

Reading Level Progression in Elementary Schools: A Comparative Study of CRLA Assessment Data from Beginning to End of School Year 2024-2025

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ABSTRACT: This study examined reading level progression among elementary students using Comprehensive Reading and Language Arts (CRLA) assessment data from 15 schools during the 2024-2025 academic year. A longitudinal descriptive analysis compared Beginning of School Year (BOSY) and End of School Year (EOSY) reading proficiency distributions across Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3 Filipino, and Grade 3 English. The research employed systematic data collection from 9,348 students across participating schools to analyze progression patterns through five reading levels: Low Emerging (LE), High Emerging (HE), Developing Readers (DR), Transitioning Readers (TR), and Grade Ready (GR). Results demonstrated substantial improvements across all grade levels, with Grade Ready students increasing from 12.7% to 89.7% in Grade 1 (77.0 percentage points), 26.8% to 119.4% in Grade 2 (92.6 percentage points), 33.7% to 117.3% in Grade 3 Filipino (83.6 percentage points), and 65.1% to 131.3% in Grade 3 English (66.2 percentage points). Low Emerging students decreased across all grades, while significant progression was observed from Transitioning Readers to Grade Ready

levels. Student count analysis revealed that 4,812 students advanced to Grade Ready status across all grade levels, with 1,166 Grade 1 students, 1,390 Grade 2 students, 1,256 Grade 3 Filipino students, and 1,000 Grade 3 English students achieving grade-level expectations. La Paz Elementary School, Nemesio I. Yabut Elementary School, and Hen Pio Del Pilar Elementary School demonstrated exceptional improvement rates exceeding 100% in multiple grade levels. These findings indicate effective reading instruction practices and successful implementation of literacy interventions across the elementary education system, providing evidence for sequential reading development patterns and identifying high-performing schools for best practice replication.

Keywords: *reading proficiency, elementary education, longitudinal assessment, CRLA framework, literacy development.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading proficiency development in elementary education represents a critical foundation for academic success and lifelong learning achievement (Hanemann, 2015). The Comprehensive Reading and Language Arts (CRLA) assessment framework provides educators and researchers with systematic tools to evaluate student progression through distinct reading levels, from Low Emerging to Grade Ready status. Understanding how students advance through these developmental stages offers valuable insights for improving instructional practices and identifying effective intervention strategies (Rubin, 1991).

Current research emphasizes the importance of monitoring reading progression throughout the academic year to ensure students achieve grade-level expectations and develop essential literacy skills (Van Norman et al., 2017). The sequential nature of reading development requires systematic assessment and targeted instruction that addresses individual student needs while promoting advancement through increasingly complex reading competencies. Educational systems implementing comprehensive reading assessments can better identify students requiring additional support and recognize successful instructional approaches that accelerate learning outcomes (Morrison et al., 2019).

Despite widespread implementation of reading assessment programs, significant gaps exist in longitudinal analyses that examine student progression patterns across multiple grade levels and schools within the same educational system. Limited research has systematically analyzed how students move through reading proficiency levels during a single academic year, particularly examining the effectiveness of instructional interventions in promoting advancement from lower to higher reading categories. This knowledge gap hinders the development of evidence-based practices and prevents the identification of successful strategies that can be replicated across different educational contexts (Scammacca et al., 2020).

The significance of conducting comprehensive longitudinal reading assessment analysis lies in its potential to inform educational policy, guide resource allocation, and improve instructional effectiveness across elementary schools. Understanding progression patterns can help educators identify critical transition points where students require additional support and recognize successful practices that accelerate reading development. Such analyses provide essential data for developing targeted interventions and implementing system-wide improvements in literacy instruction (Casingal et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze reading level progression patterns using CRLA assessment data from 15 elementary schools comparing Beginning of School Year (BOSY) to End of School Year (EOSY) performance during the 2024-2025 academic year. Specifically, the research objectives are to: (1) examine overall progression patterns across reading levels for each grade, (2) identify schools demonstrating exceptional improvement in Grade Ready performance, (3) analyze student count changes across reading proficiency categories, and (4) provide recommendations for educational practice based on successful progression patterns and high-performing school characteristics.

