READING COMPREHENSION LEVELS, SKILLS AND PRACTICES OF ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM (ALS) GRADES 11 AND 12 STUDENTS TOWARDS SHS ALS READING ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Anne Marie S. Fajardo
University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, Las Piñas Campus
PHILIPPINES
annemarie.fajardo@deped.gov.ph

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the reading comprehension levels, skills and practices of Senior High School students in Biñan City of Laguna who were enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) for the 2024–2025 school year. The study used a descriptive-correlational design using the PHIL-IRI tool to find out how well the respondents understood what they read. It also used a researcher-made questionnaire to find out how well the respondents understood what they read, how they read, and how motivated they were to read. The study included 70 ALS SHS students. The demographic profile showed that most of them were 16 to 20 years old (47.10%), female (61.40%), in 12th grade (80.00%), and had been in ALS for 1 to 2 years (55.70%). The PHIL-IRI results showed that 67.10% of students were under frustration level whereas just 14.30% were independent. The respondents did "Very Satisfactory" in terms of their comprehension skills, with weighted means of 2.62 for Literal, 2.58 for Inferential, and 2.61 for Critical. Their reading habits and motivation got a score of "To a Moderate Extent," with means of 2.63 and 2.79, respectively. When divided by age (p = .645), sex (p = .367), grade level (p = .579), and years in ALS (p = .401), there was no significant difference in reading comprehension skills. In the same way, there was no significant difference in comprehension skills depending on demographic factors, such as literal (p = .446), inferential (p = .449), and critical (p = .446) skills. There was no significant relationship in between demographic profile and reading habits or motivation when Pearson r correlations were used. There was, however, a very strong positive relationship between reading habits and comprehension skills (e.g., r = .746 for literal) and between reading motivation and comprehension skills (e.g., r = .739 for literal), all at p = .000. These results show how important it is to have different reading improvement programs for students at different levels of understanding. The study ends with a suggested action plan to help students who are under the frustration level or at the instructional level to improve their reading habits and motivation.

Keywords: *ALS, PHIL-IRI, Reading Comprehension, Reading Practices*

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO (2022) conducted a research study on literacy across 20 countries, revealing that around 770 million adults worldwide lack fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. Most of these countries are classified as low- and middle-income, where individuals often cannot complete formal education due to financial constraints, family responsibilities, early employment, or migration. In response, various nations have developed flexible learning systems to integrate marginalized youth and adult learners into the educational framework. Examples include Brazil's

Educação de Jovens e Adultos (EJA) program and South Africa's *Kha Ri Gude* program, both of which provide alternative, community-based education using local languages and contextualized materials to enhance relevance and engagement. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) developed the Alternative Learning System (ALS), a parallel program designed to serve out-of-school youth and adults who were unable to complete basic formal education. This aligns with the global push for inclusive education, offering a student-centered and flexible approach tailored to learners' specific needs. ALS serves as a bridge to close learning gaps and provides second-chance opportunities for both personal and academic advancement.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution underscored the necessity to develop and support an integrated education system. This directive is operationalized through laws such as Republic Act 11510, or the Alternative Learning System Act of 2020, and RA 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. These laws mandate the full implementation of ALS to ensure equitable access to quality basic education. Supporting this, DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2019, or the *Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the Enhanced ALS*, highlights reading comprehension as a critical skill, foundational not only for communication but also for employability and lifelong learning.

Consistent with DepEd's program, Biñan Integrated National High School and Biñan City Senior High School—Timbao Campus became the first institutions in the District of Biñan Laguna to offer "second chance" education for out-of-school youth and adults. Given the challenges ALS Senior High School (SHS) learners face, such as varied educational backgrounds, limited instructional time, and diverse learning needs, assessing their reading comprehension is essential to understand their ability to process text beyond mere decoding.

A standardized reading proficiency assessment is vital to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses. The outcomes of such assessments inform the design of reading programs tailored for ALS SHS students, thereby preparing them for academic and personal growth. Galang et al. (2023), through their study on the Casaup-Literacy Program, emphasized the necessity of diagnostic tools to properly evaluate reading skills among ALS learners. Similarly, Gregorio (2024) highlighted the benefits of structured reading sessions and tailored teaching approaches to enhance comprehension.

