

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**ASSISTING QUAYSON MEMORIAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS,
IMPROVE UPON THEIR READING AND COMPREHENSION SKILLS
USING THE PHONIC METHOD.**

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of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Latefatu Zakaria, declare that, with the exception of quotations and references I made which have all been duly identified and acknowledged. This thesis is entirely my own original work, and that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE

DATE



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work is supervised with the accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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DATE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my lovely and supporting husband, Mr. Dawuda Afatogma Ahmed, my children and the rest of the family. May the Almighty Allah bless them all for their support and encouragement in diverse ways towards my study on this write-up.



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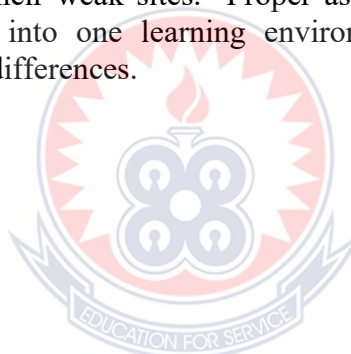
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to improve the reading and comprehension skills of the JHS One (1), students of Quayson Memorial School. The researcher employed purposive sampling technique to select a sample size of twenty-five (25) pupils who had difficulties in reading. Data were collected from pre-test, observation and post-test and analyzed in tables for easy understanding. The pre-test results show that no students scored between 80-100 marks and only one (1) student had a pass mark which falls between 50-70 representing 10%. The post-test results show that four (4) students scored marks between 80-100 representing 40% of the sampled students, the study concluded that teachers do not always consider the appropriate aspects of phonic method like systematic synthetic phonic and phonics instruction for teaching reading and comprehension skills. The findings show that students face various levels of difficulties in learning reading comprehension. These difficulties emanated from their homes, teacher remediation, assessment, sex, teaching and learning resource, lack of adequate infrastructure. First of all, the school environment must be conducive for learning to take place. The teachers who facilitate the students learning must be trained and retrained to be equipped with adequate competences for their jobs, students, try to identify their weaker points in their process; this will help them learn to improve upon their weak sites. Proper assessment should be made before mainstreaming students into one learning environment to enable the teacher to identify their individual differences.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The content of this first chapter is presented as follows: background of the study (1.1), statement of the problem (1.2), purpose of the study (1.3), objectives of the study (1.4), research questions (1.5), significance of the study (1.6), and organization of the study (1.7).

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is fundamental to students in a variety of situations and professions. In Ghana, the official language is English hence all the contents in our educational levels are structured with every material in English as a medium of communication. Reading has also therefore, become important skill for success in the 21st global digital century. Reading development is an important aspect of high-stakes tests, which require higher order reading skills.

As the Ghana Education Service (GES) puts it, “Success in education at all levels depends to a very large extent on the individual’s proficiency in reading. On reforms which Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of GES (2007: 1) to be in the right frame of mind for reading and to know which letter combinations create words, the CRDD of GES (2007), came out with a policy on reforms which states in part that “by the time a child left the primary level to the Junior High School, he/she must have an appreciable level of reading competence to enable him/her perform quite easily any reading task”, CRRD syllabus, (2001:1). This statement is in line with (Milan’s, 1995:1) assertion that “a good reader is the one who has the ability

to read carefully, thoughtfully and confidently”. A good reader knows what to look for and is actively involved in the text by thinking, questioning and evaluating.

Teachers have the responsibility of making sure that their students read efficiently. Lack of efficiency in reading and comprehension has contributed to the poor Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in many basic schools including Quayson Memorial Junior High School in Tarkwa. Another problem is that; although, most pupils in the primary level are able to make meaning of what they read and continue to the JHS form one (1) class, students in Quayson JHS form one (1) do not reflect that. Reading is not as natural as breathing, talking or even walking. It however has its root in oral language proficiency and children must be able to express themselves in English before being taught to read for better comprehension. No one is born with the ability to read; rather it is acquired, taught and learnt. English language is one of the core subjects in the curriculum of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Among others are Mathematics, Science, Social studies and Religious and Moral Education. However, before a student is able to study the rest he/she must be competent in the English language. In the JHS syllabus reading and comprehension is one of the aspects of the English as a subject, others are composition, grammar, listening, speaking and literature.

There is no clear evidence which prove that there are insufficient reading materials for Ghanaian children to read. According to Ama Ata Aidoo, Kofi Anyidoho and some other renowned authors, reading and comprehension as an aspect of English are considered as one of the most important components for a student to read fluently and have command over the language. The ability of a student to read is probably one of the greatest achievements in his academic life and this largely boosts his ability to

understand the other subjects under study. David (2000:3) stated that because reading with comprehension is the foundation of all content areas, it is vital that the diversity of the relating comprehension be met. It must be assumed that it is not that we give the students the chance to read but that we instruct them on how to /understand, how to comprehend or how to use strategies that will help them comprehend what they are reading.

In the United States, the ability to read proficiently is significantly related to how much a person can achieve in his or her personal and professional life, (Black and Israel, 2005, p.2) Reading is essential to success in school and lifelong learning. It is even more crucial in second language learning where students need to read to improve their vocabulary and communication skills Grabe and Stoller (2002).

Crosley, McCarthy and McNamara (2006) are of the opinion that second language reading texts are more comprehensible for second language learners and to other levels as well, in order to mark the text more comprehensible for second language learners and to help prepare them for more authentic texts. This may cause difficulty in learning. To avert this, it is crucial to determine the reading difficulty of the comprehension passage we provide for our learners, especially at the Junior High School level. Hence the urgent need for this study to help find

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Basic education has the potential to affect the future of societies positively or negatively depending on whether the inputs correlate with the outputs. The foundation of this social institution called ‘school education’ is Basic Education.

English Language serves as a subject for other subjects in the Basic School Curriculum. Examination questions of all subjects (except Ghanaian Language) are set in the English Language for pupils to read comprehend and answer appropriately.

It cannot be denied that reading comprehension is a very important activity in the school system especially in the area of English Language. In Ghana, many students fail English papers because of their inability to read questions and understand the best way of answering the question drawn from the passage. According to International Final Awards and Examiners Appointment Committee of West African Examination Council (WAEC) on Monday 17th April, 2000,

the poor performance in English Language is particularly worrying because it would be impossible for any candidate to do well in examinations if English Language as a medium of expression, is not mastered. The committee, therefore, called for a return to the policy of placing emphasis on lexis and structure as well as promoting reading habit among pupils and students. In Quayson Memorial Junior High School form one (1) hundred and forty-six (146) candidates sat for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) from 2018/2019 academic year and 40%, that is, sixty-eight candidates passed in English Language while 60%, that is, seventy-eight candidates failed. It is not known the methods that were adopted by teachers in the school for teaching reading and comprehension. The focus of this research is to investigate pupils' ability in reading comprehension by using phonic method.

The researcher observed that pupils have challenges in reading and their inability to read and understand text in English Language, often cause their failure in Examination. According to Lerner (2006) a number of learners are unable to use reading as a tool for learning, getting new information, ideas, attitudes and values

from standard four upwards. At the basic level, primary six (6) serves as a transitional class between the primary and Junior High School (JHS). Pupils in Junior High School (JHS) one (1) who have just completed primary school where L1 was mostly used as a medium of instruction usually find it difficult to cope with the English Language which is used as the main medium of instruction in JHS one (1).

If pupils are not helped at this early stage to build a firm foundation in their literacy abilities, they will find it extremely difficult if not impossible to achieve their academic dreams because the success in education appears to have a strong association with a person's English Language proficiency, especially in an English-speaking country such as Ghana.

Using the SVR as a theoretical framework, students who are unable to develop adequate reading comprehension skills can be categorized into three main groups:

- 1) Students with dyslexia are those who show significant word reading difficulties in the absence of language comprehension problems;
- 2) Students with specific comprehension problem are those who show adequate word-recognition skills, but significant language comprehension difficulties.
- 3) Students with a mixed reading difficulties profile (in the part referred to as garden variety poor readers), are those who show weaknesses across word recognition and language comprehension (Spear-Swelling, 2016).

The knowledge society has placed educational systems in front of the challenge of developing educational context in which students are placed at the center the teaching-learning process and where is promoted the development of key skills

spendable also in daily life. The competence of “learning to learn, The National Guideline for the Curriculum In the First Cycle of Education (Maraiccio, 2015)

The ability to read opens new knowledge and opportunities, especially the ability to read texts in foreign languages (English). This allows students to get information, pleasure and do many other things that are done by the world community due to information obtained from reading. Better reading skills also enable people to be successful in academics (Iftanti, 2015). A current study showed that the better the reading skills students have the better students in achieving knowledge (Akbasli, Dhin, & Yaykiran, 2016).

Reading comprehension skills are very important and useful for Junior high school students. Reading comprehension itself is an advanced level of reading and / or reading skills. At least there are two levels of reading; the initial level and level of reading comprehension. The initial level is teaching reading where the teacher introduces to students orthographic writing in separate alphabetical order. At this point, the teacher generally teaches students some basic English vocabulary to contextualize phonemic knowledge of letters. Meanwhile, reading comprehension is a high reading skill level. Students must be able to use their cognitive skills to understand the interrelated conditions between written and oral communication where basically these types of communication differ from each other (Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro, 2015).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study is to improve reading and comprehension abilities of form one (1) students of Quayson Memorial Junior High School in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. The researcher would use the phonic method; follow the steps and procedures in teaching

using the phonic method and its aspects and to find out the difficulties students encounter when learning reading and comprehension. The study would focus on the form one student who have serious difficulties in reading and comprehension. This would help enhance the students' learning capabilities in other subject areas like Science, Mathematics and Social Studies and so on.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to use phonic method to enable pupils, acquire the basic skills in reading and be able to answer questions based on reading.

The study specifically aims to:

1. Identify difficulties students encounter in reading and comprehension skills.
2. Examine the effects of the phonic method in teaching reading and comprehension skills.
3. Find out the steps and aspects of the phonic method that is relevant for teaching reading and comprehension skills.

1.5 Research Question

1. What difficulties do students encounter when learning reading and comprehension skills?
2. How could the phonic method be used to effectively teach the form one students reading and comprehension skills?
3. What are the steps and aspects of the phonic method that are relevant for teaching reading and comprehension skills?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study will go a long way to help establish the problem of the JHS one (1) students' difficulties in reading and comprehending their English text book passages, and this will enable them progress steadily in their academic ladder. The result of this study will be useful in the school and other schools by teachers, students, future researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations, Ghana Education Service, and other stake holders in the field of education. In the country Ghana, this study will contribute to the existing literature to enrich the field of academia.

The Ghana Education Service could also adopt this document to train student teachers in the colleges of Education so they can identify the characteristics of improving comprehension difficulties and how to help their pupils in the various schools where they would go to teach after graduation. The study will opens up avenues for more research to be conducted by researchers in the field of education.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study will be organized in to five chapters as follows; chapter one includes; the introduction/overview of the chapter, background, perceived problem, diagnosis, evidence, statement of the problem, purpose of the study objectives of the study, objectives of the study, research question, significance of the study and organization of the study. The chapter two looks at review of relevant literature as follows; introduction to the chapter, conceptual analysis of phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension skills, the schema reading theory aspects of the problem under investigation, factors that course difficulties students encounter in reading and comprehension, effective use of the phonic method in teaching reading and comprehension skills. Chapter three is methodology which will start with

introduction, profile of the study, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, and data quality and ethical issues. Chapter four includes introduction, demographic characteristics of respondents, pre-test results, post-test results, pre-observation results and post-observation results. Chapter five includes; introduction, summary, conclusion, recommendation, and chapter summary and finally, references and appendices A, B, and C.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter would cover the review of conceptual analysis which includes the theoretical framework, relevant literature to this study, aspect of the problem under investigation and it would also deal with the research questions in detail.

2.1 Conceptual Analysis

The study would review theoretical framework on phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension skills. Phonics is the system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciation (Adams, 1994). In other words, phonics refers to associating letters or letter groups with the sound they represent. Phonics involves teaching how to connect the sounds of spoken English with letters or group of letters (e.g., the sound /k/ can be represented by c, k, ck or ch spellings) and teaching them to blend the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciations of unknown words. Therefore, phonics is not necessarily a method for teaching English pronunciation; It is a method for teaching English speakers to read and write, intensive phonics instruction (reading-like behavior). Intensive, Systematic Phonics are all major letter-sound correspondents taught in order.