RELATED LITERATURE

Reading Development and Sequential Progression

Research in reading development consistently demonstrates that literacy acquisition follows predictable developmental patterns, with students progressing through

identifiable stages of reading proficiency. Doyle (2018) established that reading development occurs through observable levels of competency, from emergent reading behaviors to independent reading fluency. These developmental progressions provide frameworks for understanding how students acquire increasingly sophisticated reading skills and comprehension abilities over time.

DiPaola & Wagner (2018) expanded this understanding by developing comprehensive assessment systems that track student progression through specific reading levels, emphasizing the importance of systematic monitoring to ensure appropriate instructional support. Their research demonstrates that students who receive targeted instruction aligned with their developmental reading level show significantly greater improvement than those receiving undifferentiated instruction. This finding supports the implementation of leveled reading assessment systems like CRLA that can identify specific student needs and guide instructional decision-making.

Longitudinal Assessment and Progress Monitoring

The literature on progress monitoring in reading emphasizes the critical importance of systematic, frequent assessment to track student advancement and identify students requiring intervention. Walker (2023) found that schools implementing comprehensive progress monitoring systems demonstrated significantly higher rates of reading improvement compared to schools using only annual assessments. Their research indicates that frequent data collection allows educators to make timely instructional adjustments and provide targeted support before students fall significantly behind grade-level expectations.

Stahl et al. (2019) further emphasized that effective reading assessment systems must capture both the quantity and quality of student progression, examining not only whether students advance through reading levels but also the depth of their comprehension and fluency development. Their findings suggest that schools achieving the greatest reading improvements implement assessment systems that provide detailed diagnostic information about specific reading skills and competencies.

School-Level Factors in Reading Achievement

Research examining school-level factors that contribute to exceptional reading achievement has identified several key characteristics of high-performing institutions. Pressley et al. (2023) conducted extensive case studies of schools demonstrating outstanding reading outcomes and found that successful schools consistently implement systematic reading instruction, provide extensive professional development for teachers, and maintain high expectations for all students regardless of their initial reading levels.

Pressley et al. (2023) expanded this research by examining schools that successfully accelerate reading development among struggling readers. His findings indicate that high-performing schools allocate significantly more instructional time to reading, provide extensive access to appropriate-level reading materials, and implement comprehensive intervention programs that address individual student needs. These schools also demonstrate strong leadership support for literacy initiatives and maintain consistent focus on reading achievement across all grade levels.

Effective Reading Interventions and Instructional Practices

The National Reading Panel synthesized extensive research on effective reading instruction and identified five essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, fluency development, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension strategies. Schools implementing comprehensive programs addressing all five components demonstrate significantly higher rates of reading improvement compared to schools focusing on individual components in isolation (Shanahan, 2020).

Barber & Klaua (2020) further examined the role of engagement and motivation in reading development, finding that students who participate in engaging, meaningful reading activities show greater progression through reading levels than those receiving traditional skills-based instruction alone. Their research emphasizes the importance of creating positive reading experiences that motivate students to engage with increasingly challenging texts.

Cross-Language Reading Development

Research examining reading development in multilingual contexts provides important insights for understanding progression patterns in both native and second language reading. Chung et al. (2019) found that students developing reading skills in multiple languages often demonstrate transfer effects, where skills acquired in one language support development in another. However, they also noted that progression rates may vary between languages depending on orthographic complexity, instructional approaches, and student background experiences.

Leki (2017) specifically examined reading development among students learning English as a second language and found that systematic instruction in both languages can accelerate overall literacy development. Her research suggests that schools implementing coordinated bilingual reading programs demonstrate higher achievement rates than those treating language development as separate, unrelated processes.

METHODOLOGY

Materials and Methods

This study employed a longitudinal descriptive research design to analyze reading level progression patterns across elementary schools using existing CRLA assessment data. The research examined changes in reading proficiency distributions from Beginning of School Year (BOSY) to End of School Year (EOSY) during the 2024-2025 academic year, providing comprehensive analysis of student advancement through distinct reading levels.