Despite existing efforts, there remains limited research on assessing the reading comprehension skills of Grade 11 ALS students using standardized measures like the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). While Phil-IRI is widely employed in formal education, its application within the ALS context, especially for SHS learners, is underexplored. Using this tool can help classify learners by reading level—independent, instructional, or frustration—and guide interventions to improve comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that impacts students' academic trajectories and later professional success. It also aligns with the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum's emphasis on 21st-century skills. Recent functional literacy assessments among Junior High School graduates reveal concerning outcomes, suggesting that if ALS graduates were similarly assessed, the results could be even more troubling. This underscores the need to include ALS learners in such evaluations to combat functional illiteracy effectively.

As an ALS English teacher in Biñan City, Laguna, I have observed firsthand the varied literacy challenges faced by learners from diverse educational backgrounds. This study serves to obtain accurate data on the current reading comprehension strengths and weaknesses of ALS students. The findings will enable teachers to create targeted, inclusive, and contextually relevant reading interventions that align with real-life demands.

Reading comprehension among ALS SHS learners is crucial, as deficiencies hinder academic tasks, critical thinking, and effective communication, potentially limiting future employment or higher education opportunities. By using assessments like Phil-IRI, educators can pinpoint skill gaps and develop appropriate strategies. Given the significant learning and age gaps observed since the program's implementation at Biñan Integrated National High School, a standardized tool is essential for guiding instruction and ensuring learners become competent, employable graduates.

In line with the K–12 curriculum's vision and to address non-standardized assessments and anecdotal reports of ALS students struggling with complex texts, this study employs the PHIL-IRI reading framework. This systematic, internationally comparable assessment will help evaluate and enhance reading comprehension among ALS learners.

Thus, this research aims to assess the reading comprehension levels, skills, and practices of SHS ALS students in the division of Biñan City Laguna that offers ALS SHS Program. The results will serve as the basis for a reading program specifically crafted to address the unique comprehension needs of out-of-school youth and adult learners in the ALS program.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Reading Comprehension: A Critical Educational Competency

Reading comprehension is widely recognized as a foundational skill essential for academic achievement and lifelong learning. According to Snow (2020), comprehension extends beyond decoding words; it involves constructing meaning, making inferences, and critically evaluating text. In the Philippine educational context, reading comprehension remains a persistent concern, particularly for learners in non-formal and alternative learning systems who often lag behind their peers in formal education (Garcia, 2020).

Alternative Learning System and Literacy Development

The Department of Education's Alternative Learning System (ALS) is designed as a parallel learning system to address the educational needs of out-of-school youth and adults. While it serves as an inclusive mechanism to achieve Education For All goals, studies indicate that many ALS learners struggle with literacy. De Leon (2023) reported that a significant number of ALS students tested under PHIL-IRI were classified at the frustration level, indicating serious difficulties in independently understanding grade-level texts. Villanueva (2023) emphasized that PHIL-IRI, though commonly administered in formal settings, offers diagnostic potential for ALS when tailored appropriately.

Reading Comprehension Skills: Literal, Inferential, and Critical Dimensions

Comprehension is multidimensional, typically assessed through literal, inferential, and critical (evaluative) skills. Literal comprehension involves understanding explicit details, inferential comprehension requires deriving implied meanings, and critical comprehension demands judgment and evaluation of content (Tompkins, 2020). Hernandez (2023) found that ALS students often demonstrate relative strength in literal comprehension but encounter substantial challenges with inferential and critical analysis, highlighting the need for targeted instructional interventions.

Reading Practices: Habits and Motivation

Numerous studies highlight the role of reading habits and motivation in enhancing comprehension. Wigfield and Guthrie's (2021) expectancy-value theory posits that students who value reading and believe in their competence are more engaged and achieve better comprehension outcomes. Inderjit (2021) similarly found that Filipino ALS learners with strong intrinsic motivation and exposure to reading-friendly environments performed significantly better on reading assessments.