- (1) We learn to read by first learning the rules of phonics, that is, we learn to read by sounding out words and reading out-loud (“decoding to sound”).

(2) Knowledge of phonics must be deliberately taught and consciously learned. This is hard work. The major rules: “long and short vowels and vowel and consonant digraphs consist of two letters representing one phoneme, such as oi, ea, sh, and th. Also, phonics instruction may include blends of letter sounds that represent larger sub units in words such a consonant pair (e.g., st, bl), onsets, and rimes (“Tompkins 2011. 107)) defines phonics as “the set of relationships between phonology (the sounds in speech). It involves an understanding or the alphabetic principle (there is a relation between spoken words and letters or combinations of letters) on which the English language is based and a knowledge of the sounds associated with a particular letter or combination of letter (Stickland, 2011).

According to (Maxwell 2005), assists the researcher in understanding what problems have been encountered with existing research and theory, what contradictions the researcher has found in existing views, and how the study can make an original contribution to understanding. In this study I used a theoretical framework for understanding teaching methods of reading not based purely on a theoretical point of view, but also by taking existing practice into account, or at least acknowledging the constraints caused by the gap between theory and practice. The theoretical framework used is the schema Reading Theory, the Schema Reading Theory (SRT) is an interactive approach to reading that taps into the prior or background knowledge of the learner and uses it to achieve a better meaning of what is used.

According to (Ajidey 2003), proponents of the SRT such as (Bartlett 1932), and (Rumelhart 1977), believe that there ought to be an instructional and interactive process by learners to process information. The SRT model dwells on the fact that information processing is a dual affair between the learner and the text in which case,

what the reader comprehends must be in tune with his prior knowledge of the subject or text. These proponents of the theory and others have defined the Schema Theory in a number of influential ways. (Li, Wu and Wang 2007), argue that some of the proponents of the schema theory like (Bartlett 1932) defined schema “as an active organization of past reactions of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adopted organic response”. (Rumelhart 180), define the schema theory simply as ‘a theory of how knowledge is mentally represented in the mind and used’. We are able to interpret what is real because of the context in which it is presented.

2.1.1 The Schema Reading Theory

Schema is the knowledge and experience stored in the brain throughout life that helps prepare a learner to understand new material and gives a model for coping with new tasks or experiences (Dry 2013). The first language (L1) of the child dictates how he/she understands reading. The pupil already has prior knowledge of things and events. In this case his mind is not blank or empty (*tabula rasa*). Contrary to the views of some psychologists, the child mind’s is active and full of experiences instead of viewing the mind as a clean slate, cognitive psychologist now see the child’s mind as “set of empty shelves or slots” which are filled, modified, or expended by learning.

The child’s schema therefore may include values, culture, beliefs, expectations and systems of what he already possesses. The theory asserts that the ability to learn is based on the existence of a schemata framework which is patterns of background knowledge that a person brings to bear on these new ideas or events, (Savages 1998). Schema (plural schemata) is a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory, (Ajideh 2003). Every learning environment or school is

modified or expanded by learning to make up the schemata by which information is organized. The schemata thus, patterns of mental structures representing the reader's knowledge of ordinary events. When schema is activated, it involves the relationship of how the different knowledge parts stored connects to make meaning the reader's knowledge of ordinary events.

When schema is activated, it involves the relationship of how the different knowledge parts stored connects to make meaning of text. These parts are what they refer to as "nodes", "variables", or "slots". Every child comes into the classroom with different reading abilities and some come under-prepared for reading demands. "The schema theory therefore explains how the child reads and by identifying this, how to become a better reader. As a widely accepted theory for reading comprehension, the schema theory is based on the assumption that every reader's prior knowledge directly impacts on his new learning (French 2002:12) citing (Kitao 1989) explains "that most linguists "now see schema theory as a framework that organizes knowledge "that most linguist now see schema theory as a frame work that organizes knowledge in memory by putting information into the correct slots".

His schema theory emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge in reading. (Dry 2013), believes that "most of us do not realize how much we have already stored in our memories, or how we draw upon it when we deal with new situations or challenges. As we learn more, we add to our knowledge or develop our schema" The schema development net is a visual representation of the schema theory.

In example 'An' in fig. 1, the net has wider gaps (less developed) so the tennis ball (information) can get right through. This represents a student's who has little backend knowledge about a text, so many of the unknown concepts may slip by. However, in

example B, the net is much closer together (more developed), so the ball k(information) is less likely to get through, representing a student who has more experience with the concept in the text, so the information is more likely to be understood and retained. The more experience and background knowledge a student's has with the topic, the easier it will be for him or her to comprehend the material. (Dry 2013) explains in his schema development net. Thus, making it clear that the more background knowledge a learner has the more experience he/she will have in retaining and making use of text.

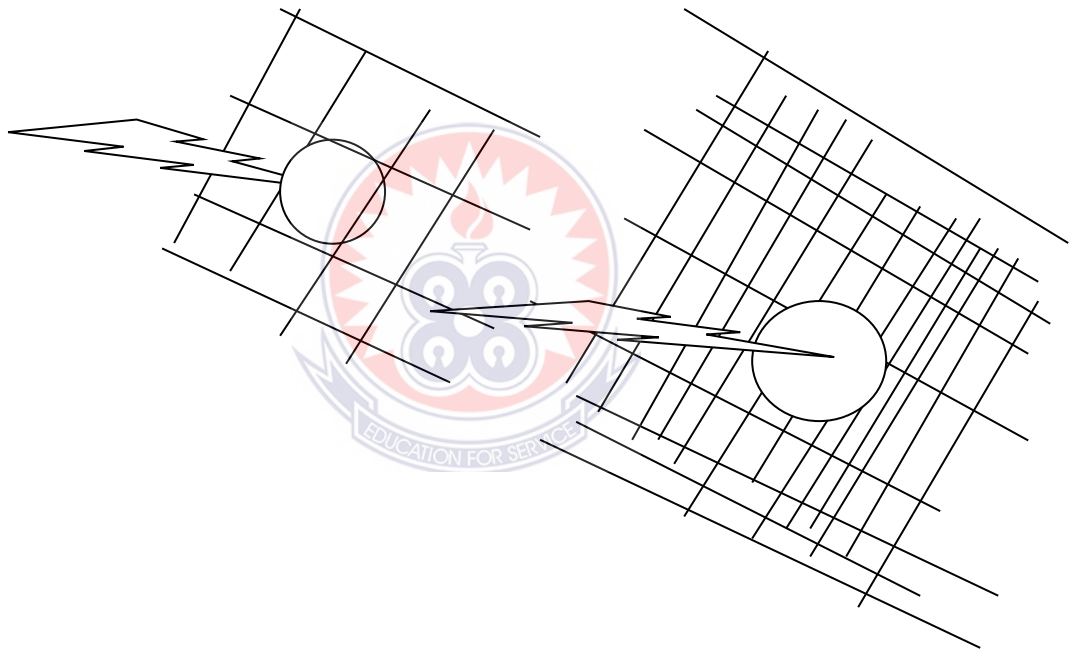


Figure 1: Illustration of Schema Theory (Manzo & Manzo 1995, p.61)

Vuezi (2009) identified three main theories of reading. These are the traditional view, the cognition view and the metacognitive view of reading. The traditional view focuses on the printed form of a text while the cognitive view looks at the role of background knowledge in addition to what appears on the printed page and metacognitive view is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have on the act of comprehending a text. According to (Pearson 1991), in the traditional view

of reading, novice readers acquire a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills, reader are view as experts who understand what they read.

By using 'bottom-up' (language- based process) view of reading which involves the decoding of a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents in the quest of making sense of the text. According to (Harns 2006), the bottom-up theories to argue that meaning is embedded in the text and that meaning travels from the "bottom" (the page) 'up' to the eyes. This theory defines reading as beginning from letters that form the printed words, and then from sentences, sentences form texts. The steps here explain that combining of small will eventually form a whole text from which meaning will emerge.

According to this theory the reading process consists of a number of skills and that children need to be taught to be able to hear and identify sounds in words (phonemic awareness) match sounds and letters (phonics), and recognize words in isolation with automaticity (Moller, 2013). (Smith 1978) cited in (Nunan 1991) stated that reading works in the reverse order from that proposed by the bottom-up theory. He believed that in order to identify words we need to comprehend meaning. I partly agree with but also feel that this theory displays that knowledge of linguistic features which is also necessary for reading comprehension to take place. (Nunan 1991) stated that it was time consuming to teach reading in chunks, whereas the teacher should just teach the top-down theory of getting the learners to understand the content before they are taught the sounds. Learner should be able to identify sound in order to correctly understand words. It is the over dependence on this theory that might limit learning to read with understanding.

The cognitive view is the top-down (knowledge-based process) model which directly opposed the ‘bottom-up’ model. According to (Goodman 1967) cited in (Paron, 1996) reading is a psycholinguistics guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text make hypothesis. Confirm or reject them, make new hypothesis, and so forth. The cognitive view encompasses the schema theory of reading which is used in the process of interpreting sensory data, in retrieving information from memory, in allocating resources, and in guiding the flow to the processing system. (Harris 2006) also stated that the top-down theories emphasize that reading begins in the head of the reader claiming that the reader moves from the ‘top’-the brain-down to the text on the page. (Harris 2006) added that readers use their prior knowledge stored in their memories to unlock the text.

According to this theory, without background knowledge meaning cannot be made from the text. This theory, propose that the objective of reading is making meaning of the text by using the reader’s background knowledge.

Rumllhart (1994), cited in Harri (2006) suggest that while reading is predominantly a meaning-making process that is embedded in the top-down view also requires that readers focus on skills –a position more aligned to a bottom-up view. This model of reading has taken a more social view of reading. Readers in this view can be taught to adjust their reading strategies in a flexible manner to choose the best strategy to meet the purpose of the current text and their purpose for reading it. Each view of reading can help to develop the reading capacity of learners differently if approached correctly. All these theories are integrated and used in the training of teachers.

According to Rockerts (2011) reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Reading also means making

meaning from print. This simply means that the end result of any act of engagement should be comprehension of a text.

In investigating the possible mismatch between training in teaching reading comprehension at college and teachers' application of the methods in the classroom, the constructivist theoretical framework was used in this study. The constructivist theory is based on the tenet that people construct their understanding of phenomena by actively interacting with other people and 'objects' in the world around them (Mertens, 2010). The view in this study was that in order for teachers to appropriately use teaching methods to teach comprehension they were taught in colleges of education they attended.

One of the main tasks of this investigation is to help the Basic School form one students in Quayson Memorial JHS identify the reading problem and continue learning. Other theoretical underpinnings of this study are presented in the literature review. The ability to read and understand a simple text is one of the most essential skills a pupil can learn. Yet in many countries, learners enrolled in school for as many as six years are unable to read and understand a simple text.

Acquiring literacy becomes more difficult as learners grow older. Children who do not learn to read in the first few grades are more likely to repeat and eventually drop out of school. Worldwide efforts to expand access to education may be undermined if parents, faced with difficult economic choices and the knowledge that learners are not acquiring basic reading skills, remove their children from school. Comprehension, a complex cognitive process is central to acquiring a new linguistic system. Input must be decoded in some comprehensible fashion for second language acquisition to occur. In the case of a foreign language reading comprehension, the reader uses previous

knowledge to construct and integrate meaning from text. During reading there is simultaneous cognitive processing involving pattern recognition, letter identification, and lexical access, concept activation of prior knowledge, information storage, and comprehension monitoring. Text based quality is affected by the individual's text processing efficiency i.e. ability in lower level process, such as word recognition and syntactic parsing and working memory.

Generally, reading evokes curiosity and sensibility, helps the reader build good viewpoints and enhances personality. Reading broadens the reader's experiences and strengthens the willingness to realize one's goals. Reading makes the reader explore information and use it, to create knowledge and finally, reading has therapeutic value (Lee, 2006). Students in basic four (4) to Junior High School (JSS) one (1) spend the majority of their days in content-area classes. All content-area instruction (e.g. English Language, Art, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies) utilizes literary or informational text in some manner, so students must comprehend specific texts and grasp the concepts being communicated in them. This is a particular concern as the texts students are asked to read become increasingly complex with unique linguistic and cognitive features that are not necessarily shared across disciplines.

