the reading program?
4. What programs should be implemented to address the reading difficulty of the respondents?

### 4. Methods

#### 4.1. Research Design

The study aimed to determine the reading levels of the respondents before and after the

administration of a reading intervention program to the respondents. The researchers employed the descriptive type of research to gather facts and information regarding the reading performance levels of the respondents. The study was action research since the study proposed a literacy program in response to the result of the conducted pre and post-test. A pre-test and post-test administration of the standardized FLT (Fluency Literacy Test) was employed to test the significant difference in the reading level of the respondents before and after the reading program. A *t-test* was used wherein one group is tested twice in order to get a significant difference in the data.

#### 4.2. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of 86 students from Sta. Rita District, ALS Program located in Sta. Rita, Guagua, Pampanga. The researchers made use of the total popula-

tion of the said ALS program. The student participants were between the ages of 15 to 23 with a percentage of 79.07%. There were also 13 student participants ranging from the ages of 24-32, as well as 3 student participants from the age bracket of 33-41, and 2 student participants from the age bracket of 42 and above. Significantly, the respondents were graduates of the Alternative Learning System administered in Sta. Rita within the period of one school year.

#### **4.3. Research Instrument**

The researchers utilized different instruments, the first instrument used was the Functional Literacy Test (FLT) which was administered before the intervention and after the reading program to determine the reading level of the ALS students. The second instrument used was a researcher-made survey questionnaire which was developed by the researchers and validated by experts. The first part of the survey questionnaire is the FLT Learning Strand 1, which determines the reading ability in English and Filipino competency. The FLT is a test on the readiness of applicants for the different levels in the curriculum of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Department of Education. It was designed to include measures of the ability to supply personal information and to recognize prior knowledge of learners in the six learning strands: LS 1 Communication Skills-English and Filipino, LS 2 Scientific Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills, LS 3 Mathematical and Problem-Solving Skills, LS 4 Life and Career Skills, LS 5 Understanding the Self and Society, and LS 6 Digital Literacy. The second part was composed of questions that described the profile of the respondents in terms of age, grade level, and reading level of the respondents.

#### **4.4 Data Gathering**

In the conduct of the study, permission from the dean of the department for the administration of the research instrument was sought. A letter of request for the extension project was sought from the ALS (Alternative

Learning System) coordinator was also sought. After permission was granted, the researcher administered the FLT (Functional Literacy Test) to the ALS students to get the pre-test results. A series of sessions was given as part of the literacy program based on the needs assessment results. After which, a post test was administered to get the effectivity rate of the intervention done among the students. The completed all the data gathered was subjected for statistical treatment.

#### **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

The complete method must have to keep in mind the standards of ethics and ought to be a key attention. Consent must be acquired from the scholars both verbally, thru era or in writing (Bhandari, 2021). In order to abide with this, the researchers distributed the reading comprehension assessment tool while following and taking note of the proper guidelines. They gave consent letters to the respondents to know if they are willing to fully participate on the study. The researchers also stated the purpose of the reading comprehension assessment tool and their reason why they are conducting the study. Lastly, the researchers made it very clear to the respondents that all of the data gathered was treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The researchers ensured the respondents that the data obtained from the respondents was used for academic purposes and was shared among the researchers only.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

A careful analysis of the completed assessment tool was done to ensure that the collected data are accurate and consistent with other information gathered. Pre-processing of collected data was done through editing to detect errors and omissions and make corrections where necessary. After completion of coding, the data was classified based on common characteristics and attributes. The data was then compiled and tabulated in form of statistical tables to allow for further analysis.

## Results and Discussion

*Table 1. Respondents' Reading Level before the Reading Program*

Reading Level	Frequency	Percent
Fast	5	7.35
Average	40	58.82
Slow	21	30.88
No Data	2	2.94
Total	86	100

Table 1 presents respondents' reading levels in the ALS program of Sta. Rita District. The FLT (Functional Literacy Test) interpretation of their reading level was interpreted based on the standard interpretation of; 0-3- Slow, 4-6 – Average, and 7-11- Fast. The results revealed that 5.81% are interpreted as Fast, 55.14% are

interpreted as Average, and 33.72% are interpreted as Slow. 2.33% show no data. The result indicates that before the reading program, majority of the respondents are of average reading level which indicates that Als students lack the literacy in terms of reading.

*Table 2. Respondents' Reading Level after the Reading Program*

Reading Level	Frequency	Percent
Fast	66	97.06
Average	0	0
Slow	0	0
No Data	2	2.94
Total	86	100

Table 2 shows the respondent's reading levels after the reading program. 97.68% of the respondent obtained the level of Fast, whereas 0% for both average and slow levels. 2.33% reported no data presented. This shows that after

the reading program the respondents have fast reading level. It is positive indication of the success of the reading program.