However, Ali and Basit (2020) caution that motivation alone does not guarantee comprehension gains without adequate scaffolding. Their research showed that even motivated learners struggled when faced with poorly organized texts or lacked explicit reading strategies. This suggests that motivation and structured instructional support must work in tandem.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which underscores the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in learning. Guided reading practices and teacher mediation are crucial in bridging ALS learners' current literacy levels with higher-order comprehension skills. Anderson's Schema Theory further informs this research, positing that readers integrate new information with existing knowledge structures, which implies the importance of contextually relevant reading materials to facilitate comprehension.

Local Gaps and the Need for Programmatic Interventions

In the local context of Biñan City's ALS Senior High School programs, there is a limited literature examining reading comprehension levels, specific skill domains, and their relationship with reading habits and motivation. This study thus seeks to fill that gap by employing the PHIL-IRI as a diagnostic tool not merely to classify reading levels but also to inform the design of an ALS Reading Enhancement Program. By examining how reading motivation and habits correlate with comprehension skills, this study aligns with prior research while offering contextually grounded recommendations to improve literacy outcomes among ALS learners.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the reading comprehension levels, skills, and practices of ALS Senior High School students, and to examine the relationships among these variables. This design was chosen because it is appropriate for identifying patterns, assessing prevailing conditions, and exploring correlations without manipulating the study environment.

Participants And Sampling Technique
The respondents of this study were 70 ALS Senior High School learners enrolled at Biñan Integrated National High School and Biñan City Senior High School – Timbao Campus, the only two schools in Biñan City offering the ALS Senior High School program during the academic year 2024–2025. Given the limited population, the study utilized total enumeration sampling, involving all ALS SHS learners from these institutions to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Research Instruments
Two primary instruments were used to gather data. The first was the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI), a standardized tool developed by the Department of Education, which was administered to assess the respondents' reading comprehension levels and to classify them into independent, instructional, and frustration levels. The second instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire designed to measure reading comprehension skills—specifically literal, inferential, and critical (evaluative) comprehension—as well as reading practices, including habits and motivation, through structured Likert scale items.

Validation And Reliability
The researcher-made questionnaire underwent expert validation by a panel of three specialists in English education and educational research. The experts evaluated each item's clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Items receiving ratings below acceptable standards were revised or replaced based on the panel's recommendations. Following validation, a pilot test was conducted with 20 ALS learners who were not part of the final sample. The data gathered were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, which confirmed the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

Data Gathering Procedure
Prior to data collection, formal approval was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent of Biñan City, followed by the consent of the principals of the participating schools. The researcher then coordinated with ALS Coordinators and Mobile Teachers to facilitate the data gathering process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with parental or guardian consent secured for minors. The PHIL-IRI was administered to assess reading comprehension levels, followed by the supervised completion of the researcher-made questionnaire to collect data on comprehension skills, reading habits, and motivation.

Statistical Treatment of Data
Data collected were encoded and analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the demographic profile, reading comprehension levels, skills, and practices of the respondents.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine significant differences in reading comprehension levels, skills, and reading practices when grouped according to demographic variables. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to establish the relationship between reading comprehension skills and reading practices. A 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) was used as the decision criterion for all inferential tests.

RESULTS
Demographic Profile of The Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of ALS Senior High School students in terms of age, sex, grade level, and years in ALS. The majority were aged 16–20 (47.1%) and female (61.4%). Most respondents were in Grade 12 (80%) and had been enrolled in ALS for 1–2 years (55.7%).

Table 1
Demographic Profile Of ALS SHS Students

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16–20	33	47.1
21–25	18	25.7
26–30	9	12.9
31–35	3	4.3
36–40	1	1.4
41–45	3	4.3
46 and above	3	4.3
Male	27	38.6
Female	43	61.4
Grade 11	14	20.0
Grade 12	56	80.0
<1 year	8	11.4
1–2 years	39	55.7
>2 years	23	32.9

Reading Comprehension Levels Of The Respondents
Table 2 presents the PHIL-IRI assessment results. It reveals that 67.1% of ALS SHS students were at the frustration level, while only 14.3% were at the independent level.