We need knowledge of the world to understand new things, we also need to be familiar with various text structure encountered and need to be active in seeking meaning to rise up from the passage. Comprehension processes and second language acquisition processes, although somewhat overlapping, are also distinct. For example, comprehension involves constructing a mental representation from the proportional content for the purpose of understanding the message, in seeking meaning to rise up from the passage. However, in order for a linguistic system to be developed through

comprehension activities, additional input processing must occur. Such processing entails making form-meaning connections from the input, or focusing attention on new forms and associating them with their functions or referents.

2.2 Aspects of the Problem under Investigation

The aspects of the problem under investigation under this includes; phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension, steps in using phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension, and aspects of phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension.

2.2.1 What is the difficulties students encounter in reading and comprehension?

There seems to be great controversy on what the causes of reading difficulties are. Some scholars relate reading difficulties to neurological factors while others relate them to environmental factors. These are disorientation and disorganization in the recognition of visual patterns due to brain damages, hereditary relationship of reading disability and the interrelationship between visual, auditory, temporal and kinesthetic disorientation and disorganization. (Mando 2008) indicates that reading failure is mainly caused by failure to acquire phonological awareness and skills in alphabetical coding. Teachers have a lot of work in teaching literacy skills so that a lot of children would become fluent readers. Environmental factors also contribute to one having reading difficulties, that is the home and school environments. If there is no one to motivate the child at home as well as in school, it will be very difficult for a student to develop interest in reading. Furthermore, teachers also have their own perceptions of what causes reading difficulties. The curriculum planners, government and all players in education all have a stake in the difficulties in students reading in the Ghanaian schools today and Quayson Memorial JHS is not an exception.

Home Factor

Many homes have turned out to be un-conducive for students to read, write and do other school works in Ghana today, according to (Paananen et. Al 2009), the home environment plays a role in pupil's reading ability. It can affect someone either positively or negatively. In the home environment, there are many factors which can cause students reading difficulties. These include; mother tongue interference, lack of motivation, lack of textbooks and reading materials, parents' literacy levels, effects of poverty (e.g., poor nutrition, lack of proper furniture for studies), kind/nature of lighting system, lack of support by parents or guardians and the community at large. The home environment is very important for a child's growth in all aspects of life and this includes education. For one to thrive academically, Conducive home environment is very cardinal.

Gender factor

The process of child development on one hand, girls usually speak their first words earlier than boys. On the other hand, boys tend to have problems when it comes to reading and in most cases; their reading is below their grade level. These gender differences in reading literacy worldwide may also be as a result of broader societal and cultural contexts or of educational policies and practices, Elliot and J. E., 2009. In most societies, parents tend to be gentle with the girl children as they are growing up. This could probably be due to the fact that girls are considered to be '**a weaker sex**'. Boys are usually engaged in rough games from an early age. There is no much talking done except actions where boys are generally taught to be strong and independent from the onset.

Because of this early emphasis on language ability for girls, it has been suggested that they are more likely to rely on verbal skills as they interact with others which will help them to further develop verbal skills (Rathus, 2006 in Carducci, 2009). One of the scientific explanations for linguistic oriented skills favoring girls may lie in biological forces. The left hemisphere of the brain, which is central to language, may mature more rapidly in girls than in boys and this could be the reason for girls doing better at reading than boy.

Methods

While some pupils are good at reading others are poor readers. This kind of situation it all depends on the teacher to select those methods of teaching reading that will help the poor readers. Unfortunately, most of the teachers do not have adequate knowledge get does not adequately prepare them to handle all pupils according to their needs. Most pupils require close supervision if they are to perform better in academic work. As a result, even when the teacher knows that a particular pupil is a poor reader, he/she is not in a position to help (Kalindi, 2005). From this scenario, it can be said that, teachers use the same method of teaching for all pupils in a classroom despite one being a good or poor reader. All the necessary materials can be in place but this will not help improve the skills of poor readers as long as the teacher, who is the key person in this whole process, is not competent enough to help the poor readers (Kalindi, 2005).

This means that the poor readers are not given a chance to improve themselves where reading is concerned. The good readers have an advantage in this case and the poor readers are left out of the learning process. Teaching normally starts with the smallest and easiest things and children learn to read and write longer and more complicated

things as time goes by (Lytinen, 2006). Today, a child will learn to read letters in the alphabet, the next day the child will be able to read words, then sentences and so on. It is important to note that most teachers in Ghana work under harsh conditions such as, attending to so many classes in a day, too many pupils in one classroom, inadequate reading materials and experiencing irregular attendance at school by pupils.

Furthermore, there are no incentives to motivate the teachers especially those in remote areas. As a result, such teachers will have no drive to concentrate on poor readers. It is up to the pupil whether he/she has understood or not. The methods of classroom approaches to reading, such as the 'look and say' method, resulted in most pupils in primary schools' level of reading in English to be inadequate for learning to take place (Kalindi, 2005). However, it has not been easy to attain this goal due to the high number of pupils in classrooms hence making it difficult for teachers to offer education on a one-to-one basis for those children with special needs (Matafwali, 2005). The classrooms are just too crowded hence stressing the teachers. These disadvantages pupil with special needs/slow learners as teachers are too tired to concentrate on such pupils on an individual basis as earlier mentioned.

Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment in reading is very important if children with reading difficulties are to be helped. In Ghana, the inclusive education policy places those children with reading problems in the same class with those who do not have reading problems without taking into consideration the extent of the problem. As a result, most of the children with reading difficulties may go unnoticed, more especially in the early stages of their education. For this reason, it is cardinal that children with reading

problems are identified using available assessment methods so that they get positive results from early intervention (Matafwali, 2005). A problem is better solved when it is still in its infant stage rather than waiting until it gets worse because it might require a lot of resources to deal with it.

Remediation

Learning how to read is a process which begins early in the life of a child, (Torgesen, Wagner, Roshotte 1999). Even before a child reaches school going age, parents and other caregivers usually try to teach the child to master the letters of the alphabet, until he/she starts going to pre-school. As soon as parents or teachers notice that the child is having difficulties in reading, it is important to put the necessary measures in place. Interventions must be started as soon as possible before the problem gets out of hand. One remediation programmed used in countries like Finland is the 'Ekapeli' which is a computer-based learning game which helps the child to become fluent in letter sound connections. The 'Ekapeli' was developed by (Lytinen, 2003). This game is now widely used and other language versions of the game have been tested (Kachenga, 2008). According to research evidence it is very difficult to catch up or become fluent readers once learners lag behind in the language-based skills of reading unless intensive measures are put in place (Matafwali, 2005). Early intervention is very important as it can help in ameliorating the problem rather than waiting until it is too late. There is the need to know the causes of reading difficulties before intervening. It is very difficult for a problem to be solved without understanding its cause. For example, if it is found that the cause of the reading difficulty is lack of phonological awareness and skills in alphabetical coding, there is the need for teachers to be trained on letter-sound correspondence methods of teaching which are

based on alphabetical codes (Mando, 2008). These teachers will in turn help the pupils with reading difficulties.

Teacher Factor

In virtually every class, there could be a learner with a reading difficulty. As such during their career, every teacher meets several learners for whom reading is laborious, and even learners who think that they cannot read. Teaching these learners is a challenge for the entire school (Paananen, et. al., 2009)). Classroom effectiveness of teachers heavily depends on their knowledge of the subject matter and their pedagogical skills. Unfortunately, most teachers are not oriented towards helping poor readers in their classes (Paananen, et. al., 2009)). In their training, they were not adequately prepared to teach all children according to their needs. Therefore, even in cases where reading materials are adequate, reading skills of poor readers are not improved when the most important person who is the teacher does not know how to help the poor readers (Kalindi, 2005). It is also important to bear in mind that, teachers have been working under difficult circumstances such as, too many pupils in classrooms, erratic pupil attendance etc. in some parts of Ghana. When there are too many pupils in a classroom, it becomes difficult for the teacher to give individual attention especially to those who may be lagging behind in reading.

Furthermore, serious shortages of teaching and learning materials, as well as poor staffing especially in remote areas also makes it a challenge for teachers in teaching reading. A teacher may have the required skills in teaching reading, but it becomes difficult for him/her to teach effectively if the necessary teaching and learning materials are not in place. Poor staffing levels means teachers have to attend to more

than one class hence being overburdened. In turn, they will not be able to pay particular attention to those learners who have difficulties in reading.

2.2.2 How can the phonic method be used to effectively teach students reading and comprehension?

Phonics proponents were led by Rudolph Flesch in his book “Why Johnny Can’t Read and What You Can Do About it” in which he warned that American schools would produce a generation of illiterates, if they continued to rely on “faddish” techniques (namely the look-say, or whole-language approach) to teach reading. Phonic method is taken as appropriate for teaching reading and comprehension in the basic schools. A reading method is a set of teaching and learning materials and/or activities often given a label, such as phonics method, literature based method, or language experience method (International Reading Association, 1998). (Flesch, 1955) also emphasized that the abandonment of phonics and other traditional approaches to reading would inevitably wreak havoc on the nation’s schools.

Although the public accepted Flesch, American educators rejected his arguments. At the time, Chall was a professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education where she published her book after five years of research reviewing eighty-five (85) classroom and clinical studies (Flesch, 1981).

The basis of the studies was to compare phonics-first programs to look-say methods of reading instruction. Specifically, four main elements considered effective to literacy (teacher competence, pacing, method, and content) were debated. Early in the twenty-first century, reading comprehension research was summarized by two “blue ribbon” groups: the National Reading Panel (2000) and the RAND Reading Study Group (2002).

The National Reading Panel (NRP: 4-5), described reading comprehension as a complex process, often viewed as ‘the essence of reading.’ Reading comprehension is intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader. The content of meaning is influenced by the text and by the reader’s prior knowledge and experience that are brought to bear on it. Similarly, the RAND Reading Study Group (2002) noted that reading comprehension involves four components: (1) the reader, (2) the text, (3) the activity, and (4) the situational context (p. 1). The first three essential components are; the reader, the text, and the task occur within the fourth component of reading comprehension the situational context. The reader is the one doing the comprehending, and the text is the reading material (e.g., stories, nonfiction selections, etc.). The activity refers to what kind of comprehension task, skill, strategy, or concept the reader is attempting to perform (e.g., discovering the author’s main idea, understanding a sequence of events, thinking about a character’s intent in a story, etc.).

The situational context of comprehension can be thought of in at least two ways. First, the actual setting where reading occurs at home, in a school classroom, the library, under a blanket at bedtime, and so on affects how well one comprehends while reading. There is little doubt that children’s reading comprehension is influenced by the setting in which they read. Second, there is a social context associated with reading comprehension. In some cases, reading comprehension occurs individually, in a very limited social activity in which people, teachers, parents, and children read a text together and jointly construct meaning through discussion. Lively interaction about a text in the company of others seems to be the optimal situational context to enhance students’ reading comprehension (McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009).

The goal of phonics instruction is to help students develop the alphabetic principle. Students who understand the alphabetic principle know that the sounds of spoken words are mapped onto written words in systematic ways. As students develop understandings of this principle, they become adept at using letter-sounds correspondences to figure out unrecognized words. Command of the alphabetic principle is the foundation for accurate word recognition and a prerequisite for fluency well-documented characteristics of skillful readers. Phonics-based approaches are designed to teach children to unlock or decode the sound/symbol relationships in our language and to begin reading instruction by teaching children to associate the graphemes (letters) with the phonemes (sounds) they represent (Harp & Brewer, 2005).

There are two competing views regarding the teaching of phonics. One approach is known as synthetic phonics instruction, and the other approach is known as analytic phonics instruction (Reutzel & Cooter, 2005). Synthetic phonics is more traditional in that students learn how to change letters or letter combinations into speech sounds, and then blend them to form words (i.e., sounding out). In analytic phonics, children are first taught to read a word and then to analyze the individual sounds within the word. They are taught to decode unfamiliar words by looking to see if they can find a similar word (i.e., knowing the sounds in cake to decode make) (Harp & Brewer, 2005). Phonics advocates focus their efforts on the primary grades and emphasize the importance of students being able to sound out (read) words based on how they are spelled. According to (Aukerman 1984), the theory behind the phonic approach is based on two assumptions. These are:

- Most languages have consistent phoneme (sound) to grapheme (letter) correlation
- Once learners have learned the relationships of the letters to the sound, they can pronounce printed words by blending the sounds together (Aukerman, 1984).

