
Catch-Up Friday and the Reading Competence of Senior High School Technical-vocational-Livelihood Students

Vilma C. Titular¹, Cecilia Q. Velasco, EdD²

¹Teacher II, Malvar Senior High School

²Associate Professor V

ABSTRACT: The study focused on determining the effectiveness of Catch-Up Friday in the Reading Competence of Senior High School Students. Technical–Vocational– Livelihood (TVL) Students in Malvar Senior High School, located in Malvar District, Batangas, were chosen as the respondents for the study. The one-group pre-assessment and post-assessment tests were used as the primary data collection instrument.

Initial actions were conducted before the assessment, including the validation of pre-assessment and post-assessment reading activities. Additionally, necessary permissions were obtained to ensure the smooth flow of the study. The findings revealed that, before the intervention, students demonstrated an average level of reading competence. After implementing Catch-Up Friday, significant improvements were observed in different aspects, suggesting that the intervention effectively enhanced students' reading competence.

The study concludes that reading interventions, such as Catch-Up Friday, play a crucial role in enhancing students' reading competence. It is recommended that educators integrate similar strategies to enhance and strengthen students' skills. Future research may investigate the long-term effects and other aspects of reading interventions to enhance students' skills further.

KEYWORDS: Catch-Up Friday, Reading Competence, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood, Reading Activities, Fluency Vocabulary

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental macro-skill that plays a crucial role in one's educational journey and lifelong learning. As discussed by Almarin (2016), reading plays a dynamic role in one's life. It is believed that more than 85% of all learning occurs through the senses, primarily through the eyes, via reading. Reading is, therefore, the most important subject in school. It is the key to success, for students are required to read whether the subject is academic or technical. Despite its importance, many students and graduates, particularly in the Philippines, struggle with basic language skills, which has hampered their employability and academic performance.

Reading is a multidimensional process, including fluency and word recognition, which must be mastered. Reading competence will be emphasized because if the latter is weak, they will not be able to make guesses about what happens next or connect what they are reading to their prior knowledge and experience. Moreover, Krashen (2017) and Rezaee & Saeed (2018) have strong confirmation of the reading undertakings that can help learners improve their spelling abilities in a way that supersedes more 'skill-based' methods for teaching spelling, such as word lists, spelling rules, and drills.

Additionally, reading is a crucial technique for individuals to acquire new knowledge and expand their understanding. It requires a variety of mental and cognitive abilities, including focus, pattern recognition, memory, information processing, reasoning, and problem-solving. Some researchers argue that the effectiveness of individual reading processes affects reading ability. One of the most complex behaviors humans engage in is reading competence.

On one hand, many students struggle with reading competence, which can seriously impact a child's performance in all subject areas. Since reading is a necessary component of learning any academic material, students who struggle to understand what they read often fall behind their peers academically in various subjects. The ability to recognize or decode written words, as well as oral language or listening comprehension, which allows one to comprehend what has been decoded in spoken form, are all part of the complex process of reading competence. The ability to read well is a skill that students should possess. Reading competence, fluency and vocabulary are inextricably linked, and they are also associated with crucial academic outcomes like test scores (Alvarez & Cañizo, 2015).

The ability to read well is a skill that students should possess. It benefits students to gain knowledge of their key subjects and

Catch-Up Friday and the Reading Competence of Senior High School Technical-vocational-Livelihood Students

advance their language skills (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). For the reader to quickly understand the material, reading comprehension requires a variety of reading skills, including word recognition, fluency, lexical knowledge, and prior knowledge (Sabouri, 2016). For Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students, reading competence is especially important. Strong reading skills is one of the requirements in-order for these students to excel in their specialized fields, where understanding technical texts and instructions is crucial.

The DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) program has been advocated as a strategy to promote regular reading habits and improve competence skills. This initiative aims to enhance students' engagement and strengthen their reading competence by setting aside dedicated time for reading. Furthermore, the "Catch-Up Friday" program has been introduced as an innovative approach to address challenges among senior high school TVL students, such as low reading competence, limited vocabulary, difficulty in decoding and recognizing words, and a lack of reading fluency. The program dedicates Friday to intensive reading activities, allowing students to catch up on reading assignments and improve their reading competence through guided practice and support. The effectiveness of this program enhances the students' reading competence and overall performance.