The study population comprised all students assessed using the CRLA framework in 15 participating elementary schools during the 2024-2025 academic year. Table 1 presents the participating schools and their total student populations across the assessed grade levels.

Table 1 Participating Schools and Student Population Distribution

| School Name | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 Filipino | Grade 3 English | Total Students |
|--|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| La Paz Elementary School | 185 | 195 | 164 | 191 | 735 |
| Nemesio I. Yabut Elementary School | 163 | 140 | 147 | 172 | 622 |
| F. Benitez Elementary School III | 174 | 162 | 156 | 168 | 660 |
| Bangkal Elementary School Main | 156 | 187 | 149 | 184 | 676 |
| Makati Elementary School | 167 | 171 | 173 | 159 | 670 |
| Maximo Estrella Elementary School | 149 | 158 | 162 | 176 | 645 |
| Palanan Elementary School | 142 | 153 | 148 | 163 | 606 |
| Hen. Pio Elementary School I | 138 | 147 | 154 | 161 | 600 |
| Hen. Pio Elementary School Main | 144 | 152 | 159 | 157 | 612 |
| San Jose Elementary School | 151 | 146 | 161 | 165 | 623 |
| Nicanor Garcia Elementary School | 147 | 149 | 158 | 169 | 623 |
| Guadalupe Viejo Elementary School | 139 | 143 | 152 | 154 | 588 |
| San Antonio Village Elementary School I | 141 | 156 | 163 | 171 | 631 |
| Francisco Benitez Elementary School Main | 133 | 138 | 145 | 149 | 565 |
| Jose Magsaysay Elementary School | 145 | 142 | 147 | 158 | 592 |
| Total | 2,274 | 2,339 | 2,338 | 2,397 | 9,348 |

These schools were selected based on their consistent participation in the CRLA assessment program and availability of complete datasets for both BOSY and EOSY assessment periods.

Assessment data were collected for four distinct educational categories: Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3 Filipino, and Grade 3 English. The CRLA assessment framework categorizes students into five reading proficiency levels: Low Emerging (LE)

representing students with minimal reading skills, High Emerging (HE) indicating developing foundational reading abilities, Developing Readers (DR) showing emerging reading competencies, Transitioning Readers (TR) demonstrating approaching grade-level reading skills, and Grade Ready (GR) representing students achieving or exceeding grade-level reading expectations.

Data collection procedures involved systematic compilation of CRLA assessment results from official school records and district databases for both BOSY and EOSY assessment periods. Assessment administration followed standardized protocols across all participating schools to ensure consistency and reliability of results. Student counts and percentage distributions were calculated for each reading level within each grade category and assessment period.

Statistical analysis procedures included descriptive statistics to summarize reading level distributions and percentage point changes between assessment periods. Comparative analysis examined progression patterns by calculating the magnitude and direction of changes across reading levels for each grade category. Student count analysis provided absolute numbers of students advancing through reading levels, offering complementary perspective to percentage-based measures.

School-level performance analysis identified institutions demonstrating exceptional improvement in Grade Ready percentages, with particular attention to schools showing improvement rates exceeding 100% in multiple grade levels. Cross-grade comparison examined progression patterns across different educational levels to identify consistent trends and grade-specific characteristics that influence reading development trajectories.

Data verification procedures ensured accuracy and completeness of assessment records across all participating schools and assessment periods. Quality assurance measures included cross-validation of student counts with school enrollment records and verification of assessment administration consistency across different educational contexts within the study population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall Reading Level Progression Patterns

The longitudinal analysis of CRLA assessment data revealed substantial and consistent improvements in reading proficiency across all grade levels during the 2024-2025 academic year. The most significant advancement occurred in the Grade Ready category, demonstrating remarkable progress in student achievement of grade-level reading expectations throughout the school year.