An analytic method to reading begins with words (preferably nouns that can be easily illustrated), they break the words into parts. According to (Grayling, 1997) one way to help pupils to improve upon their reading habits is by using the phonic technique. This technique places emphasis on the individual letters making up the word. It could be called reading by spelling. In this technique, the pupil pronounces by saying it. For instance, **C-A-T = CAT, D-O-G = DOG, M-A-N = MAN ETC**, while this technique helps the pupil to embolden their efforts and to spell some words that may be completely new to them, it has some limitations.

However, modern phonic approaches to reading start with whole words instead of a sound. But each letter is considered equally important. Phonics can also be viewed as a systematic teaching of the sounds conveyed by letters and groups of letters, and includes teaching children to combine and blend these to read or write words. It is of crucial importance, for the following reasons: the majority of the information conveyed by letters concerns sounds. Letters tell us more than any other source of information, even when we have to interpret the information they provide. We cannot read fluently until we read accurately, and this depends on accurate use of the information conveyed by letters.

Skilled, fluent readers do not guess. Once we have learned what the letters are telling us in a word, we can store it in our memory and retrieve it more quickly than if we

had to work it out. Research over the past 30 years has contributed greatly to our understanding of the thinking processes involved in reading comprehension. Surprisingly, however, little research has focused on the development of young children's comprehension (Reutzel & Cooter 2005) (Pressley, 2000) describes the development of reading comprehension as a two stage process, beginning with "lower processes" focused at the word level such as word recognition (phonics, sight words fluency), (rate, accuracy, and expression), and vocabulary (word learning, selecting, and controlling the uses of several cognitive strategies for remembering and learning from text.

2.2.3 What are the steps and aspects of the phonic method that are relevant for teaching reading and comprehension?

Alphabetic writing represents the sounds we hear in words by means of letters. For reading, learners reconstruct the word by blending the sounds represented by the letters. For spelling, they translate the sounds in words into letters. Although letters often give us more than sounds, their links with sounds are their most consistent and important feature, and there is some link with sound in every word. Children and adults who can use this connection fluently and accurately build up a store of words that they can read very quickly. Familiar words are scanned swiftly, as they contain information that has already been learned and stored in the memory, while learners have a valuable technique for working out new words, even when the sound connection does not tell the whole story. Almost all weak readers have difficulty in blending sounds from letters to make words. Almost all good readers do this well. reading proficiency is the most fundamental skill critical to most, if not all, academic learning and success in school. In the United States the ability to read proficiently is

significantly related to how much a person can achieve in his or her personal and professional life Block and Israel, (2005).

Unfortunately, in Quayson Memorial Junior High School form one few students, could read fluently a comprehension passage during a lesson and this triggered this research work. Comprehension is the main goal when reading any text whether for the purposes of examination or for pleasure. For many readers, reading is a skill that eludes them for a variety of reasons. Cognitive processes such as working memory and phonological processing can account for some of the variability in reading comprehension. These processes allow the reader to not only decode words but access memory “stores” to understand written text. Readers also rely on lexical knowledge and reading strategies to comprehend the specific words they have read.

Securing Confidence in Reading (SCR)

(French, 2004: p. 9) says “learning to read is a difficult gradual process that involves all the senses including cognitive and linguistic abilities already in place. It also involves identification of letters and mapping them onto sounds, as well as the recognition of words and syntax. To be able to read, one must learn to communicate with the writer and the text”. To be an effective reader, the learner must be able to generate meaning from the text. As stated earlier, reading is a gradual process, a skill that is not learned all at once because there are numerous components that must come together to be learned and practiced. (French, 2004) outlined these components as follows:

1. “The child must know the language that he is going to learn to read.
2. The child must learn to dissect spoken words into component sounds.

3. The child must learn to recognize and discriminate the letters of the alphabet in their various forms (upper- and lower-case letters, printed and cursive).
4. The child must learn the left-to-right principle by which words are spelled and put in order in continuous text.
5. The child must learn that there are patterns of highly probable correspondence between letters and sounds, and he must learn those patterns of correspondence that will help him recognize words that he already knows in his spoken language, or that will help him determine the pronunciation of unfamiliar words.
6. The child must learn to recognize printed words from whatever cues he can use, their total configuration, the letters composing them, the sounds represented by those letters, and or the meanings suggested by the context.
7. The child must learn that printed words are signals for spoken words, and that they have meaning analogous to those of spoken words. While decoding a printed message into its spoken equivalent, the child must be able to comprehend the meaning of the total message in the same way that he would comprehend the meaning of the corresponding spoken messages.
8. The child must learn to reason and think about what he reads, within the limits of his talents and experience”.

2.2.4 Using Multiple Comprehension Strategies (UMCS)

Teachers and researchers have known for many years that reading comprehension is positively affected when students are interested in the reading materials. Knowing how important student interest is in developing reading comprehension, many feels that the first place to begin is assessing this factor. (McKeown et al. 2009), produced particularly strong results for improving children reading achievement.

Other research evidence points clearly to the need for teachers to help students apply comprehension strategies in a variety of text types (narrative and expository) and genres (fairy tales, realistic fiction, almanacs, encyclopedias, etc.) Thus, the key to successful instruction is delivering carefully structured learning activities that support children while they are developing the ability to use multiple comprehension strategies to understand what they read (McKeown et al., 2009).

Durkin 1978, reported findings from her studies of reading comprehension instruction as taught by teachers using commercial reading programs (i.e., basal or core reading programs). After observing in both reading and social studies classrooms, Durkin concluded that the teachers spent very little time actually teaching children how to understand what they read. In fact, less than 1 percent of total reading or social studies instructional time was devoted to the teaching of reading comprehension. Research has shown that reading comprehension improves most when teachers provide explicit comprehension instruction to children e.g., (McKewon et al., 2009); (National Reading Panel, 2000) all support the following five strategies as the most critical keys for focused instruction:

1. Activating prior knowledge of learners before the commencement of the lesson.
2. Questioning learners before, during and after the lesson.
3. Analyzing text structure with the learners.
4. Creating mental or visual images during the lesson.
5. Summarizing the lesson with students.

The National Reading Panel, and other studies, has also found that comprehension instruction is most effective when there is a great deal of text-focused dialogue among students (Pressley, 2006).

2.2.5 Metacognition

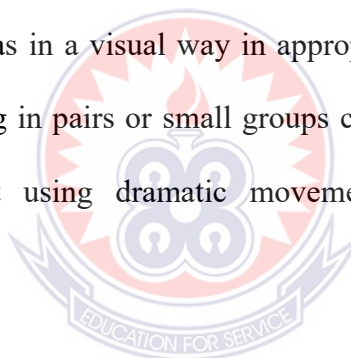
Refers to two important concepts related to reading comprehension: (1) a reader's awareness of how well he or she is understanding the reading (such as when you have been 'reading' and realize your mind has wandered) and (2) a reader's ability to control his or her own thinking, including the use of comprehension strategies to improve or repair failing comprehension while reading (such as rereading a passage after realizing your mind had wandered). For many readers, problems in comprehension result from failures related to one or both of these were important concepts. The purpose of metacognitive assessment is to gain insight into how students select strategies for comprehending text and how well they regulate the status of their own comprehension as they read. Recently, researchers (McKeown, Beck, and Blake, 2009) found support for methods they call **content approaches** as an important part of the instructional picture. They describe content approaches as focusing student attention on the content of the text through open, meaning-based questions about the text.

In short, having structured, collaborative dialogue around the content and vocabulary found in assigned texts is a powerful tool for improving reading comprehension. For example, (the National reading Panel, 2000) recommends that teachers research (plus multiple-strategy instruction), butt the curricula found in leading core reading programs today cover skills and strategies. Not only is this unnecessary and ineffective, but the large numbers of skills and strategies taught in core reading

programs means all get superficial treatment, often at a rate of one skill in a week. The structure of the curricula is often incoherent so that students and teachers do not know how skills and strategies relate to one another or how acquiring these sets of skills lead to becoming a better reader.

2.2.6 Visualizing

Uses the mind's capacity to imagine what is being communicated within context. For example, many who read the first Harry Potter books (before viewing the movies) no doubt formed vivid images in their "mind's eye" when learning about Harry and his new friends. Visualization helps to anchor new ideas in a reader's mind by connecting unfamiliar ideas and concepts to past experiences. Thus, students need to be encouraged to recall ideas in a visual way in appropriate reading contexts (Pressley, 2000). Students working in pairs or small groups create a series of three pictures to retell events in a text using dramatic movement (without words-almost like pantomime).



The following example from Mills shows how a small group of students introduced visualizing to their class, followed by some tips for teachers: After reading Aesop's fable, "The Hare and Tortoise," one student uses expressive postures and facial expressions to reenact the Hare running, falling asleep, and waking. At the same time, a second student could play the Tortoise who plods consistently three times. Other students in the group might be animals cheering as the Tortoise crosses the finish line. The students should use a range of heights-low, medium, and high-to create interest and should remember to face the audience when performing.

Divide the class members into groups to plan, rehearse, and present their freeze frames. When presenting each performance, the teacher and class signal for the group

to change postures by clapping. Class members offer an interpretation of each freeze frame, and the performing group clarifies the depicted events. Educated citizens are expected to function well in more than one language. L2 reading ability, particularly with English as the L2, is already in great demand as English continues to spread, not only as a global language but also as the language of science, technology and advance research (Grabe & Stoller, 2002).

2.2.7 Reading for Pleasure (RP)

Reading is an essential competency in the 21st Century. The importance of reading undertaken in childhood cannot be underestimated, since it provides a foundation for the acquisition of knowledge as well as for a love of reading for pleasure. Reading for pleasure refers to “reading that is done out of the reader’s own freewill anticipating the satisfaction that he will get from the act of reading and it typically involves materials that reflect the reader’s own choice, at a time and place that suits him” Clark and Rumbold (2006). Cremin (2007) states that reading for pleasure is “oriented towards finding personal meaning and purpose and related human need to make sense of the world, the desire to understand, to make things work, to make connections, engage emotionally and feel deeply”. Once decoding has been mastered, research evidence highlights the importance of fluency and comprehension for children to be proficient readers. (Clark and Rumbold, 2006) argue that reading for pleasure could be one important way to help combat social exclusion and raise educational standards.

2.2.8 Aspect/Methods

There are three evidence-based or proven approaches for teaching English letter-sound patterns or phonics to children and adults. All are sequential, systematic, and

use explicit instruction. All can be delivered in short, regular lessons that combine seeing, hearing, saying, reading, and spelling activities. Below are brief descriptions of each. Once learners know some sounds, they can use this knowledge to read words via decoding, or write words via encoding, as they can build up and break words-down.

2.2.9 Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP)

This is a method of teaching reading and spelling through decoding and encoding with a systematic approach, it relies upon teaching the individual sounds of the 44 phonemes in the English language sequentially and the letters that correspond to them (Ehri et al., 2001). This method of teaching is where words are broken up into the smallest units of sound (phonemes). Children learn to make connections between the letters of written texts (graphemes, or letter symbols) and the sounds of spoken language. Synthetic phonics also teaches children how to identify all the phonemes in a word and match them to a letter in order to be able to spell correctly. In the word bat, children learn to identify three individual phonemes using the synthetic phonics method: /b/ /a/ /t/ that can be blended back together to produce a word. The ‘synthetic part of this particular phonics instruction derives from the process of synthesizing or blending sounds to create words. There is a great deal of evidence which suggests that Synthetic Phonics is the superior phonics approach and outperforms.

First of all, it creates phonemic awareness, which is an essential component for learning to read and write. (According to Adams 1990), once phonemic awareness is established and some sound-letter correspondences are learned, the brain begins to recognize new patterns on its own. After demonstrating phonemic awareness,

students begin to develop their phonological awareness, or their ability to rhyme, identify onset sounds, and recognize syllables. Synthetic Phonics also provides children with the ability to independently read unfamiliar words, without which they could not decipher enough words to make meaning from text in order to comprehend. Thus, this approach can be seen as an antidote to the rote learning of other methods like Analytical Phonics, giving children the methods to solve reading problems autonomously.

