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EXPLORING CONTEMPORARY TEACHING APPROACHES, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN READING INSTRUCTION AND LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study explored contemporary teaching approaches, practices, and challenges in reading instruction, with a focus on their influence on learners' reading proficiency. Utilizing a descriptive quantitative design with a correlational approach, the research involved 40 teacher-respondents from Grades 4, 5, and 6 at Sta. Maria Central School. Results showed that while teachers consistently employed a variety of instructional strategies, learners' reading proficiency remained at the instructional level. This suggests that effective reading instruction is influenced by multiple factors and not solely by the frequency or quality of teaching strategies. The study found no significant relationship between teachers' approaches and learners' reading proficiency, indicating the presence of external constraints that limit the impact of instruction. Among the most pressing challenges identified were limited contact time with students, overlapping school activities, teacher workload, curriculum congestion, and the diverse needs of learners - all of which hinder consistent and effective reading instruction. These findings emphasize that improving reading outcomes requires not only refining teaching practices but also addressing systemic barriers. As such, it is strongly recommended that the division of Zamboanga City revisit its policies related to the scheduling of academic and non-academic activities to allow for more dedicated instructional time. Moreover, continuous professional development in literacy instruction must be prioritized. Training should be responsive to teachers' career stages – keeping seasoned teachers updated, encouraging mid-career innovation, and supporting new teachers as they cross the demands of literacy.

KEYWORDS: *Reading Instruction, Teaching Approaches, Literacy, Learner Proficiency, Educational Challenges*

INTRODUCTION

Reading instruction has undergone significant transformations in recent years, driven by evolving educational paradigms and technological advancements. Teachers are faced with the challenge of navigating this ever-changing environment while striving to implement effective instructional practices that foster literacy skills among students. As Shanahan and Shanahan (2017, 15) highlight, educators are tasked with navigating complex terrain as they adapt to these shifts.

In response to the diverse needs of learners, teachers have embraced a variety of instructional strategies aimed at promoting reading proficiency. These strategies range from evidence-based practices such as explicit phonics instruction to constructivist approaches that emphasize meaning-making. McKeown et al. (2015, 214) emphasize the importance of creating a conducive learning environment that supports literacy development through the implementation of these diverse strategies.

However, despite the plethora of instructional approaches available, teachers encounter numerous challenges that hinder the effectiveness of reading instruction. One such challenge is the need to address the diverse needs of learners, including those with learning disabilities or English language learners. Gersten et al. (2017, 316) underscore the importance of differentiation in instruction to accommodate the varied abilities and backgrounds of students, highlighting the complex nature of meeting the needs of all learners. Furthermore, the advent of digital technologies introduces additional complexities to the teaching of reading. In the digital age, educators must navigate the demand for online texts, multimedia resources, and digital literacy skills while simultaneously fostering critical reading abilities. According to Warschauer and Matuchniak (2016, 225), this necessitates a reevaluation of traditional pedagogical practices to effectively integrate digital tools and resources into instruction.

In the Philippines, despite government efforts to ensure inclusive education through various policies and programs, challenges persist in achieving universal literacy. As noted by Davis et al. (2016, 236), initiatives such as the community-based reading program in Basilan, Lamitan Province, attest to the commitment to address literacy issues. However, the prevalence of non-readers remains a pressing concern, as lamented by Lantaka (2022, 10).

Similarly, at Sta. Maria Central School SPED Center, the plight of non-readers is evident, with a substantial number across grades 4, 5, and 6 comprising 20% of the student population. Despite concerted efforts by the Department of Education in Zamboanga Division and school administrators, the challenge of eradicating non-readers persists. Aguana (2018, 7) underscores the various reading programs implemented, such as the "Drop Everything and Read" Project and Remedial Classes, along with the formulation of developmental plans. However,

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these efforts have yet to yield significant improvements, highlighting the persistent struggle to address literacy gaps effectively.