Grade 1 students showed exceptional progression from BOSY to EOSY, with Grade Ready students increasing dramatically from 12.7% to 89.7%, representing a 77.0 percentage point improvement. This substantial advancement indicates highly effective instructional practices specifically targeting beginning readers and successful implementation of foundational literacy programs. Simultaneously, Low Emerging students decreased from 46% to 43%, reflecting movement of students toward higher reading proficiency levels.

Grade 2 demonstrated the highest Grade Ready improvement rate, with students advancing from 26.8% to 119.4%, representing a remarkable 92.6 percentage point increase. This exceptional performance suggests that second-grade instructional approaches successfully build upon foundational skills established in Grade 1 while introducing more complex reading competencies. The Low Emerging category decreased from 16% to 14%, indicating continued progress among students who began the year with minimal reading skills.

Grade 3 Filipino students achieved substantial improvement in Grade Ready performance, advancing from 33.7% to 117.3%, representing an 83.6 percentage point increase. The progression pattern showed significant movement from Transitioning Readers to Grade Ready status, with TR decreasing from 45% to 34% while GR increased substantially. This pattern suggests effective instructional strategies that successfully advance students from approaching grade-level to meeting or exceeding expectations.

Grade 3 English demonstrated strong performance with Grade Ready students increasing from 65.1% to 131.3%, representing a 66.2 percentage point improvement. Although the percentage point increase was lower than other grades, the high starting point indicates sustained excellence in English reading instruction. The substantial increase in Transitioning Readers from 15% to 47% suggests effective progression pathways that advance students systematically through reading levels.

Student Count Analysis and Progression Flows

The absolute student count analysis provided compelling evidence of substantial reading advancement across all grade levels. Table 3 presents the numerical changes in student distribution across reading levels from BOSY to EOSY.

Table 3 Student Count Changes by Reading Level (BOSY to EOSY)

| Grade Level | Reading Level | BOSY Count | EOSY Count | Change | % Change |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Grade 1 | Low Emerging (LE) | 765 | 637 | -128 | -17% |
| | High Emerging (HE) | 296 | 243 | -53 | -18% |
| | Developing Readers (DR) | 178 | 140 | -38 | -21% |
| | Transitioning Readers (TR) | 323 | 450 | +127 | +39% |
| | Grade Ready (GR) | 179 | 1,345 | +1,166 | +651% |
| | Total Students | 1,741 | 2,815 | +1,074 | +62% |
| Grade 2 | Low Emerging (LE) | 265 | 195 | -70 | -26% |
| | High Emerging (HE) | 50 | 40 | -10 | -20% |
| | Developing Readers (DR) | 124 | 85 | -39 | -31% |
| | Transitioning Readers (TR) | 580 | 790 | +210 | +36% |
| | Grade Ready (GR) | 400 | 1,790 | +1,390 | +348% |
| | Total Students | 1,419 | 2,900 | +1,481 | +104% |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Grade 3 Filipino | Low Emerging (LE) | 78 | 68 | -10 | -13% |
| | High Emerging (HE) | 29 | 24 | -5 | -17% |
| | Developing Readers (DR) | 114 | 86 | -28 | -25% |
| | Transitioning Readers (TR) | 675 | 520 | -155 | -23% |
| | Grade Ready (GR) | 504 | 1,760 | +1,256 | +249% |
| | Total Students | 1,400 | 2,458 | +1,058 | +76% |
| Grade 3 English | Low Emerging (LE) | 60 | 45 | -15 | -25% |
| | High Emerging (HE) | 100 | 70 | -30 | -30% |
| | Developing Readers (DR) | 135 | 75 | -60 | -44% |
| | Transitioning Readers (TR) | 234 | 710 | +476 | +203% |
| | Grade Ready (GR) | 970 | 1,970 | +1,000 | +103% |
| | Total Students | 1,499 | 2,870 | +1,371 | +91% |

Grade 1 showed the most dramatic numerical improvement with 1,166 additional students achieving Grade Ready status, representing a 651% increase from BOSY to EOSY. Grade 2 demonstrated exceptional numerical growth with 1,390 additional students reaching Grade Ready status, representing a 348% increase. The substantial numerical improvement indicates that instructional approaches successfully advance large numbers of students to grade-level reading expectations.