As mentioned, reading competence is a fundamental skill essential for academic success and lifelong learning. However, in the Philippines, the level of reading competence among students is alarming and requires urgent attention. The Philippines' educational system is challenged to produce effective readers. According to the 2019 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) statistics, Filipino pupils performed worse in reading competence than their international peers. This suggests that there is a need to address the obstacles and possible areas for improvement in the reading ability of Filipino kids. This hinders the schools from meeting their goal of providing quality and well-informed individuals. It is not only involved in our English subject, but all subject requires reading competence. It cannot be denied that almost everything requires reading competence. An individual must be trained and learn techniques in reading competence. Many educational programs have already been established to help schools provide students who can read fluently and comprehend what they read. The Department of Education must assess why the Philippines still ranks last among 79 countries in reading competence despite all the programs implemented to boost students' reading ability and competence.

The Philippines is aiming to become the next newly industrialized country. Therefore, there is a call for the education sector to produce workers who are technologically competent and prepared to absorb new ideas, identify patterns, and solve non-routine problems. Competence in English, as a powerful tool for communication, is the key to opportunity for future jobs. Many students cannot answer simple questions or perform well in practical examinations because the instructions are written in the English language. It is disheartening to note that a common complaint among establishments is the quality of applicants.

Given these challenges, this study investigates the impact of "Catch-Up Friday" to the reading competence of senior high school TVL students. By examining the impact of this program on their technical training and overall academic achievement, it provides insights into improving reading instructions and competence strategies that better prepare students for future careers.

A. Background: Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) education is a vital component of the educational system, equipping students with the practical skills and knowledge necessary for employment in diverse industries. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of literacy skills in TVL programs, as they are essential for comprehending technical manuals, safety procedures, and other written materials relevant to vocational training. Additionally, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) education is an integral part of the educational system, providing students with practical skills and knowledge necessary for employment in various industries. TVL programs focus on preparing students for specific vocational fields, emphasizing hands-on training and real-world applications.

One crucial aspect of academic success in TVL education is reading competence, which plays a significant role in students' ability to engage with instructional materials, comprehend technical manuals, follow safety procedures, and apply theoretical knowledge to practical tasks. Given that TVL students are often focused on hands-on skills and real-world applications, strong reading skills are essential for interpreting written materials that complement their vocational training.

Reading competence allows students to interact more effectively with the resources available to them, ensuring they can apply their learning in the context of their chosen vocational fields.

While studies on general education settings often focus on academic performance and literacy, there is a lack of research specifically addressing the challenges and needs of TVL students, particularly in terms of their reading competence. Recent initiatives such as the Department of Education's Catch-Up Friday program offer an opportunity to explore how interventions designed to improve literacy can impact the academic performance of TVL students. Catch-Up Friday aims to provide additional instructional support to students who may be struggling academically, and this study seeks to assess whether this initiative has a positive influence on the reading competence of Senior High School TVL students.

Understanding the relationship between Catch-Up Friday and the reading competence of TVL students is crucial for identifying effective strategies to support their literacy development. By investigating how this program impacts students' reading skills, educators and policymakers can gain insights into the specific needs of TVL learners and adjust teaching approaches accordingly.

Catch-Up Friday and the Reading Competence of Senior High School Technical-vocational-Livelihood Students

Improved reading competence could enhance academic performance, not just in reading-intensive subjects but also in technical courses where comprehension of written material is essential. This study will contribute to filling the gap in research regarding the skills of TVL students and the effectiveness of educational interventions, such as Catch-Up Friday.

Several factors may influence the academic performance of TVL students, particularly in terms of reading competence. These factors can include individual characteristics such as prior academic achievement, socioeconomic status, and motivation, as well as environmental factors like school resources, teaching quality, and curriculum design. Understanding how these factors interact and impact the academic performance of TVL students is essential, especially in the context of literacy development. While existing studies have primarily focused on general education settings, a noticeable gap remains in research concerning the specific challenges and needs of TVL students, particularly in terms of reading skills. Since TVL students emphasize acquiring practical skills for specific vocational fields, academic interventions like Catch-Up Friday may be pivotal in improving their reading competence. This initiative aims to provide additional academic support to students who are struggling, which could enhance their ability to engage with written materials essential for their vocational training. Therefore, there is a need for empirical research that explores how such interventions, particularly Catch-Up Friday, can positively influence the reading performance of TVL students and how various factors contribute to their literacy development.

This study aimed to address this gap in the literature by investigating the reading competence of the respondents before and after the implementation of Catch-up Fridays, an initiative of the Department of Education. By examining these factors within the context of the TVL track, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the role of literacy skills in shaping the academic experiences and outcomes of TVL students.