Thus, the evolving landscape of reading instruction poses challenges for teachers as they strive to implement effective instructional practices in response to changing educational paradigms and technological advancements. Addressing the diverse needs of learners and navigating the complexities of digital literacy are key considerations in ensuring the continued efficacy of reading instruction in modern classrooms. This paper explored the contemporary teaching practices and challenges encountered by educators in the domain of reading instruction.

TEACHERS' PRACTICES IN INCREASING READING PROFICIENCY

The quest to enhance reading proficiency among elementary learners has been a central focus in educational research and practice. From 2018 to 2022, scholarly literature has provided valuable insights into effective teaching practices aimed at improving reading skills among young students. This literature review synthesizes key findings from studies conducted during this period, highlighting innovative approaches and evidence-based strategies employed by teachers to promote reading proficiency.

Differentiated Instruction and Personalized Learning. One prominent theme in recent literature is the importance of differentiated instruction and personalized learning approaches in addressing the diverse needs of elementary learners. Researchers emphasize the significance of tailoring instruction to individual students' strengths, interests, and learning styles (Tovani 2018, 22). By leveraging diagnostic assessments and formative data, teachers can design targeted interventions and provide differentiated support to students at various reading levels (Vogt and Shearer 2020, 122).

Explicit Instruction in Phonics and Phonemic Awareness. Studies continue to underscore the efficacy of explicit instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness for developing foundational reading skills among elementary learners (Stuebing et al., 2018). Researchers advocate for structured phonics instruction that systematically teaches letter-sound correspondences and decoding strategies, laying the groundwork for proficient reading (Hatcher et al. 2021, 87). Furthermore, integrating phonemic awareness activities into daily instruction helps students develop crucial phonological processing skills essential for reading success (Foorman and Torgesen 2019, 58).

Promotion of Vocabulary Development. The significance of vocabulary development in fostering reading comprehension has been a focal point in recent literature. Teachers are encouraged to employ instructional practices that promote vocabulary acquisition and deepen students' understanding of words in context (Beck et al. 2020, 23). Incorporating explicit vocabulary instruction, engaging students in meaningful word-learning activities, and providing opportunities for repeated exposure to target words are cited as effective strategies for enhancing vocabulary knowledge among elementary learners (Nagy and Townsend 2019, 221).

Integration of Technology and Digital Literacy. With the increasing prevalence of digital resources and technology in education, scholars emphasize the importance of integrating technology into reading instruction to enhance engagement and learning outcomes (Moss and Hendershot 2022, 23). Educators are encouraged to leverage digital tools, multimedia resources, and online platforms to provide interactive and personalized reading experiences for students (McKenna and Labbo 2021, 220). Additionally, teaching digital literacy skills equips students with the critical competencies needed to navigate and evaluate digital texts effectively. Leu et al. (2019, 161)

Collaborative Professional Learning Communities. The establishment of collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs) emerges as a promising practice for supporting teacher growth and improving reading instruction in elementary schools (Goddard et al. 2020, 123). Through ongoing collaboration and shared inquiry, teachers can exchange best practices, analyze student data, and co-plan instructional strategies tailored to the needs of their students (DuFour et al. 2018, 25). PLCs foster a culture of continuous improvement and collective responsibility for student learning, ultimately contributing to enhanced reading proficiency among elementary learners.

An ecological approach can enhance the reading skills of learners by integrating various strategies and support systems. Increasing the number of teachers and implementing supplementary programs for multigrade schools, as suggested by recent research, can address the challenges posed by such learning environments. Collaborative efforts between administrators and teaching staff are crucial, fostering effective communication and support systems. Additionally, providing consistent assistance during reading instruction, coupled with administrative support, ensures teachers have the necessary resources and professional development opportunities. Educators are urged to explore innovative teaching methods tailored to the diverse needs of multigrade pupils, focusing on improving vocabulary, comprehension, and grammatical accuracy. Parental involvement, especially in encouraging English language use at home, plays a significant role in language development. This study aimed to identify effective classroom strategies employed by teachers, utilizing an ecological perspective to inform teaching practices. The research objectives include identifying the challenges faced by grade school teachers (Divinagracia 2023, 1664)

TEACHER'S CHALLENGES IN TEACHING READING

Addressing the challenges teachers face in teaching reading among elementary learners reveals several persistent hurdles hindering effective instruction. These challenges encompass a range of factors impacting both educators and students, including resource limitations, diverse learning needs, and evolving educational landscapes.