Synthetic (meaning combining different substances or components) teaches individual letter-sound patterns, blending, and segmenting of recognizable words. For example, a teacher researcher shows and says *the consonants m, l, s, t and short vowel a*. Student's practice saying the sounds and the teacher researcher models how to blend (or combine) them into small words: *am, Sam, tam, Al, Sal, as, mat, at, sat*. Then he/she guides them in rereading and spelling the same words. New sounds are not introduced in alphabetical order, and they are introduced quickly. Synthetic phonics means that children are able to read a range of easily decodable words sooner. This means that a child is introduced to the sounds /m/ /s/ /a/ /t/ they can quickly read the words **at, mat, sat, am, Sam, etc.**

A systematic approach to teaching synthetic phonics means teachers take a planned, thorough approach, teaching, teaching children the simplest sounds first and progressing all the way through to the most complex combinations of letters. Using a systematic synthetic phonics approach, almost all children quickly become confident and independent readers. They soon move away from the mechanics of identifying and blending letter sounds (or 'decoding' words) and start reading fluently; even when they come across words they have never heard or seen before once the process

of reading become automatic. Johnston and Watson, 2005) carried out two experiments, one controlled trial and one randomized controlled trial (the gold standard of scientific research) to understand the effects of synthetic phonics teaching on reading and spelling attainment.

In Clackmannanshire, study of a deprived area of Scotland where many of the pupils came from extremely deprived homes and or had significant educational difficulties were tracked from pre-school to age 11, they achieved results in reading and spelling far beyond expectation for their ages. This analysis concluded that using systematic synthetic phonics instruction enabled the children to read and spell better than those taught by alternative approaches.

Torgerson, Hall and Brooks (2006) found that systematic phonics teaching “enables children to make better progress in reading accuracy than unsystematic or no phonics, and that this is true for both normally-developing children and those at risk of failure. Systematic phonics instruction is critical if children are to be taught to read well, whether or not they experience reading difficulties. Moreover, where there is unsystematic or no phonics instruction, children’s literacy progress is significantly impeded, inhibiting their initial and subsequent growth in reading accuracy, fluency, writing, spelling and comprehension.”

English, a model of reading which encourages switching between various strategies, particularly when phonic work is regarded as only one such strategy, all of equal worth, risks paying insufficient attention to the critical skills of word recognition which must be secured the beginner readers, for example if beginner readers are encouraged to infer from pictures the word they have to decode. It may also lead to

diluting the focused phonics teaching that is necessary for securing accurate word reading.

Opponents of synthetic phonics voice concern that it encourages a focus on the mechanics of reading words rather than understanding them. However, skilled readers are able to identify a word just from the combination of letters written on the page, regardless of understanding its meaning. Confident reading of a wide range of texts therefore only come after a child is confident decoding every word. Children simply have more time to attend to comprehension because they are fluent decoders.

According to Abisamra (2007:1) there are strategies for reading. These must be planned to achieve the ultimate purpose: to diagnose learner's prior knowledge and provide necessary background knowledge so they will be prepared to understand what they will be reading.

Rationale: A diagnostic and instructional procedure used when learners read informational books and content area textbook.

1. Introduce key concepts to learners using word, phrase pictures to initiate a discussion.
2. Have learners brainstorm words about the topic and record their ideas on a chart. Help make connections about brainstormed ideas.
3. Present additional vocabulary and clarify misconceptions.
4. Have learners draw pictures and/or write quick write-ups about the topic using words from brainstormed list.
5. Have learners share quickly write-ups and ask questions to help clarify and elaborate quick writes.

This procedure is in line with the Schema Reading plan for this study. This would be done a day before the actual lesson (drawing period for instance) because the time allotted for reading comprehension is not enough for all these activities. The advantage of this will be to help pupils learn about a subject before starting the reading and comprehension lesson. However, lessons may be disrupted as classroom management may become a problem with all the excitement of everyone trying to make their ideas known. Children learn through play and this time affords them the opportunity to feel relaxed to share in the activities planned for the day while bringing on board their own expressions of the topic under review.

2.3 Analytical Phonics (AP)

Analytic (meaning separating something into components or parts) teaches analysis of letter-sound patterns in known words and application to unknown words. For example, teacher researcher explains short vowel 'a', and long vowel /a/, silent 'e' headers, which include phonetic spellings, example, words and sometimes pictures. He/she models how to sort (or separate) by headers, a list 12-21 other words: **mad, fast, page, name, same, hand, snap, came, grass, rake, made**. Then he/she guides students in rereading, resorting, and spelling the same words. Analogy (meaning comparing things based on their similarities) teaches phonograms (or rimes) and their related word families (formed by adding onsets or consonant patterns at the front). For example, a teacher researcher show and says the phonogram **-ab**. He/she models how to add the single consonants **c, d, g, j, l, n, t**, at the front to form relatives: **cab, dab, gab, jab, lab, nab, tab**. Then he/she guides students in rereading and spelling the word family.

Synthetic is the most common phonics approach and used in many published instructional materials. Analytic may be challenging for new readers with limited literacy experience or long-term reading difficulties, but can be a fun and interactive practice activity. The Analytical Phonics approach is often referred to as the Whole Word Approach, which relies upon children learning to recognize words instantaneously, without requiring to ‘sound them out’ or decode them (Gunning, 2000). This is often referred to as “sight reading” or rote learning words from flash cards. Although there is support for the use of this approach, it can mostly be disproved, especially when considering the use of this method with second language learners.

Holmes 2009, argues that through Analytical Phonics, learners can effectively read words by sight via an analytical conversion process that can be achieved through continued practice in reading at both text and word level. He also hypothesizes that this method is in accordance with the ‘verbal-efficiency’ theory, where efficient instantaneous word recognition is imperative in a competent reader, as less energy is ‘wasted’ on decoding allowing more to be spent on higher order thinking skills and linguistic processes such as comprehension.

However, the position of Holms (2009), can be refuted by considering the exorbitant number of words in the English language that must be memorized by learners before the benefit of energy saving could be considered feasible, demonstrating that this approach would be unsuitable for second language learners. This is problematic given the likelihood of a second language learner forgetting words may be higher than that of a first language learner, as they will often converse in their native language as opposed to English. Given that it is even more likely that a second language learner

will come across unknown words, it renders this approach invalid. As a result of the reasons discussed, it should not be the primary method of literacy instruction for second language learners. However, there is a great deal of support for the use of Analytical Phonics in the instance of irregular words, such as “**was**” or “**are**” which cannot be decoded

Cameron (2001) Yang, Dai, and Gao (2012) expressed that intensive reading is useful to develop reading comprehension. Gonzalez et al., (2011) said that intensive reading is considered as significant instrument for improving reading comprehension. Ahmad & Pourhosein, Gilakjani (2012) said that the main focus of this model is the smaller units of a text like letters words, phrases, and sentences. The reader reads all of the word in a phrase, or a sentence before understanding it. This model starts with decoding the smallest linguistic units, particularly phonemes, graphemes, and words and then makes meaning from the smallest to the largest units. The reader uses his/her background knowledge to the information that they find into the texts. There are some when he/she deciphers the linguistic units and understands the connection between words. The reader is not able to keep in his/her memory the meaning of every word. The other difficulty is that it is not possible to connect one word to those other words.

English is considered the official language to study in Ghana. Studied as compulsory school subject in junior high school, basic and high school students are considered as teenagers or young adults whose ages range from thirteen to eighteen years. These kinds of students are in the age of puberty, as (Brown, 2001) stated that students at that age are in a period of transition, confusion, self-awareness, growth and changes in body and mind. In other words, adolescent students are in a transition age between

children becoming adults. They experience a growth process that makes some changes to their body and mind, and sometimes the transition process makes them confused. That can be a number of factors that need to be considered in teaching English for teenagers.

Reading is often associated with the process of interaction between readers and texts that are usually quiet, internal and personal (Alderson, 2000). This means that there are many things that happen when reading. The understanding of how people interpret written texts to gain knowledge or understand messages, these processes involve three components, namely the writer, the text and the reader.

Nuttall (2000) also defines reading as a process. He connects reading with the communication process and states that reading means releasing messages from the text as much as possible. In other words, the writers as the code maker have something to share with others during the process. To make it happen, the authors puts their ideas into words as text. While the reader plays the role of a decoder, which can crack the code or construct the meaning of the text, before the message enters the reader's mind and finally communication is reached.

According to Klingner, Vaughn and Broadman (2000) reading comprehension is the process of interaction between readers and what they bring to the text, such as their prior knowledge or background and use of strategies. This process also includes variables related to the text, such as readers' interest in the text and their understanding of the text genre. This means that what the reader learns and how they respond and understand the text is individualistic. The process of building meaning depends on individual competencies, such as experience and how to interpret the text.

Klingnerm Vaughn and Broadman (2007) propose five basic understanding processes. These processes work together simultaneously and complement each other. First, micro processes occur in individual sentences. This is the ability to remember detailed ideas from a text that carries meaning. The second is an integrative process. This is the process of understanding and concluding relationships between clauses to make connections between sentences.

Furthermore, a macro process is the ability to organize ideas in a coherent way. These processes can be done by choosing the most important information to remember and removing relatively less important details.

Here is also an elaborative process. These processes connect information provided in the text with prior knowledge or background. The final process is the metacognitive process. This is awareness or control of cognitive process. In this process the reader tries to understand the text, chooses what information needs to be remembered and decides which strategies to use when reading. The metacognitive strategies used by the reader include repeating information to improve memory, underline the words or important parts of a section, record and check understanding.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the approach the researcher used to conduct this research. The chapter contains research design, population and sample, setting, sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedures as well as method of data analysis. Descriptive survey design was used to gather the data for the study. The descriptive survey design attempts to describe what prevails in a certain place.

3.1 Profile of the Study Area

The study was carried out in Quayson Memorial Junior High School (JHS) in the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality. The school had a student population of 190, 15 trained teachers, 3 community Volunteer Teachers under the Youth Employment Agency, 4 NABCO Teachers and 2-night watchmen, the students in this school are mostly from low income earning parents, who also care little about their wards academic progress in the school. Parents hardly visit the school to report or enquire about their wards progress and this has made the visitors book virtually empty with no parent's information. This is likely to be a factor that contributes to students' poor attendance to school, lateness, truancy and poor academic performance.

3.2 Research Approach

The research design refers to the overall plan employed by the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions and for testing the hypothesis formulated (Agyedu et al, 2000 as cited in Nortey, 2009). It encompasses decisions about how the research is conceptualized, the conduct of the research and the type of contribution the research is intended to make to the development of knowledge. In constructing a

research design, theoretical, methodological and ethical considerations relevant to the study are taken into consideration. The study adopted the qualitative research approach for data collection and analysis.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) indicate that research which attempts to increase our understanding of why things are the way they are in our social world and why people act the way they do is called “qualitative research”. In this study, the qualitative research approach provided the researcher a narrative investigation and description of the quality of relationships, situations, events, materials and conditions as observed in the sampled school and classroom settings of the school studied.

Qualitative research in its purest sense follows the paradigm that research should be conducted in the natural setting and that the meanings derived from research are specific to that setting and its conditions thereby being a holistic and peculiar interpretation of the natural setting under study (Wiesma & Jurs, 2009). (Bogdan and Biklen as cited in Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008) describe five features of qualitative research as follows:

1. The natural setting is the direct source of data and the researcher is the key
2. The natural setting is the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research.
3. Qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.
4. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process as well as product.
5. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
6. How people make sense out of their lives is a major concern to qualitative researchers.

3.3 Research Design

Case Study design was used. This is a research design in which one or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in depth (Blatter, 2008). It is argued that the strong emphasis in recent theoretical approaches of aspects such as ideas and timing is favourable for the adoption of case study approaches. The research design provided answers to the specified research questions thereby achieving the set objectives of the research study, making data collected easier and useful for interpretation and effective recommendations made thereof. Photographs were used to reinforce textual description within the findings as a form of documentation explaining conditions existing during the period of the study within the Quayson Memorial JHS.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of this study included all 25 students in the class however, the researcher selected 10 pupils as her sample size which had difficulties in reading comprehension. They were between the ages of 15 and 17 years.

The table below gives a detailed description of the study population. According to Beins and McCarthy (2012), population of a study is the entire set of people or data that are of interest to a researcher.