Table 2
Reading Comprehension Levels Based On PHIL-IRI

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frustration	47	67.1
Instructional	13	18.6
Independent	10	14.3

Extent Of Reading Comprehension Skills
Table 3 indicates that respondents' comprehension skills across literal, inferential, and critical domains were rated 'Very Satisfactory,' with means ranging from 2.58 to 2.62.

Table 3
Reading Comprehension Skills

Skill	Mean	Interpretation
Literal	2.62	Very Satisfactory
Inferential	2.58	Very Satisfactory
Critical	2.61	Very Satisfactory

Level Of Reading Practices

Table 4 shows that reading habits and motivation were both interpreted as 'Moderate,' with means of 2.63 and 2.79 respectively.

Table 4
Reading Practices Of ALS SHS Students

Practice	Mean	Interpretation
Reading Habits	2.63	Moderate
Reading Motivation	2.79	Moderate

Relationships Between Reading Practices And Comprehension Skills

Table 5 displays the Pearson correlation results, revealing strong positive relationships between reading practices and comprehension skills. All correlations were significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table 5
Correlation Between Reading Practices And Comprehension Skills

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Reading Habits vs. Comprehension	.746	.000	Very Strong Positive
Reading Motivation vs. Comprehension	.739	.000	Very Strong Positive

DISCUSSION
Demographic Profile of The Respondents

The demographic data revealed that nearly half of the ALS Senior High School students were aged 16–20, and a substantial majority were female. Most were enrolled in Grade 12 and had been in the ALS program for 1–2 years. This distribution underscores the reality that ALS serves as a crucial educational pathway for young learners who, for various reasons, have been outside the conventional schooling system. It also reflects trends noted by Garcia (2020) and De Leon (2023) regarding the age and gender demographics prevalent in ALS programs, where economic and family factors often delay or disrupt formal education.

Reading Comprehension Levels of The Respondents

The PHIL-IRI assessment results showed that 67.1% of the respondents were at the frustration level, indicating considerable difficulties in reading independently. Only a small fraction reached the independent level. This finding is consistent with Villanueva (2023), who highlighted that many ALS learners struggle with grade-level texts without teacher scaffolding. The prevalence of students at the frustration level emphasizes the urgent need for tailored interventions in reading instruction within the ALS framework.

Extent Of Reading Comprehension Skills

The study found that while students generally achieved "Very Satisfactory" mean ratings across literal, inferential, and critical comprehension skills, these scores still signal room for substantial improvement, especially given their PHIL-IRI levels. The slightly lower mean in inferential comprehension (2.58) suggests that making logical connections and interpreting implied meanings remains particularly challenging, aligning with Tompkins' (2020) observation that such higher-order skills require explicit, structured teaching approaches.

Level Of Reading Practices

Reading habits and motivation were both rated as moderate, indicating that while ALS learners possess some degree of engagement with reading, it is not yet robust enough to translate into strong independent comprehension. This is reflective of Wigfield and Guthrie's (2021) expectancy-value framework, which argues that students' perceptions of reading's value and their self-belief significantly influence sustained reading behavior.

Relationships Between Reading Practices And Comprehension Skills

Correlation analysis demonstrated very strong positive relationships between reading practices—both habits and motivation—and reading comprehension skills, with r-values of .746 and .739 respectively. This mirrors findings by Inderjit (2021), who reported that motivated and habitually engaged readers tend to perform better in comprehension tasks. However, Ali and Basit (2020) cautioned that motivation alone does not ensure comprehension gains without accompanying scaffolding, a point underscoring the need for well-planned instructional support alongside motivational strategies.