According to Becker (2020, 231), teachers often encounter challenges related to limited resources, including insufficient access to appropriate reading materials, outdated textbooks, and inadequate classroom supplies. This scarcity impedes their ability to implement engaging and varied

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instructional activities that cater to the diverse needs of students (Becker 2020, 230).

Adding up to that challenge is that elementary classrooms typically consist of students with varying levels of reading proficiency and diverse learning styles. Teachers grapple with the challenge of differentiating instructions to accommodate these differences effectively. Addressing the needs of struggling readers, English language learners, and students with learning disabilities requires tailored approaches and additional support. Rasinski et al. (2020, 210).

This challenge was supported by Washburn and Gunning (2019, 112) and state that aside from having various levels of reading proficiency and diverse learning styles, many teachers face challenges related to limited professional development opportunities focused on reading instruction. Without access to ongoing training and support, educators may struggle to stay abreast of research-based practices and innovative strategies for promoting reading proficiency.

Another is the effective use of assessment data to inform instruction presents difficulty among teachers. While formative assessment tools provide valuable insights into students' reading progress, interpreting and utilizing this data effectively requires specialized knowledge and training. Teachers may encounter difficulties in identifying appropriate interventions and tracking student growth over time. Kim et al. (2021, 25)

In an increasingly digital world, the digital divide poses significant challenges for teachers seeking to integrate technology into reading instruction. Disparities in access to devices and reliable internet connectivity among students exacerbate existing inequalities in educational opportunities. Teachers must navigate these challenges while ensuring equitable access to digital resources and fostering digital literacy skills. Harris et al. (2022, 265)

Also, elementary teachers often contend with time constraints imposed by a crowded curriculum and competing instructional priorities. Balancing the need to cover mandated content with providing ample time for reading instruction poses a significant challenge. Teachers may struggle to allocate sufficient time for explicit instruction, independent reading, and literacy-focused activities within the constraints of the school day (Gambrell and Morrow 2018, 76)

Thus, it can be noted that elementary teachers have faced a myriad of challenges in teaching reading, ranging from resource limitations and diverse learning needs to the integration of technology and time constraints. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from stakeholders at all levels to provide teachers with the necessary support, resources, and professional development opportunities to effectively promote reading proficiency among elementary learners. A research investigation carried out by Smith and Johnson (2010, 123), centered on the difficulties experienced by educators teaching reading in fourth to sixth-grade settings, revealed that instructors confront hurdles concerning the application of efficient teaching methods, addressing the requirements of students from various backgrounds, and coping with limited time.

Another study conducted by Bustos and Lalas (2015, 26) highlights the critical role of teachers' attitudes towards reading, emphasizing that genuine and sincere approaches can carry risks when assessing their educational impact. If educators solely focus on basic reading skills like decoding and word recognition, neglecting aspects such as vocabulary growth, comprehension, and engagement with literature, students may struggle with reading tasks. Consequently, students might not achieve the necessary level of reading proficiency to read autonomously and analyze texts critically. This shortfall in academic performance could ultimately perpetuate disparities in power, voice, and educational achievement among citizens.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study examined the practices of teachers and challenges in teaching reading at the intermediate level from 4th to 6th Grade in Sta Maria Central School SPED Center, school year 2023-2024. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What are the teacher's teaching approaches in conducting reading instruction?
2. What are the teacher's teaching practices in conducting reading instruction?
3. What is the learner's reading proficiency?
4. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers teaching reading?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the teacher's teaching practices in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the teacher's teaching approaches in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency?