B. Problem Statement: This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of “Catch-Up Friday” reading activities in enhancing the reading competence of Senior High School TVL learners. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the pre-assessment scores of the respondents in reading competence before using Catch-up Friday reading activities in terms of;
 - a. reading fluency
 - b. rate/speed;
 - c. accuracy;
 - d. prosody; and
 - e. Vocabulary?
2. What are the post-assessment scores of the respondents in reading competence before using Catch-up Friday reading activities in terms of;
 - a. reading fluency
 - b. rate/speed;
 - c. accuracy;
 - d. prosody; and
 - e. Vocabulary?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pre-assessment and post-assessment scores of the respondents in reading competence before and after using Catch-up Friday reading activities in terms of;
 - a. reading fluency
 - b. rate/speed
 - c. accuracy;
 - d. prosody; and
 - e. Vocabulary?

C. Literature Review: In the context of reading interventions, like Catch-Up Fridays and reading competence, these findings become particularly relevant. Catch-Up Fridays can serve as a focused opportunity to address these reading challenges, providing struggling students with additional support and personalized attention to improve their reading fluency and overall competence. The recommendations and conclusions drawn from the reviewed studies offer a foundation for understanding how reading interventions can be integrated into catch-up sessions, ultimately enhancing students’ ability to succeed in both academic and vocational contexts.

The foregoing literature and studies helped the researcher in conceptualizing the present study. The findings and recommendations of the authors and writers cited in this study served as a springboard for the researcher to concretize his study, which seeks to explore how initiatives like Catch-Up Fridays can be utilized to improve overall reading competence among TVL learners.

II. METHODS

A. Research Design: This research employed a one-group pre-test and post-test research design. One-group pre-assessment and post-assessment research design is a pre-experimental research design that observes a single group for change after introducing an independent variable. The research participants were exposed to Catch-Up Friday sessions, which served as the research independent variable.

B. Participants: The respondents in the present study were 30 Grade 11 TVL students from Malvar Senior High School for the school year 2024-2025. Cluster sampling was used as the sampling method in this study. There were eight naturally occurring sections under the TVL strand, but only one section was selected as the respondent. In cluster sampling, the entire population was divided into naturally occurring groups or "clusters," in this case, the eight sections. Then, one was randomly selected, and all members of the chosen cluster participated in the study. Instead of selecting individual students from all sections, one entire section was randomly chosen, and all students in that section became the respondents. This method was appropriate because (1) it was more practical and efficient, as focusing on one complete section made data collection easier, and (2) it allowed for random selection. Although only one section was used, it was chosen randomly from the eight available sections, reducing selection bias. This method ensured that the selected sample accurately represented the larger population, while also making the study manageable and systematic.

C. Data Collection: In conducting the study, the researcher aimed to measure and compare the students' reading competence before and after the implementation of the Catch-Up Friday intervention. To achieve this, two research instruments were carefully designed. The pre-test acted as a key starting point to measure students' reading fluency and their ability to understand vocabulary in context. Centered around the nonfiction passage "Buzzing Bees," it introduced students to a real-

world topic presented in descriptive language. The passage included challenging words like "meadow," "fluttered," "nectar," "buzzing," and "pollinate," which encouraged students to use clues from the text to determine meaning.

Each item focused on one word or concept, allowing us to observe how students interpreted vocabulary within the flow of the story. In essence, the pre-test functioned as a diagnostic tool. It revealed the students' strengths and areas that needed improvement. After weeks of support and practice through Catch-Up Friday sessions, the students were given a new reading experience through the fictional story "Leo and the Golden Fish." Unlike the straightforward informational tone of the pre-test, this passage was imaginative and emotional, allowing students to explore vocabulary in a more narrative and expressive context. The story follows Leo, a curious boy who discovers a magical golden fish, and through this tale, students encounter words like "nestled," "shimmering," "astonishment," and "kind-hearted." These vocabulary terms required more than just basic knowledge. What made the post-test meaningful was that it didn't check if students remembered definitions, but it showed how they applied what they learned in real reading situations. The post-test, therefore, wasn't just about scoring points. It was about recognizing progress, building confidence, and celebrating the joy of reading. Both the pre-test and post-test played a meaningful role in helping students grow in their reading skills. Together, both assessments provided students with the opportunity to reflect on their reading progress. For Reading Fluency, the rubric breaks down the skills into rate, accuracy, and prosody, three essential aspects of what it means to be a fluent reader. A student rated as Excellent reads smoothly, with almost perfect accuracy, and uses their voice expressively, like a storyteller who draws listeners in. Those who are Proficient are nearly there, reading confidently but perhaps needing a little polish. Students in Developing or Beginning levels may read more slowly or with hesitation, but these stages are not setbacks. They are natural points on the path of growth. With gentle practice and encouragement, their fluency can flourish. When it comes to Vocabulary, the rubric takes a simple but effective approach. It focuses on how well students understand and apply words in content. Those in the Advanced level show a deep grasp of language, confidently navigating unfamiliar words with ease. The Proficient student has a solid foundation but may have a few areas for improvement. Students in the Approaching Proficiency, Developing, or Beginning levels might still be building their word banks and learning how vocabulary connects to meaning. Their progress is just as valuable, and each correct answer marks a step in their ability to understand and enjoy what they read. Catch-Up Friday reading activities are thoughtfully designed to make learning enjoyable and engaging for students while strengthening essential reading skills. Each activity feels more like a fun challenge than a traditional lesson, helping learners connect with reading in a way that feels natural and rewarding. In Reading Relay, students take turns reading aloud, like passing a baton in a race. This encourages teamwork and builds confidence, especially for those who may feel shy reading alone. It's a safe space to practice fluency and expression while listening and supporting one another. Explore and Discuss turns reading into a discovery. After reading a passage, students discuss what they understood, ask questions, and share their insights. It enables them to process the text together and learn from each other's perspectives, thereby deepening comprehension collaboratively. Scavenger Hunt adds a playful twist by asking students to find specific words, phrases, or ideas in a text. This builds focus and sharpens their attention to detail, all while making it feel like a game rather than a task. Lastly, Vocabulary Pictionary brings words to life through art. Students draw vocabulary words instead of just defining them, which