Implications For ALS Programs

These results highlight critical areas for programmatic focus. Given the high proportion of learners at the frustration level, ALS programs should prioritize diagnostic assessments like PHIL-IRI not merely for compliance but as foundations for individualized reading interventions. Additionally, the clear linkage between reading practices and comprehension skills underscores the necessity of fostering reading-friendly environments and integrating strategies that simultaneously build motivation, habits, and comprehension proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

Reading Comprehension Levels Of ALS SHS Students

Based on the PHIL-IRI assessment, the majority of ALS Senior High School students in Biñan City were found to be at the frustration level, indicating significant challenges in understanding grade-level texts independently. Only a small proportion reached the instructional and independent levels, highlighting the pressing need for remedial reading interventions within the ALS program.

Extent of Reading Comprehension Skills

The respondents demonstrated "Very Satisfactory" competence in literal, inferential, and critical comprehension skills. However, these skills did not fully translate into independent reading proficiency, as suggested by the PHIL-IRI results. This indicates that while ALS learners can engage with structured comprehension tasks, deeper understanding and autonomous application require further strengthening.

Reading Practices of The Respondents
Findings revealed that the reading habits and motivation of ALS SHS students were at a moderate level. This suggests that while learners exhibit some positive engagement with reading activities, their practices are not yet consistent or robust enough to drive higher comprehension outcomes independently.

Relationships Among Reading Variables
The study established very strong positive correlations between reading practices—both habits and motivation—and reading comprehension skills. This affirms that learners who are more motivated and who engage regularly in reading are more likely to exhibit higher levels of comprehension skill across literal, inferential, and critical domains.

Implications For ALS Program Development
Overall, the study underscores the critical importance of integrating structured reading enhancement programs within the ALS Senior High School framework. Fostering stronger reading habits and motivation, paired with targeted instruction in comprehension skills, can significantly contribute to improving literacy outcomes for ALS learners in Biñan City.

My professors at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, thank you for your dedication, knowledge, and commitment to nurturing lifelong learners and researchers like me.

My colleagues and dear friends, your support, kind words, and shared experiences truly lightened this academic pursuit. Thank you for walking with me through this journey.

To my beloved husband, **Carlos Erwin**, and our wonderful children, **Francis Dominic , Benedict, and Matthew**, thank you for being my unwavering pillars of strength. Your love, patience, and understanding gave me the courage to continue despite the many sacrifices.

To my mom, Edna and Antoine, my siblings , Eugene and Kristine —thank you for your enduring love, faith, and prayers. Your belief in me fueled my determination and inspired me to strive harder.

Finally, to everyone who contributed, whether in small or significant ways, your presence and help did not go unnoticed. This accomplishment is not mine alone—it is a shared success with all of you.

AMSF

REFERENCES

Abad, G. R., & Galleto, P. G. (2020). Alternative learning system program's implementation landscape of a division in the Philippines. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*.

Abril, R. L., Garcia, J. M., & Santos, D. M. (2022). Evaluating the effectiveness of the PHIL-IRI in identifying reading difficulties among ALS learners. *Philippine Journal of Educational Measurement, 14*(2), 55–70.

Abocejo, F. T. (n.d.). *The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Program: A critical analysis*. ResearchGate.

Academic English UK. (2022). *Idioms and reading comprehension resources*. Retrieved from https://academic-englishuk.com/

Ahmed, S., & El-Sayed, F. (2021). Literacy interventions in alternative education: Assessment tools and outcomes. *International Journal of Literacy Studies, 10*(3), 44–59.

Bautista, M. L. (2021). Assessing the literacy skills of ALS learners using informal reading inventories. *Philippine Journal of Alternative Education, 9*(1), 14–27.

Beers, K., & Probst, R. E. (2022). *Disrupting thinking: Why how we read matters*. Scholastic.

Brown, T., & Patel, A. (2025). Improving reading comprehension skills in marginalized learners. *Global Literacy Review, 15*(2), 70–89.

Castro, Q. A. S. (2025). Frustration readers in senior high school: A case study. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 8*(12), 2396–2402.

Catacutan, R. M. (2025). Home-related factors influencing the learning continuity and levels of learning continuity of Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners: Foundation for an enhanced learning continuity program. *International Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Science, 9*(2), Article 0923. https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2025.0923

Chong, W., & Lee, C. (2022). Context-based reading assessments for non-traditional learners. *Asian Journal of Education, 14*(1), 23–41.