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study is to determine the teaching approaches and practices employed by teachers, along with the challenges they encounter in delivering reading instruction to Grades 4 to 6 learners at Sta. Maria Central School SPED Center. The study involved a total population of 40 teachers and is specifically designed to gain insights into the methods, strategies, and difficulties faced by educators in promoting reading development among learners within this grade level.

Data collection was conducted exclusively at Sta. Maria Central School SPED Center to allow for a focused and contextualized analysis of instructional practices and associated challenges in reading. The study aimed to provide a detailed understanding of localized teaching realities while also offering findings that may serve as valuable references for similar educational contexts within the division and potentially other comparable public elementary schools.

The research was carried out within the academic year 2023–2024, allowing for a timely and relevant examination of the current reading instruction landscape. No further investigations was conducted beyond this period, ensuring the completion and finalization of this research within the specified timeframe. While the study is limited to a single school, the results may offer useful

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insights and implications for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to improve reading instruction strategies and address instructional challenges in similar school environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive quantitative research design with a correlational component was employed in this study. This methodological approach systematically describes and quantifies the characteristics of a population or phenomenon of interest by collecting and analyzing numerical data. It enables the identification of patterns, trends, and relationships within the dataset, providing a comprehensive overview of the variables under investigation. As Creswell and Creswell (2018, 12) explain, such a design allows researchers to draw objective conclusions from empirical evidence, especially when studying educational phenomena.

This design is deemed appropriate for the present study as it facilitates the assessment of elementary students' reading proficiency levels. It is widely adopted in educational research, particularly in the administration of standardized reading assessments, as it provides measurable insights into both student performance and the strengths and weaknesses of teachers in their reading instruction practices.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This study included 40 teachers from grades 4 to 5 which employs a purposive sampling technique. It is a non-probability sampling method, and it occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the researcher as needed in the study. Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using sound judgment, which will result in saving time and resources. Below is a specific table for the participating teachers in the study.

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Grade Level	Number of Respondents
4	10
5	15
6	15
Total	**40**

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Self-structured questionnaire was developed by the researcher to ensure that the contents are relevant to the study and addresses the problem. The questionnaire was divided into four parts.

The first part focused on the teacher's teaching approaches using a 4_point Likert scale where 4 is Highly Utilized, 3 – Utilized, 2 – Less Utilized, and 1 – Not Utilized at All. Some of the teacher's teaching approaches mentioned in the instrument are

The second part of the questionnaire focused on teacher's practices in a scale of 4–1 (4: highly practiced, 3: – Practiced, 2 – practiced, 1: – practiced at all). The inclusion of indicators is "provided individualized instruction/ customized or personalized" and "applying explicit instruction".

The third part emphasizes the challenges of teachers encountered in the conduct of reading instruction such as "time constrains, resources and work overload" where respondents will check the box that corresponds to their answer using a scale of 1-4 (4-Highly Challenged; 3-Challenged; 2-Less Challenged and 1-Not at all Challenged).

Finally, Part four was the collection of Phil-Iri Result among Grade 4 learners. Additionally, the content and structure of the instrument will be subject for validation and reliability. The researchers sought validation from three (3) experts in the field, preferably Master's degree holders whose knowledge is indispensable in terms of reading instruction. After incorporating all the comments and suggestions in refining the instrument, the researcher proceeded to the immediate conduct of data collection along with the attached informed consent and approved endorsement from the School's Division Superintendent through Planning and Research.

DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The researcher presented the proposed study to the school principal for initial review and then submit it to the School Evaluation Team (SET) for technical assistance and endorsement. During the preparation of the proposal, the researcher was guided by the Research Evaluation Tool, in accordance with the provisions stated in the division memorandum on research conduct.

After the proposal received the approval from the SET, it was endorsed to the Schools Division Superintendent for final approval. After receiving the necessary permissions, the researcher proceeded the data collection phase. To ensure the reliability and validity of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted among a group of respondents who are not part of the actual study sample.