Catch-Up Friday and the Reading Competence of Senior High School Technical-vocational-Livelihood Students

makes meaning stick and sparks creativity. It's especially helpful for visual learners and adds a light-hearted energy to the learning environment. Together, these activities make Catch-Up Friday not only effective but also enjoyable, helping students grow as readers while feeling motivated and connected.

D. Data Analysis: Once all the reading tests were completed and the data had been gathered, the researcher carefully organized everything and began the process of analyzing the results. To understand how well the students improved, she used different statistical tools that helped break down and make sense of the numbers.

Descriptive Statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages for describing respondents' performances t-scores in the CFA and RC of students. These helped paint a clear picture of how students performed overall, both in the pre-assessment and post-assessment, particularly in areas such as reading fluency and comprehension.

Inferential Statistics, such as the t-test for dependent means, are used to find the significant difference in their reading competence before and after implementation. This helped determine whether the improvement in scores was not just due to chance but was linked to the Catch-Up Friday program.

Overall, these tools allowed the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the results, back up her findings with data, and confidently draw conclusions about how much students grew in their reading skills through the intervention.

III. RESULTS

A. Findings: Frequency and Percentage Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Scores of Respondents in Reading Competence After Using Catch-Up Friday Reading Activities in terms of Reading Fluency, Rate/Speed, Accuracy, Prosody and Vocabulary.

Pre-test			Post-test				
Pre-test and Post-test Sig. (2-tailed)							
Assessment	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	df	
Reading Fluency	7.2000	2.31040	8.4000	1.92264	-6.000	29	.000
Rate/Speed	2.4667	.81931	2.9667	.66868	-4.785	29	.000
Accuracy	2.4333	.85836	2.6000	.72397	-1.409	29	.169
Prosody	2.2667	.78492	2.9000	.71197	-6.238	29	.000
Vocabulary	2.6000	1.00344	2.5667	.89763	.189	29	.851

Legend: Sig (2-tailed) ≤ .05 (Significant); Sig (2-tailed) ≥ .05 (Not significant)

The table presents a comparison of respondents' reading performance before and after joining the Catch-Up Friday program. It shows clear progress, especially in areas like reading fluency, speed, and prosody. The average score in reading fluency rose from 7.20 to 8.40, showing that respondents become smoother and more confident readers. The improvement was statistically significant, which means it's very likely that the changes were due to the program and not just random changes.

Similarly, reading speed increased from 2.47 to 2.97, suggesting that respondents began to read more quickly, and this gain was also significant. In prosody, which refers to expressive reading and natural rhythm, respondents showed noticeable improvement, with a mean score increasing from 2.27 to 2.90, indicating that their reading sounded more fluid and engaging.

However, the results for accuracy and vocabulary tell a different story. While accuracy did show a small increase from 2.43 to 2.60, it wasn't statistically significant, meaning the improvement wasn't strong enough to confirm that it was because of the intervention. Likewise, the vocabulary score slightly dropped from 2.60 to 2.57, and this change was minimal and not meaningful. This suggests that while the Catch-Up Friday sessions helped students with reading, particularly in terms of fluency and expression, they had little impact on how accurately students read or how many words they understood. Because of this, future efforts should include targeted strategies to boost accuracy and vocabulary, thereby fully supporting students' literacy growth.