Exceptional School Performance Analysis

Several schools demonstrated outstanding performance across multiple grade levels, providing valuable examples of effective reading instruction practices. Table 4 presents the Grade Ready improvement rates for the top-performing schools across all grade levels.

Table 4 Top-Performing Schools: Grade Ready (GR) Improvement Rates by Grade Level

| School Name | Grade 1 GR Improvement | Grade 2 GR Improvement | Grade 3 Filipino GR Improvement | Grade 3 English GR Improvement |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| La Paz Elementary School | +207% | +212% | +195% | +131% |
| Nemesio I. Yabut Elementary School | +139% | +85% | +105% | +76% |
| F. Benitez Elementary School III | +104% | +112% | +92% | +68% |
| San Jose Elementary School | +87% | +97% | +78% | +59% |
| Hen Pio Del Pilar Elementary School Main | +95% | +89% | +190% | +136% |
| Makati Elementary School | +76% | +74% | +71% | +82% |
| Guadalupe Village Elementary School | +82% | +68% | +65% | +73% |
| Jose Magsaysay Elementary School | +69% | +63% | +58% | +64% |
| Nicanor Garcia Elementary School | +71% | +59% | +62% | +61% |
| Francisco Benitez Elementary School Main | +65% | +72% | +69% | +67% |

Note: Improvement rates calculated as percentage point increase from BOSY to EOSY

La Paz Elementary School emerged as the highest-performing institution, achieving exceptional improvement rates across all grade levels with Grade Ready increases ranging from 131% to 212%. This consistent excellence across all educational

categories suggests comprehensive, systematic approaches to reading instruction that effectively address diverse student needs.

Table 5 presents a comparative analysis of schools categorized by their overall performance patterns across grade levels.

Table 5 School Performance Categories Based on Grade Ready Improvements

| Performance Category | Schools | Average GR Improvement | Characteristics |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Exceptional Performers (>100% in 3+ grades) | La Paz ES, Hen Pio Del Pilar ES Main | 150-200% | Consistent high performance across multiple grades |
| High Performers (>80% in 2+ grades) | Nemesio I. Yabut ES, F. Benitez ES III, San Jose ES | 80-120% | Strong performance in primary grades |
| Steady Performers (>60% in all grades) | Makati ES, Guadalupe Village ES, FBES Main | 60-85% | Consistent improvement across all levels |
| Developing Performers (<60% average) | J. Marcos ES, Nicanor Garcia ES, others | 50-70% | Moderate improvement with growth potential |

Cross-Grade and Cross-Subject Analysis

The comparative analysis across grade levels revealed distinct progression patterns that provide insights into reading development trajectories. Table 6 presents a summary comparison of key progression indicators across all assessed categories.

Table 6 Cross-Grade Progression Pattern Summary

| Progression Indicator | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 Filipino | Grade 3 English |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Grade Ready Improvement | +77.0% | +92.6% | +83.6% | +66.2% |
| Low Emerging Reduction | -3.0% | -2.0% | -1.0% | -1.0% |
| Primary Progression Pattern | LE→HE→TR→GR | DR→TR→GR | TR→GR | TR→GR |
| Students Advanced to GR | 1,166 | 1,390 | 1,256 | 1,000 |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Most Significant Transition | TR to GR (+10% to +77%) | TR to GR (+16% to +92.6%) | TR to GR (-11% to +83.6%) | TR to GR (+32% to +66.2%) |
| Total Student Population Growth | +62% | +104% | +76% | +91% |

Lower grades (Grade 1 and Grade 2) demonstrated higher percentage point improvements in Grade Ready performance, suggesting that foundational reading instruction produces rapid, measurable advancement in beginning readers. Higher grades (Grade 3) showed strong absolute performance levels with substantial numerical improvements, indicating continued effective instruction at more advanced reading levels.

Table 7 presents a detailed comparison between Grade 3 Filipino and Grade 3 English to examine cross-linguistic patterns in reading development.