Table 1: Distribution of population according to sex

S/N	Boys	Girls	Total
Quayson JHS 1	10	15	25

From the above table, the total number of boys is 10 representing about 40 percent of the sample size in the form one class and the total number of girls is 15 representing 60 percent of the sample size in the form one class.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of the study is made up of 10 students in Quayson Memorial JHS form one and they include 4 boys and 6 girls. Research sample, according to Beins and McCarthy (2012), refers to subset of the population that is studied in a research work. The sampling procedure used was purposeful sampling technique aimed at selecting sample size of the study. Avoke, (2000) citing Cohen, Manion Morrison (2003) sees purposeful sampling hand-picking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of the typicality of the issue identified for study. This means choosing a sample for a specific purpose. Purposeful sampling is the process of including whoever happens to be information rich and available in the sample Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009).

This is the process of selecting a sample using a technique that does not permit the researcher to specify the probability, or chance, that each member of a population has been selected for a sample Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009). The advantages of this method are convenience, economy and the ease in obtaining a suitable sample size. The disadvantage is that the readily available participants are most likely not a random sample of the overall population Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009).

The form one students are immediate graduates from the Primary six and are supposed to be able to read their English reader fluently without difficulties whatsoever. Since some have difficulties, they form the appropriate persons to be

included in this study. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the study on the basis of their judgment of the typicality or possessing the particular characteristics being sought (Cohen, Manion & Marroson, 2008). This is the reason why the sample is deemed satisfactory to their specific need. On the basis of this, the sample size for this study was 10 out of the 25 students in the form one class. The table below gives a detailed description of the sampled size for this study.

Table 2: Sampled population of form one students in Quayson Memorial JHS

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
Quayson JHS form 1	4	6	10

From the table above, the total number of boys is 4 representing forty (40) percent of the sampled size and number of girls are 6 representing sixty (60) percent of the sampled population for the study.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher relied on primary data, and this focused on the use of observation guide and test. With observation, the researcher used her sense of vision as a main source of gathering data. It may also be referred to as the act of watching the individual performs a task or show a character and a record of that act or task is then noted and analyzed. Observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or a phenomenon as it takes place without asking the respondents. It helps in situations where accurate information cannot be elicited by asking/questioning. The researcher implored observation to collect a primary data for the study. Observation was conducted during her visit to the form

one class for a primary data collection. The use of this tool started from this stage (pre-visit stage) to the end of the data collection process.

The researcher used test as another instrument to help her gather data for the study. She conducted pre-test at the beginning to ascertain the veracity of the problem in order to launch and intervention, and a post-test after the intervention to again ascertain the effect of the intervention.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was undertaken after the researcher had asked for permission from the municipal education director and the headmaster, assistant head teacher, other teachers of the school and the students who were the participants. The research work covered three weeks. Two days within each week was used to conduct the research work to the end. In all, twelve working days; that is every Monday and Thursdays in the week. The first two weeks were used for the pre- intervention.

3.8 Data Quality and Ethical Issues

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) stated that ethical behavior is important in research, as in any other field of human activity. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) further explained that principles underlying 'research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. In respect of this, the researcher observed ethics throughout this research. The autonomy of the participants and the information was respected and handled confidentially. No information collected was revealed to anybody and no names of participants were used in this research. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. Consent was obtained from participants and it was explained to them that they could withdraw from the research any time they wished to. This requires that participants receive a

full, non-technical and clear explanation of the tasks expected of them. This was done by the researcher before every session.

The researcher always sought for permission from the headmaster and that particular class's teacher in times of usage of the teacher's instructional time and the student's involvement. For example, using the student's pictures on the work, the researcher had to visit and seek individual parent's permission. Again, the researcher had to educate them on the pre-test and post-test administered to the students before their full participation.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions of the findings of the study in relation to the literature review. The results are presented according to the research questions. These findings also are basis for appropriate conclusions.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

These tables discuss the demographic components of respondents on the following areas: age, sex, religious set/denominations.

Table 3: *Age Distribution of Respondents*

Variable/Age	Frequency	Percentage
10-11	6	60
12-13	3	30
14-15	1	10
Total	10	100

4.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

The analysis of table one on the ages of respondents revealed that the majority of respondents between 10-11 years were 6, representing about 60%. This is high because the JHS one students graduated from the Primary Six Class. Three (3) respondents, representing 30% were aged between 12-13 years. One (1) respondent in the age bracket of 14-15 representing, 10% of the population, and this shows that the form one mostly are students of ages between, 11-15 year. The age distribution of the respondents, gives the researcher an idea of the age group she is dealing with and

hence the kind of language or vocabulary to use since it corresponds with the pupil's level of analysis.

Table 4: Sex of Respondents

Variable/Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	4	40
Female	6	60
Total	10	100

Table 2 results revealed that male population in the study stood at 4, representing 40 percent of the population while their female counterparts dominate with 6, representing 60 percent of the entire population of the study. This result is not surprising because the entire student population in Quayson Memorial JHS is 70% female and 30% male. Also, the Ghana Statistical Service, GSS (2010) puts the population of women ahead of their male counterparts with a 51/49 margin.

Quayson Memorial JHS is located within the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality where parents and guardians have access to information on the importance of girl child education and this also contributes to the high enrolment figures for girls in the school. To add to that, some NGO's do not only advocate for female education, but also offer support like sponsorship/scholarship packages for the girl child who excels in her exams. All these have contributed to the greater percentage of female over male in the school and for that matter, the sample population for this study. Sex influences the study because, in so many times male population is normally higher than female's population, but in this circumstance, females are population are rather higher than male.

Table 5: Religious Denomination of Respondents

Variable/Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Muslim	3	30
Christian	5	50
Traditional	2	20
Total	10	100

4.3 Religious Denomination

‘The table again shows that 5 students out of the 10 representing 50% were Christians; this is not surprising because Quayson Memorial JHS is located in a Christian dominated community where Christians are largely dominated. Three (3) students representing 30% were Muslims and the remaining two (2) students representing 20% of the population were Traditional African Religious worshipers. The statistics above is in line with the location and the fact that the school was established by a Christian family first as a primary to teach Christian children; hence the name of the school-Quayson is the name of the head of that family. So they named the school Quayson Memorial Junior High School after the head of the family. Tarkwa-Nsuaem is an urban community and traditionalists mostly live in rural communities and this has made the Muslims also dominate over them a margin of 1, representing 10%. Religion influences the study because, some people have the view that Muslims don’t like going to school, but here is the case that in Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality especially Quayson Memorial JHS there is Muslims community located there. Because they are near by the school, quite numbers of them usually attend that school.

Table 6: Previous Primary School of Respondents

Variable/Education	Frequency	Percentage
Feed School (Quayson Primary School)	5	50
Schools Within the Municipality	3	30
Schools Outside the Municipality	2	20
Total	10	100

Source: Field Data, June 2019

4.4 Previous Primary School

This data was taken to ascertain information on the caliber of students and their past schools to help the researcher know how to handle the population. This part of the table showed that 5 students, representing 50%, were admitted from Quayson Memorial Primary school which is the feed school. Three (3) students, representing 30%, were admitted from other schools within the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality and two (2) students, representing 20%, of the population were students who were admitted from other parts of the country. This again showed clearly that the students in the form one class came from different backgrounds. Fifty (50%) of the study population did not come from the feed school. At the same time, it is just the first term of the 2018/2019 academic year and the students have not familiarized with the school for long.

4.5 Research Question 1

What are the difficulties students in Quayson Memorial JHS one encounter in reading and comprehension?

This question was answered by identifying some areas of difficulties that student's encounter which has affected their reading and comprehension. Some of these areas include; homes, teachers, remediation, assessment, sex, teaching and learning resources etc. All these played a role in the student's reading difficulties they faced. This actually helped the researcher to understand the student's situations and carried the intervention process which includes all the students with their varying difficulties. The researcher conducted a pre-test and a pre-observation to confirm these revelations.

4.5.1 Pre-Test

The researcher also conducted pre-test to the form one students (participants) in the class to ascertain the veracity of their challenges on reading and comprehension and how the phonic method can help them to solve the situation. The problems associated with the use of the phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension at the basic school level was also considered. In all, ten (10) pre-test questions were administered to each of the ten (10) participants. These pre-test questions were based on the phonics and aspect of phonic method under this study.

Fig 2: This picture helped the researcher to initiate the intervention measures to achieve her set objectives. The students were given their free will to make their own choices.



Figure 2: Pre-Test Results Picture

Table 7: Pre-test results

Number of Students	Marks	Percentage(%) of Marks
0	80-100	0%
1	50-79	10%
3	39-49	30%
6	30-0	60%
Total 10	100 Marks	100%

Note: (1) question represent and passed mark is 50% and above.

The results show that no student scored between 80-100 marks, and only one (1) student had a pass mark which falls between 50-79 representing 10% of the student population. Three (3) students scored marks between 39-49 representing 30% of the student population of ten (10). Finally, six (6) students scored thirty (30) marks each representing 60% of the entire student population under study. This shows that out of the ten (10) students, only one (1) student passed which represents 10% of the student

leaving 90% with no or very low marks and this tells why the researcher had to embark on this study to put some intervention mechanisms to unravel the situation of the form one student.

English is a core subject and compulsory from the basic school through to the higher level and every student in the basic school must pass it at the BECE exams before gaining admission in to the Senior High School. It is also the official language of Ghana and any person who would be gainfully employed must have command over the English language in written and spoken. However, the form one students in Quayson Memorial JHS are here battling with all of these serious challenges for effective learning of the subject. It must be assumed that it is not that we give the students the chance to read but that we instruct them on how to understand, how to comprehend and how to use strategies that will help them comprehend what they are reading. For instance, there is insufficient English Language text-book for students in Quayson Memorial JHS to use during reading and comprehension lessons. The students cannot learn to read and comprehend in a vacuum.

They have not been attending any in-service training on the usage of phonic method to teach reading and comprehension. The role of the teacher in the classroom and the student's academic development for that matter is highly placed and when they lack competency it simply suggests doom for those students, and this really manifested in the reading and comprehension difficulties with the students of Quayson Memorial JHS form one. Part of the problem is the time allocation for the reading and comprehension aspect of the English language. In Quayson Memorial JHS only seventy (70) minutes is located for reading and comprehension each week, which is woefully inadequate. The researcher however sets to improvise some of these

learning materials during the intervention stage of the study e.g. magazines in the place of their English text books.

4.5.2 Pre-Observation

Table 8: Pre-Observation Guide on Student's Fluency of Reading

Student	Very Fluent	Fluent (F)	Not Fluent	Cannot Read
Participants	(VF)		(NF)	(CR)
Participant A	()	()	(NF)	()
Participant B	()	()	()	(CR)
Participant C	()	(F)	()	()
Participant D	()	()	(NF)	()
Participant E	()	()	()	(CR)
Participant F	()	()	(NF)	()
Participant G	()	()	(NF)	()
Participant H	()	()	(NF)	()
Participant I	()	()	(NF)	()
Participant J	()	()	(NF)	()

From the observation guide, only participant 'C' could read form one (1) English reader fluently representing 10% of the total participants. Seven (7) participants (A, D, F, G, H, I, and J) could not read fluently the form one English reader representing 70% of the participants. Finally, 2 participants (B and E) representing 20% could not read their form one English reader. The results from this observation show that there is a serious problem of reading and comprehension among form one (1) students in Qayson Memorial JSS.

4.6 Research Question 2

What is the effect of the phonic method in teaching reading and comprehension?

The researcher in answering this question prepared a lesson plan and delivered in two instructional hours and on two separate days. This was to ascertain the effectiveness of the use of phonic method in teaching reading. During both lesson deliveries, the right steps were followed. This was demonstrated as follows;

Day 1:

The researcher having informed the Municipal Education Office, the assistant head teacher, staff and the students about her intention, she scheduled a day for the lesson delivery. This time was focus on the following areas:

Observation of student's fluency in reading with a guide, Intensive phonics instruction (reading-like behavior) Intensive, Systematic Phonics all major letter-sound correspondences taught in order that is by knowing the following:

(1) We learn to read by first learning the rules of phonics, that is, we learn to read by sounding out words and reading out-loud (“decoding to sound”) letter of the English alphabets.

(2) Knowledge of phonics must be deliberately taught and consciously learned. The major rules: “long and short vowels and vowel and consonant digraphs consisting of two letters representing one phoneme, such as oi, ea, sh, and th. Also, phonics instruction may include blends of letter sounds that represent larger subunits in words such as consonant pairs (e.g. st, b), onsets, and rimes”

- a. Introduction of the phonic method/to teaching reading and comprehension and indicated her main focus for the day.