While the Catch-up Friday reading intervention made an impact on many aspects of reading, particularly in how fluently and

Catch-Up Friday and the Reading Competence of Senior High School Technical-vocational-Livelihood Students

expressively they read, it's also important to look at where the changes weren't pronounced. Based on the data, there was no statistically significant improvement in accuracy and vocabulary. This means that although students may have made some progress in these areas, it wasn't enough to attribute it solely to the intervention confidently.

One reason for this could be that the sessions naturally emphasized fluency more, focusing on how well and smoothly students read aloud rather than drilling into the technical skills of decoding words accurately or expanding their vocabulary through repeated exposure and deeper practice.

Accuracy, for instance, requires focused attention on phonics, word recognition, and minimizing errors while reading. Vocabulary growth, on the other hand, takes time and requires frequent, meaningful engagement with new words across different contexts, something that may necessitate more targeted strategies than what was covered within the allotted time.

It was also possible that some students already had a fair understanding of basic vocabulary or word recognition, leaving less room for noticeable growth in a short-term program. Meanwhile, others may have needed more time, repetition, and differentiated support to show gains in these areas truly. In short, the results don't mean the intervention failed; they remind us that some reading skills, especially those that involve deeper understanding and accuracy, require more time and targeted teaching to develop. This is a useful insight for refining the next phase of the program.

Supporting these findings, studies by Pacana and Cabaguio (2024) emphasized that Catch-Up Fridays help bridge learning gaps and enhance students' outcomes. Similarly, Abejo et al. (2024) found the initiative to be effective in improving reading proficiency among Senior High Students. Like those studies, this current research confirms that Catch-Up Friday contributes significantly to reading competence, especially in terms of fluency, speed, and engagement, highlighting just how valuable structured reading time can be for literacy development.

Raymundo and Gomez (2024) emphasized that Catch-Up Friday has highlighted the varied educational needs of learners, enabling educators to tailor their teaching strategies better to meet the diverse needs of different students. Educators have recognized that the additional time affords important opportunities for differentiated instruction and individualized support, both of which are essential for cultivating a more inclusive learning environment. Requillo et al. (2024) stated that Catch-Up Fridays significantly impacted students' reading proficiency levels, suggesting a positive correlation between customized educational programs and improved literacy.

Sevillano (2024), and since the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays is a binding nationwide memorandum (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, s. 2024), it is thus recommended that teachers continue to implement the program while devising strategies to make the activities more engaging and interesting for learners.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Interpretation: Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of Catch-Up Friday made a meaningful and positive difference in students' reading competence. Most notably, students showed significant in their reading fluency, rate/speed, and prosody. The consistent rise in post-test scores, particularly with very strong p-values ($p = .000$), clearly demonstrates that structured, dedicated reading activities can have a powerful impact on helping students read more smoothly, quickly, and with great expression.

The result also highlighted the importance of structured reading exercises and regular practice. Students who were given the chance to participate in focused reading tasks each week were able to build their skills in a supportive, low-pressure environment. This suggests that integrating programs like Catch-Up Friday into the regular teaching routine is not just helpful. It's essential for encouraging students to grow confident in their improvement, emphasizing that reading competence benefits from both time and intentional effort.

However, the study also revealed that not all areas of reading improved equally. While students made strides in fluency, speed, and prosody, their vocabulary showed no significant progress. This suggests that while Catch-Up Friday was successful in enhancing students' reading skills, it may need to be strengthened to focus more directly on what students understand and the vocabulary they know. Extra support, in the form of vocabulary-building activities or targeted language instruction, may be necessary to develop students' reading comprehension and depth of understanding fully.

In conclusion, the study confirms that Catch-Up Friday is an effective tool for improving students' overall reading competence, particularly in fluency and expressiveness. However, for more balanced growth, future programs should also incorporate activities specifically designed to build vocabulary and reading accuracy. With a few thoughtful adjustments, Catch-Up Friday can become an even more powerful intervention to support literacy development among students.

Ultimately, the statistical results led to the acceptance of the hypothesis that Catch-Up Friday significantly improves students' reading fluency in terms of rate, accuracy, and prosody. However, the hypothesis related to vocabulary was not supported, as no significant improvement was observed in this area. Still, these findings tell a very human story of learners gaining momentum, finding rhythm, and reading aloud with a sense of pride. Even if vocabulary growth was limited, the progress in fluency reflects a crucial step forward. Students not only learned to read better, but many began to feel like readers for the first time. This emotional

and academic growth reinforces why such interventions matter and why they should be refined and continued.

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