Cruz, J. P., & dela Paz, R. (2022). Improving reading comprehension among Grade 11 ALS students using the PHIL-IRI tool. *ALS Research Journal, 4*(2), 23–38.

Cummine, J., Ostevik, A., Cheema, A., & Cullum, C. (2023). Adult learner perspectives on skill- and life-based outcomes following literacy remediation.

De Leon, V. (2023). Functional literacy levels of Alternative Learning System learners: A reading comprehension analysis. *Biñan City Education Review, 7*(1), 45–59.

Department of Education. (2018). *Policy guidelines on administering the revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI)* (DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018). Department of Education.

Educational Leadership Magazine. (2022). Closing the reading gap: What the research says. *Educational Leadership*.

Evans, M. (2021). Informal reading inventories and functional literacy outcomes. *International Reading Journal, 11*(4), 35–52.

Fabillaran, K. (2024). Reading profile assessment: The interplay of fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension among junior high school learners. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*.

Fernandez, R., & Ortega, M. (2023). Comprehension strategies for alternative education programs. *European Literacy Studies, 17*(1), 56–73.

Gabl, K., Kaiser, L., Long, J., & Roemer, J. (2020). *Improving reading comprehension and fluency through the use of guided reading* (Master's thesis, Saint Xavier University).

Galang, R. T., Arrozal, J., Batu, C. B., & 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.

Garcia, E. M. (2020). Reading comprehension skills and their relation to PHIL-IRI performance among ALS students. *The Filipino Educator, 3*(3), 12–25.

Garcia, P., & Smith, R. (2020). Reading skills assessment using informal tools: Best practices. *Journal of Adult Education, 7*(2), 14–29.

Gebremariam, M. K., & Gedamu, A. D. (2022). Higher Order Thinking Skills in Reading Literacy Questions: A Case Study of Ethiopian Secondary Schools.

Gomez, P. R., & Reyes, L. (2021). Integrating PHIL-IRI into ALS literacy programs in Laguna. *Philippine Educational Research Quarterly, 5*(2), 34–49.

Grant, L. (2022). Assessing literacy in second-chance education. *Alternative Learning Research, 13*(1), 44–60.

Guthrie, J. T., & Klauda, S. L. (2020). *Building comprehension in every classroom*. Teachers College Press.

Hernandez, C. (2022). Challenges in reading comprehension among senior high ALS students: A case study. *Journal of Philippine Alternative Learning, 6*(4), 77–91.

Hernandez, M. (2023). Developing critical reading skills through contextualized testing. *International Journal of Alternative Learning, 12*(2), 78–95.

International Literacy Association. (2021). *Literacy leadership brief: Assessment for literacy learning*. Newark, DE: ILA.

Jimenez, F., & Lopez, A. (2023). Evaluating reading fluency and comprehension through PHIL-IRI in Alternative Learning Systems. *Manila Literacy Studies, 8*(1), 15–30.

Jolly, D. (2022). Impact of academic performance, personality types, self-efficacy and demographic profile to the employability skills of alternative learning system learners.

Personality Types, Self-Efficacy and Demographic Profile to the Employability Skills of Alternative Learning System Learners.

Jones, S., & Parker, K. (2020). Literacy needs in alternative learning settings: An assessment perspective. *World Education Studies, 9*(3), 20–37.

Kim, H., & Zhao, Y. (2021). PISA frameworks for alternative learning programs. *Asian Journal of Open Learning, 8*(1), 25–42.

Lee, J. (2024). Exploring reading competency in marginalized youth. *Journal of Education for All, 16*(1), 37–53.

Lim, S. G. (2024). Literacy assessment tools for ALS students: A comparative study. *University of the Philippines Education Journal, 10*(1), 42–58.

Manalo, J., & Francisco, R. (2022). Early detection of reading disabilities among ALS students through PHIL-IRI. *ALS Learning and Literacy Review.*

Maramag, M. P. (2022). Reading difficulties and reading behaviors of Alternative Learning System (ALS) learners. *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education, 3*(June), 102–120.