- b. Introduction of the lesson by sounding out the letters of English alphabets.
- c. Introduction of morphemes/phonemes and creation of phonemic awareness etc.

After the researcher in day, one going through all these, she closed for the day.

Day 2: Lesson delivery on content/concept and core point

The researcher began the second day at exactly 8:00 am by reviewing the student's previous knowledge of what was discussed in the introduction lesson. The researcher continued to introduce new concepts developed from those that were made known to the students yesterday to ensure continuum and to help the students learn from the known to the unknown. Data collected was that out of the sample population of 10 students, seven of them were able to respond to the question been asked and also were able to read comprehension appropriately.

4.7 Research Question 3:

What are the Aspects of the Phonic Method Necessary for Teaching Reading Comprehension?

To answer this research question, some aspects were followed to unravel the challenges. This will enable them continue to their various Senior High Schools with ease, once they have control of reading and comprehension, and writing. The researcher prepared a lesson plan on reading and comprehension using the phonic method. She considers other aspects of phonics like; the systematic synthetics phonics, phonics instruction, analogy phonics during the teaching process. The researcher also took her time to follow the step-by-step procedure of teaching students to read using phonics method to get the required results. By so doing, the following aspects were used in this study.

4.7.1 Systematic Synthetic Phonics

(Meaning combining different substances or components) teaches individual letter-sound patterns, blending, and segmenting of recognizable words. For example, a teacher researcher would show and say the consonants m, l, s, t and short vowel a. Students practice saying the sounds and the teacher models how to blend (or combine) them into small words: am, Sam, tam, Al, Sal, as, mat, at, sat.

4.7.2 Phonics instruction

Is a way of teaching reading that stresses the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling? Phonemic awareness is the understanding that letters make sounds and those sounds are systematically joined together to make words. Once phonemic awareness is established and some sound-letter correspondences are learned, the brain begins to recognize new patterns on its own. After demonstrating phonemic awareness, students begin to develop their phonological awareness, or their ability to rhyme, identify onset sounds, and recognize syllables.

The problems which appeared in reading comprehension on English text divided into three major problems, which are:

1. Problems from the student
2. Problems from the teacher and
3. External Problems

1. Problems from the Student:

Some problems came from the student, which were by the student ability of English language. Most of the students were incapable of understanding the meaning of the

text they read and they did not familiar with the vocabulary in the text. It portrays from the wrong misspelled of the words. This was in accordance with (Ulfa, 2012) which stated that most of student score in English was below the minimal competence's criterion. That was mean that student basics comprehension. The same statement also provides in (Hasibuan, 2018) research result, it stated that students still have problems to get the information from the text and there were some reasons why students unable in reading task because some reasons as lack of vocabulary, lack of catch the main idea, difficult to pronounce, and uninterested to read and they were still difficult to get reading comprehension before.

The other parts were student attraction toward the subject and their motivation in learning English in general. Both aspects were lack from the student, most of the student did find reading comprehension was attractive subject. They tend to think that this subject is boring and the also lack of motivation in learning English. This was portrayed by very few students studying English outside the school, such as taking English course. This was in accordance with (Ulfa, 2012) who stated that there were students who don't not have good motivation to read and they felt the text is not interesting for them because they must keep on looking up the words in a dictionary to find out the meaning of the words. These activities make them feel bored and uninterested in reading comprehension. So, it was a problem for the teacher in teaching reading comprehension in the class.

2. Problems from the Teacher:

The other reading comprehension problem is problem from the teacher. These problems arouse due to mainly the teacher way of teaching. Various articles that discussed

reading comprehension, some researcher found that teacher did not apply any method to comprehend the reading text. Teacher just read, led the student read and told them to finish some questions in the text book. This was in accordance with (Seomantri, 2011) which stated that traditional teaching still applied in many classroom teachings. (Seomantri, 2011) also stated that lecture technique was uninteresting while others state that it was monotonous. However, teaching learning process was dominated by the teacher as indicated by 70% of students convince the researcher that lecture was still dominated by the lecturer (teacher center).

The other phenomenon stated in some articles that the method applied by the teacher was not suitable for the text. Some reading texts are based on genre structure, different genre need different way of interpreting and comprehending. Because of that many methods were invented to comprehend different types of reading text genre. This was in accordance with (Hasibuan, 2018) statement which stated that most of teachers just explained and read the text. They couldn't give more understanding about the text. They must have skills and competence to apply the appropriate teaching strategies, methods, approaches, techniques which can motivate the students to enjoy the printing materials that they distribute.

3. External Problems:

The last reading comprehension problems face by student in English text was came from external problems. External problems mean that these problems did not originate from the teacher nor the student, but from different aspect of them. The first external problem came from the material for teaching, material in here was text book for teaching and learning and also others supplementary tools for teaching, it can be audio-visual electronic such as speaker. Text book was played an important role in teaching, but from some articles in Ghana, one of it is text book. Some researchers

said that the text book used was inappropriate for the student level; others claimed it was inappropriate for the student objectives and other else said it did not meet the curriculum build.

The second problem was environment. In Ghana, still acted as foreign language and it makes difficult for student to improve their basics English knowledge. Some students of Ghana seldom hear people speak English. They seldom used it in conversation; reading books in English, some Ghanaian student are not familiar with English. This attitude make English became hard to learned they think it is less useful hence their motivation to improve reading comprehension. This was in accordance with (Suwandyet, 2018) it is rare for students to really participate in a classroom interaction due to their lack of confidence in conversation as the signals of heir interactions with each other and the teacher. Firstly, they did not know how to respond in English. Secondly, the students were not having confident to speak English. Then, students often use Ghanaian language to respond, especially in some rural part of the countries. The interaction also showed that only one source of teaching occurred that was the teacher him/herself; the teacher dominated the classroom interaction with few responds from the students. It means that there is no response and feedback.

In conclusion, based on the research, problem face by student in reading comprehension of English text was based in three factors; first, problems from the student, secondly, problems from the teacher, and thirdly, External problems. Problems from the student consist of three parts; student basic English ability, less attraction on the subject and not motivated. Problems from the teacher were not using any method while teaching and used inappropriate method. External problems were materials and environment. This study/research is expected to identify the problems

face in conducting reading comprehension topic on learning English in Junior High school. The expected results can be database to overcome some regulation on improving English reading comprehension in Ghana especially in Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipal Assembly. Furthermore, the product of this research, study is expected to be a part of journal article and books for Reading subject in University.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The objectives of this study include using the phonic method to help form one (1) student learn reading and comprehension, helping the form one (1) students learn following; short and long vowels, consonants, blending and reading one vowel word and short sentences and using the systematic synthetic phonics, phonics instruction, and to identify the regular and irregular language to help the form one (1) students read and comprehend. In chapter four some findings were made by the researcher. Amongst the areas covered were how the phonic method was used to teach reading and comprehension in the form one (1) class, the steps to follow when teaching /reading and comprehension in the form one (1) class, the steps to follow when teaching reading using the phonic method and identifying the aspects of phonic method that are useful for teaching reading and comprehension in the form one class. In this chapter, the findings are discussed, summarized and conclusions made based on the results. The researcher then made her conclusions based on the findings. Finally, a number of recommendations are then put in place for the full realization of the program objectives in the near future.

5.1 Summary

Information sourced for this study is put together under this section. The summaries are categorized based on the objectives of this study. Results of using the phonic method to teach reading and comprehension are summarized in one section, results of the steps or procedure when using the phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension are summarized in another section and results from the aspects of the

phonic method to facilitate the learning when teaching reading and comprehension are also summarized in a different section.

5.1.1 Summary of Findings on the Difficulties Students Face in Learning

Reading and Comprehension

According to Willis, C., 2005, some students face various levels of difficulties in learning reading comprehension. These difficulties emanated from their homes, teachers, remediation, assessment, sex, teaching and learning resources, etc.

5.1.2 Summary of Findings on Using the Phonic Method to Teach Reading and Comprehension

The phonic method which is widely used for teaching reading at all levels was not used to teach the form one (1) students during their previous grade. These students did not learn to read by first identifying the sounds of the vowels and consonants, short and long vowels and reading by identifying the sounds of the vowel and consonants, short and long vowels and reading by identifying the sounds of letters in the words. Students are taught by teachers who do not have the phonemic awareness and ability to sound out letters themselves rendering them helpless.

5.1.3 Summary of Findings on the Steps/Aspects to Follow in Teaching Using Phonic Method

Teachers who attempt teaching using the phonic method lack skills of steps and procedures in teaching reading and comprehension. In addition, the teachers do not always have a comprehension lesson plan indicating the mode of delivery of their reading and comprehension lesson. Finally, teachers should follow the necessary steps when using the phonic method of teaching reading and comprehension to facilitate students understanding.

The study also revealed that Systematic Synthetic Phonics (meaning combining different substances or components) teaches individual letter-sound patterns, blending, and segmenting of recognizable words was totally ignored by previous teachers. Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling was also not considered by primary six teachers. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that letters make sounds and those sounds are systematically joined together to make words. According to Adams (1990), once phonemic awareness is established and some sound-letter correspondences are learned, the brain begins to recognize patterns on its own.

5.2 Conclusion

From the analysis of the findings gathered on teaching reading and comprehension with phonic method, steps in teaching using phonic method and aspect to consider using phonic method several considerations were made.

The researcher makes the following conclusions from the pre and post test results:

- Parents should help their wards at home by reading with them and making correction on both their pronunciation and spelling. This can be done by literate parents or hiring qualified private tuition.
- Teachers must be taken through on-the-job training to enhance their teaching skills in order to handle reading and comprehension using the phonic method.
- Teachers should assist students by giving them equal commitment, concentration and attention.

During the study, students were ready and enthusiastically participated in the lesson delivery. The study also revealed some inadequacies that compounded the students'

inability to read and some were; inadequate teaching and learning materials, inability of their previous teachers to use the phonic method to teach reading and comprehension at their early stages of learning. Another problem was the time allocated for the comprehension lesson. Another problem was the time allocated for the comprehension lesson. Students had poor experience in vowel and consonant sounds. Finally, from the study the phonic method is most effective in teaching students reading and comprehension especially at the basic schools.

The investigation has gathered that the appropriate procedures and steps are not always followed during teaching and learning of reading and comprehension at the various levels of our basic schools. In some circumstances students were taught reading and comprehension by teacher who could not identify and differentiate long vowel from short vowel, the right content of what is taught and learned.

Many times the right Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) were readily not available for teachers to use in teaching and learning. In teaching reading and comprehension lesson there has to be readily available English text books which were not also the case of the students in Quayson Memorial Junior High School. Many teachers totally ignore teaching the listening and speaking aspect of the English Language which is a toll on the students' progress in reading and comprehension and speaking. The research results revealed that teachers do not always consider the appropriate aspects of the phonic method like systematic synthetic phonic and phonics instruction for teaching reading and this has an untold effect on learners' understanding. Also, from the pre-test, only one (1) student, representing 10% of the respondents, could read with little difficulties. This was not the case during the post-test. Here, seven (7) students, representing 70% of the respondents, could now read

with little difficulties or with assistance from the researcher. Therefore, a conclusion is made that the study established that form one (1) students in Quayson Memorial Junior High School has reading and comprehension difficulties.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations on the Difficulties Students Face when Learning

Reading and Comprehension

The study findings show that some important considerations were not made in the assessment of student's difficulties in reading. First of all, the school environment must be conducive for learning to take place. The teachers who facilitate the students learning must be able to identify their weak points in their reading process; this will help them learn to improve upon their weak sites. Proper assessment should be made before mainstreaming students into one learning environment to enable teachers handle their individual differences.

5.3.2 Recommendations on the use of Phonic Method to teach Reading and Comprehension

We learn to read by first learning the rules of phonics, that is, we learn to read by sounding out words and reading out-loud (decoding to sound). This means that the knowledge of phonics must be deliberately taught and consciously learned. The study findings show that some basic considerations were not followed in the teaching of reading and comprehension lessons in the form one class. They include the following;

First of all, considering the importance of phonic method in teaching reading, I will recommend it to the Tarkwa Municipal Education Directorate as a stake holder and a curriculum planner to adopt the use of the phonic method in the teaching of reading

and comprehension in the basic schools. The Tarkwa Municipal Education Directorate should try and organize on the job training programs for all English teachers in the basic schools in the Municipality on regular basis. When teachers are equipped with the skills of using the phonic method they can facilitate their students' learning during teaching reading and comprehension. Information gathered from the research also indicated that teachers should start teaching using the phonic method at an early stage of the learners' development.

