



# Instructional Practices and Learner Engagement in MAPEH Education: Perspectives from Elementary Teachers in a Philippine Rural School Context

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' lived experiences in implementing remedial reading programs for struggling Grade 7 learners at Delfin Albano High School. Specifically, the study examined teachers' pedagogical practices, instructional challenges, coping strategies, and perceived literacy outcomes in remedial reading instruction. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with twelve purposively selected teachers involved in remedial reading interventions. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework was utilized in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that teachers encountered significant challenges related to learners' poor reading comprehension, limited vocabulary, weak decoding skills, low reading motivation, and inconsistent learner attendance. Despite these challenges, teachers implemented contextualized reading activities, phonics-based instruction, guided reading, peer-assisted learning, and differentiated literacy strategies to improve learner participation and reading competence. Participants further emphasized the importance of patience, emotional support, learner-centered instruction, and continuous reading practice in sustaining literacy development among struggling readers. Teachers also observed gradual improvements in learners' confidence, oral reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, and classroom participation. The findings underscore the importance of responsive and contextualized remedial reading interventions in supporting literacy recovery among struggling adolescent readers. The study highlights the need for strengthened literacy intervention programs, instructional resources, and professional development initiatives related to remedial reading instruction.

**Keywords:** remedial reading, literacy intervention, struggling readers, pedagogical practices, reading comprehension, qualitative research, secondary education

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading is a foundational literacy skill essential for academic achievement, communication competence, and lifelong learning. In secondary education, learners are expected to demonstrate adequate reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, fluency, and critical literacy skills necessary for understanding subject content and participating meaningfully in classroom instruction. However, many Grade 7 learners continue to experience significant reading difficulties that affect academic performance, classroom participation, and overall learning engagement.

Struggling readers in secondary schools commonly encounter challenges related to decoding, vocabulary development, oral reading fluency, comprehension, and reading motivation. These literacy difficulties become more complex when learners enter higher grade levels without fully developed foundational reading skills. Consequently, schools implement remedial reading programs to address literacy gaps and provide targeted instructional support for struggling readers.

Teachers handling remedial reading programs perform crucial roles in supporting literacy recovery and learner confidence. They are expected to utilize responsive instructional strategies, differentiated literacy activities, and learner-centered approaches that accommodate learners' varying reading needs and learning difficulties. However, remedial reading instruction also presents challenges associated with learner motivation, resource limitations, attendance concerns, and varying literacy levels among struggling readers.

Despite the growing implementation of literacy intervention programs, limited qualitative studies examine teachers' lived experiences in conducting remedial reading programs among struggling secondary learners. Understanding teachers' experiences is essential in identifying effective pedagogical practices, instructional realities, and intervention concerns that shape literacy development among struggling readers.

This study explored teachers' lived experiences in implementing remedial reading programs for struggling Grade 7 learners at Delfin Albano High School. Specifically, the study examined teachers' pedagogical practices, instructional challenges, and perceived literacy outcomes in remedial reading instruction.

### Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to:

1. Explore teachers' lived experiences in implementing remedial reading programs for struggling Grade 7 learners;

2. Examine instructional challenges encountered in remedial reading instruction; and
3. Identify pedagogical practices and perceived literacy outcomes associated with remedial reading interventions.

### Review of Related Literature

Remedial reading programs are designed to support struggling readers through targeted literacy instruction and intervention strategies. According to Allington (2020), effective reading intervention programs focus on individualized instruction, reading fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension enhancement, and learner engagement. Learners with weak reading foundations require scaffolded and consistent literacy support to improve reading competence.

Teachers handling remedial reading programs frequently encounter challenges related to learner motivation, inconsistent attendance, low confidence, and varying literacy levels. Snowling and Hulme (2021) emphasized that struggling adolescent readers often experience reading anxiety and reduced academic confidence, which affect participation and literacy development.

Research further highlights the effectiveness of differentiated literacy instruction, guided reading, phonics-based approaches, peer-assisted learning, and contextualized reading activities in improving learner engagement and reading performance. Graves, Juel, and Graves (2020) noted that responsive and learner-centered literacy interventions strengthen comprehension, fluency, and learner motivation among struggling readers.

### Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978), which emphasizes scaffolding, guided learning, and collaborative interaction in promoting literacy development. The study also utilized Chall's Stages of Reading Development Theory (1996), which explains the progression of reading skills and the importance of intervention support in addressing literacy difficulties among struggling readers.

These theories guided the exploration of teachers' pedagogical practices, instructional experiences, and literacy intervention strategies in remedial reading instruction.

### Methodology

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore teachers' lived experiences in implementing remedial reading programs for struggling Grade 7 learners at Delfin Albano High School.



Phenomenology was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to understand teachers' instructional experiences, classroom realities, and perceptions regarding remedial reading instruction.

The participants consisted of twelve purposively selected teachers directly involved in remedial reading interventions for struggling Grade 7 learners. Inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) currently handle remedial reading activities; (2) possess teaching experience related to literacy intervention; and (3) be willing to share their instructional experiences and perspectives.

Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews focusing on pedagogical practices, instructional challenges, learner responses, and perceived literacy outcomes. Ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study. The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Interview transcripts were transcribed, coded, and categorized to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and themes related to remedial reading instruction and literacy development. Trustworthiness was established through member checking, triangulation, audit trails, and thick description.

## Results and Findings

### Theme 1: Addressing Learners' Weak Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Difficulties

Participants consistently identified poor reading comprehension and limited vocabulary knowledge as major literacy concerns among struggling Grade 7 learners. Teachers observed that many learners experienced difficulty understanding passages, identifying main ideas, and interpreting contextual meanings during reading activities.

One participant shared:

"Marami sa mga learners ang hirap umintindi ng binabasa lalo na kapag unfamiliar ang vocabulary."

Another teacher explained:

"Kailangan pang isa-isahin at i-explain ang passages bago nila maintindihan."

Participants also noted that weak vocabulary knowledge affected learners' confidence and classroom participation during reading activities.

The findings suggest that reading comprehension and vocabulary limitations significantly influence learners' literacy development and engagement in remedial reading instruction.

### Theme 2: Utilizing Contextualized and Scaffolded Reading Strategies

Teachers emphasized the importance of contextualized

instruction, guided reading, phonics-based activities, and scaffolded literacy tasks in improving learners' reading performance. Participants explained that simplified reading materials, localized examples, and repetitive reading activities supported learner comprehension and fluency development.

One participant stated:

"Kapag contextualized at mas simple ang reading materials, mas naaintindihan ng learners."

Another teacher remarked:

"Malaking tulong ang guided reading at paulit-ulit na practice sa improvement ng reading skills nila."

Teachers also described utilizing peer-assisted learning, oral reading exercises, and vocabulary drills to sustain learner participation and reading confidence.

The findings highlight the importance of scaffolded and learner-centered literacy strategies in remedial reading programs.

### Theme 3: Managing Learner Motivation and Classroom Participation Challenges

Participants identified low learner motivation, inconsistent attendance, and limited reading interest as major challenges affecting remedial reading instruction. Teachers observed that some struggling readers demonstrated low confidence and hesitation during oral reading and classroom participation.

One participant shared:

"May mga learners na nawawalan ng confidence dahil hirap silang magbasa."

Another teacher explained:

"Minsan mahirap silang hikayatin lalo na kapag mababa na ang self-confidence nila."

Participants emphasized the importance of encouragement, patience, and positive reinforcement in motivating struggling readers.

The findings indicate that emotional support and learner motivation significantly influence participation and literacy improvement in remedial reading programs.

### Theme 4: Strengthening Literacy Development Through Patience and Emotional Support

Teachers emphasized that remedial reading instruction required patience, empathy, and consistent learner support. Participants viewed literacy intervention as both an instructional and emotional process requiring understanding and encouragement.

One participant remarked:

"Kailangan talagang maging patient kasi mabagal ang progress ng ibang learners."

Another teacher stated:

"Kapag supportive ang teacher, mas nagiging motivated silang matutong magbasa."



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Teachers also observed gradual improvements in learners' oral reading fluency, confidence, vocabulary acquisition, and classroom participation as a result of consistent reading intervention activities.

The findings suggest that supportive and learner-centered remedial reading practices positively influence literacy recovery and learner confidence.

### Discussion

The findings revealed that struggling Grade 7 learners experience significant literacy difficulties related to reading comprehension, vocabulary development, fluency, and learner confidence. These literacy concerns affect classroom participation, reading motivation, and academic engagement.

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated pedagogical adaptability through contextualized reading instruction, guided reading activities, scaffolded literacy tasks, peer-assisted learning, and differentiated intervention strategies. Participants also emphasized the importance of patience, emotional encouragement, and supportive classroom relationships in strengthening literacy recovery among struggling readers.

The study further highlights the significance of responsive and learner-centered remedial reading programs in improving literacy competence and learner confidence among struggling adolescent readers.

### Conclusion

The study concluded that teachers implementing remedial reading programs at Delfin Albano High School encounter instructional challenges related to learners' weak reading comprehension, vocabulary limitations, low confidence, and inconsistent learner participation. These challenges significantly affect literacy instruction and learner engagement.

Despite these instructional realities, teachers demonstrated resilience and instructional adaptability through contextualized literacy activities, scaffolded reading instruction, guided reading, peer-assisted learning, and learner-centered intervention strategies. Teachers also emphasized the importance of patience, emotional support, and positive reinforcement in promoting literacy recovery and learner confidence.

The findings underscore the importance of strengthening remedial reading programs, literacy intervention resources, and teacher professional development initiatives to support struggling adolescent readers effectively.

### Implications of the Study

The findings may guide school administrators, literacy coordinators, and policymakers in strengthening remedial

reading programs, literacy intervention initiatives, and instructional support systems for struggling readers in secondary schools. Schools may further enhance contextualized literacy instruction, reading intervention materials, and collaborative literacy support programs.

The study also highlights the importance of learner-centered and emotionally supportive reading interventions in improving literacy competence and learner motivation among struggling adolescent readers.

Future studies may further examine the long-term effects of remedial reading interventions on learners' academic achievement and literacy development across diverse educational settings.

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