Mendoza, R. (2020). Application of the PHIL-IRI tool in assessing non-traditional learners. *Southeast Asian Journal of Open Learning, 2*(1), 22–39.

Mustika, N., Nurkamto, J., & Suparno, S. (2020). The effect of higher cognitive questions on students' critical thinking skills.

National Geographic Learning. (2024). *Language and literacy in the 21st century*. National Geographic Learning.

Ndhlovu, N., & Mahlangu, M. (2021). Functional literacy testing among adult learners. *African Journal of Open Education, 7*(2), 45–62.

Nguyen, H., & Perez, A. (2022). Context-based reading comprehension in ASEAN literacy programs. *Southeast Asian Journal of Educational Research, 10*(3), 50–67.

OECD. (2021). *21st-century readers: Developing literacy skills in a digital world*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Ong, J. P. (2021). Using the PHIL-IRI tool for diagnostic assessment in ALS programs. *Philippine Journal of Literacy, 5*(3), 20–35.

Paige, D. D. (2020, July 30). *Reading fluency: A brief history, the importance of supporting processes, and the role of assessment.*

Pascual, D. (2023). Reading difficulties and PHIL-IRI assessment results of ALS students. *ALS Learning and Literacy Review, 9*(2), 60–75.

Perez, A. (2022). The effectiveness of context-based reading materials for ALS learners. *Philippine Literacy Quarterly, 7*(3), 30–48.

Ramirez, M., & Santos, B. (2021). Bridging gaps in reading comprehension among Filipino ALS learners. *Educational Innovation Review Philippines, 6*(4), 40–54.

Reyes, C. F., & Tan, M. (2024). PHIL-IRI as a predictor of academic success among ALS learners. *Philippine Open Education Studies, 8*(1), 15–30.

Rivera, J., & Santiago, D. (2021). Informal assessment tools and their impact on literacy outcomes. *Journal of Global Education Research, 15*(2), 29–45.

Sanchez, M. (2020). Assessing reading skills in multilingual alternative classrooms. *International Literacy Forum, 13*(2), 33–49.

Santiago, L. (2024). Impact of reading interventions on PHIL-IRI scores among ALS students. *Journal of Alternative Education Research, 11*(1), 18–32.

Santos, L. G., & Villanueva, K. B. (2023). Diagnostic use of PHIL-IRI in designing remedial reading programs for ALS students. *Philippine Basic Education Journal, 9*(1), 50–65.

Smith, D. (2022). Evaluating reading programs for non-traditional learners. *Journal of Adult Literacy Research, 9*(1), 60–78.

Soriano, J. M. (2024). Predicting A&E test success from PHIL-IRI diagnostic results. *Philippine Journal of Open Schooling, 7*(2), 45–59.

Stamou, L., Tsoli, K., & Babalis, T. (n.d.). *The role of counseling for non-traditional students in formal higher education: A scoping review*. Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece.

Tambis, R. C., Delos Reyes, J. R., & Mojica, A. L. (2023). PHIL-IRI diagnostic results of Grade 11 ALS learners in Biliran: Implications for intervention. *ALS Literacy Journal, 5*(2), 88–101.

Tomas, M. J. L., Villaros, E. T., & Galman, S. M. A. (2021). The perceived challenges in reading of learners: Basis for school reading programs. *Journal of Social Sciences, 9*(5), Article 9.

Tongco, M. D. C. (2020). Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection in educational research. *Asian Journal of Education Research, 7*(2), 58–67.

Villanueva, K. (2023). Strategies to improve reading comprehension in ALS programs using PHIL-IRI. *Philippine Basic Education Journal, 9*(1), 50–65.

Wilson, K., & Chen, M. (2024). Informal reading assessment in online learning environments. *Canadian Journal of Literacy Research, 8*(3), 42–58.

Zhao, Y. (2025). Transforming literacy education through context-based assessment. *World Literacy Research Journal, 18*(1), 52–68.