5.3.3 Recommendations on the Steps/Aspects to follow in Teaching Using

Phonic Method

Teaching English language at the Junior High School, especially reading comprehension, steps must be followed where the phonic method is employed. Some of the steps are:

1. The child must know the language he is going to learn to read.
2. The child must learn to dissect spoken words into component sounds.
3. The child must learn to recognize and discriminate the letters of the alphabet in their various forms (upper- and lower-case letters, printed and cursive).
4. The child must learn the left-to-right principle by which words are put in order in continuous text.
5. The child must learn that there are patterns of highly probable correspondence between letters and sounds, and he must learn those patterns of correspondence that will help him recognize words that he already knows in his spoken language, or that will help him determine the pronunciation of unfamiliar words.

6. The child must learn to recognize printed words from whatever cues he can use, their total configuration, the letters composing them, the sounds represented by those letters, and or the meanings suggested by the context.
7. The child must learn that printed words are signals for spoken words, and that they have meanings analogous to those of spoken words. While decoding a printed message into its spoken equivalent, the child must be able to comprehend the meaning of the total message in the same way that he would comprehend the meaning of the corresponding spoken messages.
8. The child must learn to reason and think about what he reads, within the limits of his talents and experience”.

Teachers of English Language must always try to follow these steps when teaching reading comprehension as the findings from this study results show:

1. Activating prior knowledge of learners before the commencement of the lesson;
2. Questioning learners before, during and after the lesson.
3. Analyzing text structure with the learners.
4. Creating mental or visual images during the lesson.
5. Summarizing the lesson with students.

The reasons for all these are that students are actively involved in the teaching and learning process and this leads to understanding.

The students should have the higher participation in the learning process:

In teaching reading comprehension, some aspects are considered to facilitate the students’ understanding. There are three evidence-based or proven approaches for teaching English letter-sound patterns or phonics to children and adults. All are

sequential, systematic, and use explicit instruction. All can be delivered in short, regular lessons that combine seeing, hearing, saying, reading, and spelling activities. Once learners know some sounds, they can use this knowledge to read words via decoding, or write words via encoding, as they can build up and break words down.

Systematic Synthetic Phonics helps the teacher create components phonemic awareness, which is an essential component for learning to read and write. Analytical Phonics (separating something into components or parts) teaches analysis of letter-sound patterns in known words and application to unknown words. For example, teacher researcher explains short vowel 'a', and long vowel 'a:' silent 'e' headers, which include phonetic spellings, example words, and sometimes pictures. He/she models how to sort (or separate) by headers a list 12-21 other words: mad, fast, page, name. same, hand, snap, came, grass, rake, made etc. Then he/she guides students in rereading, resorting, and spelling the same words.

The Ghana Education Service (GES) should encourage its teachers to do more instructional adaptation, if the needs of pupils with reading difficulties are to be met in the regular classrooms.

Workshops and seminars could be organized by the Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipal Assembly for teachers to keep them abreast on how to identify and also deal with pupils with reading difficulties. The department of General art Studies could use this study to collaborate with stock –holders of Professional English language teachers and other education officials to run such workshops. Class size in the Quayson Memorial Junior High School could be reduced so that students with reading difficulties can benefit from individualized teaching styles.

Encourage students to enhance their understanding of the text through writing and paraphrasing the answer to the question in the previous step. Have students go back to each heading and try to recall the questions and answers. Have students write a summary that ties together all of the ideas that have gathered.

Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies:

Teach reading comprehension strategies individually or in combination and by using a gradual release of responsibility strategies are questioning, visualizing, predicting /activating prior knowledge and monitoring, clarifying and fix-up, draw and summarizing/retelling.

Examples of activities:

- Ask students to predict what will happen at the end of a story. Have them explain how they decided on their prediction, which encourages them to make inferences about what they are reading.
- Put questioning words, e.g. where, Wh) on index cards and distribute to students. Have students form small groups and ask questions using these words.
- Ask students to visualize what is described in the text and to describe what they see.
- Write different reading comprehension strategies on cards and have students work in pairs to apply the strategies to text they don't understand.

Teach students to identify and use the text’s organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content:

Explain how to identify and connect the parts of narrative texts and provide instruction on common structures of informational texts.

Examples of activities:

- Provide opportunities for students to act out key passages.
- Have students match up pictures representing causes and effects in a game-like activity.
- Have students use the details in a descriptive paragraph to construct an illustration or 3-dimensional display.
- Do compare and contrast exercises

Guide students through focused, high-quality discussion on the meaning of text:

Structure the discussion to complement the text, the instructional purpose, and the readers’ ability and grade level. Develop discussion questions that require students to think deeply about text. Ask follow-up questions to encourage and facilitate discussion. Have students lead structured small-group discussions (discussions will be more structured with younger students).

Discussions and questions should be grounded in state and national comprehension standards. Many state standards for younger students incorporate versions of the National

Assessment of Educational Progress (AEP) standards which include three categories of comprehension, they are: Locate and recall, integrate and interpret and critique and evaluate:

Examples of activities

- Have students identify the main ideas and supporting details
- Ask students to compare and contrast information or actions by characters
- Consider alternatives to what is presented in the text
- Challenge students to judge either the likelihood that an event could actually occur or the adequacy of the explanation in the text
- Synthesize what is read with other texts and experiences

5.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter started with the work summary where findings on the difficulties students face when learning reading comprehension, use of phonic method in teaching reading comprehension, considering the steps in teaching reading and comprehension and aspects of phonics to teach students to enable them learn reading and comprehension. This was followed by conclusions on using phonic method, steps in teaching reading comprehension and aspects of phonics to consider in teaching reading and comprehension. The researcher then proceeded with some recommendations as follows: First, on the difficulties students face when learning reading comprehensions, the study recommended the identification of individual difficulties and competences, use of phonic method to teach reading and comprehension, the researcher concluded that in teaching reading and comprehension to students at the basic school level it is appropriate to use the phonic method.

To add to that, when teaching reading comprehension, all the steps should be followed to enable the learners actively participate and contribute in the learning process else students would just be partial learners who may just observe the learning process during instructional hours.

Finally, teachers do not know some aspects of phonics like the systematic synthetic phonics and analytical phonics that must be considered when teaching phonics. These help teachers create the phonemic awareness in learners to boost their learning of phonics.



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APPENDIX 'A'**A LESSON PLAN ON TEACHING READING AND COMPREHENSION USING THE RUBRICS**

Week ending subjectEnglish.....reference materialssyllabus, text book,

Internet, handouts, resource persons.....class/form.....one (1)...no. of students in class

25...week...5th... average age of students...11-15years duration....70 minutes

DAY/DATE /DURATION	TOPIC/SUB- TOPIC/ASPEC TS	OBJECTIVE(S)/RELEVA NT PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE (RPK)	TEACHER-LEARNER ACTIVITIES (TLAs)/TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS (TLMs)	CORE POINTS/HI GH ORDER SKILLS	EVALUATIO N/REMARKS
DAY Monday DATE 21/05/2020 DURATION 9:10 AM Minutes	ASPECT Reading and Comprehension TOPIC:	By the end of the lesson, the pupil/students will be able to: (1) Identify the consonants/vowels and auditory discriminate the sounds of the English alphabets. (2) Identify short and long vowels and consonants and blend them (phonemes). (3) Blend and read one vowel word with short sentences	Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) Vowels, consonants, short and letters of the English alphabets Introduction: Introduce the lesson by telling the students the aspect and topic for the day and the concentration area e.i letters of the English alphabets and their sounds Pre-Presentation Stage Assist students to identify the vowels and consonants in the alphabets and sound out	Listening skill and recall Acquisition of vocabulary Listening Skills	EVALUATIO N The students were made to complete a worksheet on the following areas: What have you learned today? How will you apply this

<p>Thursday 45 minutes 09am-09:45am</p>	<p>Day two Reading a giving passage</p>	<p>4) Introduce the long vowel sounds and blend long vowels with consonants</p> <p>(5) Begin blending and reading two vowels words and introduces two special rules.</p> <p>(6) Introduce the phonic chart which also introduces the special sounds that are made when letters stick together.</p> <p>(7) Read a given passage</p> <p>(8) Identify five 5 unfamiliar words and use them to form correct simple sentences.</p>	<p>Presentation Stage Assist students to identify long and short vowels and begin to blend short vowels with consonants</p> <p>Post Presentation Stage Assist students to read two vowel words and note irregular words by introduction the two special rules.</p> <p>Pre-Presentation Stage Introduce the phonic chart and continue to introduce to introduce the special sounds hat are made when letters stick together.</p> <p>Introduction Allow students to practice reading whole words all by themselves to become competent in reading individually. Give students a passage.</p> <p>Presentation Stage Read the passage while students follow silently.</p> <p>Allow students to read the passage for a giving time say 5 minutes silently and note unfamiliar/words they could not call out.</p>	<p>and language acquisition</p> <p>Fluency skills</p> <p>Skill of: Identification Vocabulary Language</p> <p>Fluency skills Silent Reading Skills and Vocabulary Listening Fluency Skills</p> <p>Vocabulary and language acquisition skills skill of re-call.</p>	
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		<p>RELEVANT PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE (RPK) The students can read the English alphabets and can identify vowels and consonants</p>	<p>Post Presentation Stage Allow students to read the passage aloud in the class for the researcher and fellow students to follow till they all read passage,</p> <p>Guide students to call out the identified words and use them to form correct simple sentence</p> <p>Conduct a posttest to ascertain level of understanding and effectiveness of the intervention</p>		
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APPENDIX 'B'

PRE-TEST QUESTION

QUAYSON MA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TARKWA

FORM ONE (1)

1. Underline vowels in the following; a, u, b, f, z, d, p, e, w, s.
2. State one difference between vowels and consonants,
3. Underline the consonants in the following; s, w, e, p, d, z, f, b, u, z.

Answer questions 4-10 by indicating whether the vowels in the vowels in the sentences are long or short vowels

4. () a--- (be pronounced as a 'short' vowels/'long' vowel) examples; cat, dad, gas, rat, at, as, ad.
5. () ae--- (be pronounced as a 'vowel/'short' vowel) examples; date, case, late, sake, page, ate, age.
6. () ai--- (be pronounced as a 'long' vowel/'short' vowel) examples; wait, rain, jail, paid fail. Aid, aim,, sad.
7. () ay--- (be pronounced as a 'long' vowel/short' vowel) examples; say, day, pay, way, days, pays, gays, says
8. () al--- (be pronounced as 'long' vowel/'short' vowel) examples; all, call, salt, tall, all, ball, wall.

9. () u--- (be pronounced as a 'short' vowel/'long' vowel) examples; cup, cut, bug, hut, luck, hug.

10. () o--- (be pronounced as a long vowel/short' vowel) examples; so, no, go, jo, to, do.



APPENDIX 'C'

Phonics Rules

Most Commonly Used Phonics Rules:

1. Every syllable in every word must contain a vowel. The vowels are: a, e, i, o, u, and y (although y is a consonant when at the beginning of a word).
2. When 'c' is followed by 'e, i, or y,' it usually has the soft sound of 's.'
Example: city.
3. When 'g' is followed by 'e, I, or y,' it usually has the soft sound of 'j.'
Example: gem.
4. A consonant digraph is two or more consonants that are grouped together and represent a single sound. Here are consonant digraphs you should know: wh (what) sh (shout), wr (write), kn (know), th (that), ch (watch), ph (laugh), ch (watch), gh (laugh), ng (ring).
5. When a syllable ends in a consonant and has only one vowel, that vowel is short. Examples: tap, bed, wish, lock, but
6. When a syllable ends in a silent 'e,' the vowel that comes before the silent 'e' is long. Examples: Take gene, bite, hope, and fuse,
7. When a syllable has two vowels together, the first vowel is usually long and the second vowel is silent. Example: stain.
8. When a syllable ends in a vowel and is the only vowel, that vowel is usually long. Example: ba/ker, fu/ture, my/self.
9. When a vowel is followed by 'r' in the same syllable, the vowel is neither long nor short. Examples: charm, term, shirt, surf.