### **Statistical Results of Pre-test and Post-test of the Reading Program**

*Table 3. Pre-Test Results*

Scores	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
0-3	29	42.6	4.0294	1.6925	Average
4-7	37	54.4			
8-11	2	2.9			
Total	68	100			

Table 3 shows the pre-test results of the respondents in the administration of the FLT (Functional Literacy Test). From the scores of 0-3, a frequency of 29 was obtained with 42.6%. The scores of 4-7 resulted in a frequency of 37 and obtained 54.4% of the total participants. 2.9% of the scores from 8-11 were obtained

and a frequency of 2. A grand mean of 4.0294 and a standard deviation of 1.6925 was obtained from the results. A verbal description of Average was interpreted from the results. It indicates that before the reading program the respondents are of average level in terms of functional literacy.

Table 4. Post-Test Results

Scores	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
0-3	0	0.0	9.4411	0.7989	Fast
4-7	0	0.0			
8-11	68	100.0			
Total	68	100			

Table 4 presents the post-test results of the FLT after the administration of reading results. From the scores of 8-11, a frequency of 68 was obtained and resulted in a 100% of the scores. The results yielded a grand mean of 9.4411

with a standard deviation of 0.7989 with a verbal description of Fast. It indicates that before the reading program the respondents are of average level in terms of functional literacy.

Table 5. Test of Significance

Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p	Significance
Pre-test	4.0294	1.6926	-29.583	0.000	Highly Significant
Post Test	9.4411	0.7989			

Table 5 shows the result of the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test administered among the respondents. The results yielded a *t-value* of -29.583 and a *p-values* of 0.000 which indicates high significance.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

The out-of-school youths of the ALS are one of the most affected sectors of the educational set-up this pandemic. The absence of physical teachers pushed down their level of functional literacy to the bottom. This study has given hope to the declining literacy rate of these ALS classes. It yielded results that would contribute to the understanding of the issue being studied. Based on the findings; generally, the respondents' age ranges from 15-23 with a minimal percentage of the ages 42-51. This shows that students tend to stop their education after attending basic education. As to their grade level, 89.53% of the respondents were secondary and only 10.47% were at the elementary level. As to their reading level, only 5.81% were obtained in the Fast level, 33.72% were obtained for the Slow level, and generally fall on the average level of 58.14%. The mean results of the pre-test which is 4.0294 are far behind the results of the post-test, which is 9.4411 mean, this indicates a highly significant difference is evident in the statistical treatment. A *t-value* of -29.583 resulted and a *p-value* of 0.000 was

obtained from the data. This proves a high significance is displayed in the results.

The study has proven that the ALS program of Sta. Rita District was greatly affected by the sudden shift of educational set-up. The absence of physical teachers greatly affects the literacy rate of the students. Even the ALS program that aims to provide opportunities for students to obtain academic credit, career exploration, and extended peer support has not met its target of a high literacy rate of out-of-school youth. The CASAUP Reading program that was initiated by DHVSU College of Arts and Sciences has proven its effectiveness in improving literacy rate of ALS students, this proves reading program improves the reading performance of students as stated in Loenig, et. Al (2017) that intervention program significantly contributed to the improvement of the students' reading performance. Including a reading development program in the scaffolding processes of first-year students may contribute to academic literacy development, which includes reading ability.

This study recommends the following:

1. Provision of supplementary reading materials for ALS students. This should be done by providing modules for students that provides enrichment to their literacy rate.
2. Extended reading sessions; Extended reading session is recommended. Teachers may give additional time (about

30 minutes) after their session. This is intended for slow readers. The additional time will give more opportunities to learn essential reading skills.

3. Support from NGOs for learning materials  
NGO's support may be asked. They can provide financial support for the printing of the module and for the purchase of more reading materials.
4. Provision of teacher assistants for the ALS teacher.  
The ALS teacher may be granted a teacher assistant to help the teacher assist in his workload and other everyday tasks.
5. Revisits ALS Curriculum.  
The Alternative Learning System Curriculum may be enhanced. Learning competencies in reading must be revisited for the proper alignment of the needs of the ALS students to develop the reading literacy of students.

## References

- Bhardwaj, A. (2016). Importance of Education in Human Life: A Holistic Approach. *International Journal of Science and Consciousness*, 23-28.
- Montoya, S. (2018). Defining Literacy, GAML Fifth Meeting, Hamburg, Germany.
- OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE PHILIPPINES, PCSO (UNICEF), 2013
- Out of School Youth Report, UNESCO
- Out of School Children and Youth.  
<http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth#:~:text=About%2058%20million%20children%20and,million%20of%20upper%20secondary%20age>.
- Vayachuta, P., et. al (2016), The study of 'out-of-school' children and youth situations for developing a lifelong education model for 'out-of-school' children and youth, Department of Lifelong Education, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.
- Vito, M. (2015), Factors Influencing Out-of-School Youth in Municipality of Clarin, Bohol, Department of College of Teacher's Education, Bohol Island State University, Philippines.