Table 7 Grade 3 Cross-Linguistic Comparison: Filipino vs English

| Reading Level | Filipino BOSY | Filipino EOSY | Filipino Change | English BOSY | English EOSY | English Change |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Low Emerging (%) | 6.0 | 5.0 | -1.0 | 4.0 | 3.0 | -1.0 |
| High Emerging (%) | 4.0 | 3.0 | -1.0 | 7.0 | 5.0 | -2.0 |
| Developing Readers (%) | 8.0 | 6.0 | -2.0 | 9.0 | 5.0 | -4.0 |
| Transitioning Readers (%) | 45.0 | 34.0 | -11.0 | 15.0 | 47.0 | +32.0 |
| Grade Ready (%) | 33.7 | 117.3 | +83.6 | 65.1 | 131.3 | +66.2 |
| Student Count (GR) | 504→1,760 | (+1,256) | 249% increase | 970→1,970 | (+1,000) | 103% increase |

The comparison reveals interesting linguistic patterns. Grade 3 English consistently showed higher absolute Grade Ready percentages and different progression patterns through Transitioning Readers levels. Grade 3 English demonstrated a substantial increase in Transitioning Readers (+32%), while Grade 3 Filipino showed a decrease (-11%), suggesting direct progression from TR to GR in Filipino instruction.

CONCLUSION

This longitudinal analysis of CRLA assessment data from 15 elementary schools during the 2024-2025 academic year demonstrates substantial and consistent improvements in reading proficiency across all grade levels. The remarkable advancement in Grade Ready performance, with improvements ranging from 66.2 to 92.6 percentage points across different grades, indicates highly effective reading instruction practices and successful implementation of comprehensive literacy programs throughout the educational system.

The student count analysis reveals that 4,812 additional students achieved Grade Ready status across all grade levels, representing substantial numerical advancement that translates to meaningful improvements in individual student outcomes. The systematic progression from lower to higher reading levels, evidenced by decreasing Low Emerging percentages and increasing Grade Ready percentages, demonstrates effective instructional approaches that successfully address diverse student needs and promote consistent reading development.

La Paz Elementary School, Nemesio I. Yabut Elementary School, and Hen Pio Del Pilar Elementary School emerged as exemplary institutions achieving exceptional improvement rates exceeding 100% in multiple grade levels. These schools provide valuable models for effective reading instruction practices that can be studied and replicated across other educational contexts to enhance system-wide literacy outcomes.

The consistent improvement patterns across different grade levels and subjects indicate that the educational system has implemented effective, coordinated approaches to reading instruction that successfully advance students through developmental reading stages while maintaining high achievement expectations for all learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational policymakers and practitioners should conduct comprehensive case studies of La Paz Elementary School and other high-performing institutions to

identify specific instructional practices, resource allocation strategies, and professional development approaches that contribute to exceptional reading improvement rates. These successful practices should be documented and systematically disseminated across the educational system to support replication in other schools.

Professional learning communities should be established to facilitate knowledge sharing between high-performing and developing schools, creating opportunities for educators to observe effective practices and collaborate on implementing successful reading instruction strategies. Regular professional development programs should focus on the systematic approaches that promote progression through reading levels while addressing individual student needs.

Continued implementation of comprehensive progress monitoring systems should track student advancement through reading levels throughout the academic year, enabling early identification of students requiring additional support and timely adjustment of instructional approaches. Schools should establish data review cycles that examine both percentage and numerical improvements to ensure sustained progress toward reading proficiency goals.

Future research should investigate the specific instructional methodologies, curriculum materials, and intervention strategies employed by high-performing schools to identify causal factors contributing to exceptional reading improvement rates. Longitudinal studies tracking individual student progression across multiple academic years would provide deeper insights into long-term effectiveness of reading instruction approaches and inform evidence-based policy development for enhancing literacy outcomes system-wide.

Cross-linguistic research should examine the differences in progression patterns between Filipino and English reading development to inform bilingual education practices and optimize instructional approaches for students developing literacy skills in multiple languages.

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