

## An action research to improve English phonic reading skill among a group of grade 7 students

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An action research was carried out in order to improve the English phonic reading skill among a selected group of weaker students of Grade 7 of a Maha Vidyalaya located close to Kandy. It was observed that the above group of 10 students was unable to read English with correct phonetic sounds. There were problems in pronunciation, and identifying some letters. It was found from the initial fact finding that the major reason for their mistakes was lack of loud reading under correct observation. A pre-test was conducted to identify the weaknesses of the students specifically and a questionnaire and an interview were used to reconnaissance, before planning and implementing the interventions. It was expected that as a result of the intervention, the students would be able to avoid the errors they made in reading due to their mother tongue interference and to use accepted Sri Lankan pronunciation. They were also expected to improve their pronunciation of consonant cluster (Combinations) avoiding mother tongue interferences. Moreover, as a result of interventions, they were expected to read any given material apart from their English textbook. During the intervention, Rebus rhymes, children's songs, developed by the researcher and activities taken from accepted workbooks/journals such as nursery rhymes, language games, picture based stories, reading articles in the children's corner of the Sunday Observer and presentation of news were introduced to overcome the weaknesses. A post-test was carried out to see whether the students had improved their pre-status. Students were given marks using the same banding at both the pre-test and the post-test. Their improvement was measured by comparing marks obtained at the pre-test and the post-test. While the process of research was going on, techniques of observations and diary keeping were used to collect data. All the ten students in the sample were interested in improving their reading ability with correct phonetic sounds and they were of a high standard and eight out of ten showed a progress in their performances due to the intervention programme. The students were willing to continue the programme as they found that it was supporting their progress in achievements. As a

result, it is suggested to continue the programme by providing such activities with another set of weaker students in oral reading with correct pronunciation, which leads to intensive reading and extensive reading.

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