Data collection was carried out by personally distributing the survey instruments to the respondents. Participants were given one week to complete the survey, ensuring they have ample time to respond at their own convenience. Prior to distribution, the researcher conducted an orientation to explain the purpose of the study, as well as the participants' rights and responsibilities. This included a clear explanation of the principle of volunteerism, emphasizing that participation is entirely voluntary and that respondents may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

To uphold confidentiality, all responses were kept private and will not be disclosed to anyone outside the research team. Additionally, the principle of anonymity was observed by not collecting any identifying information such as names or addresses, ensuring that responses cannot be traced back to individual participants.

After the data is collected, the researcher processed and interpreted the findings, guided by relevant literature and the gathered responses. The completed manuscript was the submitted to the school's research evaluator for final review and approval prior to dissemination or publication.

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DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data, the researchers used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform the statistical analyses. For Problems 1, 2, and 3, descriptive statistics—specifically the computation of means—were employed to determine the extent of teachers' practices, assess learners' reading proficiency, and identify the challenges faced by teachers in conducting reading instruction. For Problem 4, the Pearson r correlation was applied to examine the relationship between teachers' teaching practices and learners' reading proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' teaching approaches in conducting reading instruction. Table 2 summarizes the frequency and extent of various teaching approaches used in reading instruction.

TABLE 2: TEACHERS' TEACHING APPROACHES

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
1.Phonics (relationship between letters and different sounds)	3.58	Highly Utilized
2.Phonemic Awareness (understanding the concept of consonants and vowels)	3.64	Highly Utilized
3.Marungko Approach (Mastery of Syllabication – Ba, Ma, Pa, Sa)	3.53	Highly Utilized
4.Fuller Approach (blending cvc using family words -an, -am, ap, ag)	3.66	Highly Utilized
5.Piano Approach (counting fingers in recognition of syllables ba, be, bi, bo, bu)	3.07	Utilized
6.Sight Recognition Approach (Flash Cards a Day)	3.41	Highly Utilized
7.Motivational Approach (increased skills in decoding)	3.30	Highly Utilized
8.Decoding Approach	3.23	Utilized
9.Story Content (stories are based on the sounds of the words being learned)	3.30	Highly Utilized
10.Vocabulary Selection (words are selected from their phonic regularity and phonics rules.)	3.43	Highly Utilized
Over-all Mean	**3.42**	**Highly Utilized**

Legend: 4.0-3.25 Highly Utilized 3.24-2.50 Utilized 2.49-1.75 Less Utilized 1.74- 1.0 Not All Utilized

Table 2 presents the three most highly utilized reading approaches, which are the Fuller Approach (M = 3.66), Phonemic Awareness (M = 3.64), and Phonics (M = 3.58), all of which are categorized as "Highly Utilized." The strong emphasis on the "Fuller Approach" implies that teachers rely on "blending consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) patterns using family words (e.g., -an, -am, -ap, -ag) to facilitate early reading skills. This justifies the research findings that phonics-based approaches enhance word recognition, fluency, and comprehension (Ehri 2020, 11). Similarly, the high utilization of "Phonemic Awareness instruction" underscores that teachers recognize that explicit teaching of consonant and vowel sounds is important in teaching beginning reading. Phonemic awareness is a critical precursor to reading success, as it enables learners to understand words, a key skill for decoding unfamiliar text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Additionally, the "Phonics approach" ranks among the highest, reinforcing the relationship between letters and sounds as a fundamental reading skill. Research shows that systematic phonics instruction significantly improves early literacy development and supports struggling readers in decoding unfamiliar words (Adams, 2019). This implies that teachers prioritize foundational literacy skills, particularly phonemic awareness and phonics, as essential building blocks for early reading proficiency.

On the other hand, the Piano Approach (M = 3.07), and the Decoding Approach (M = 3.23), appear to obtain the lowest mean described as "Utilized", among other approaches mentioned. The low utilization of the Piano Approach, which involves counting fingers to recognize syllables, may indicate that teachers find it less effective or that it does not align well with their instructional methods. While some studies suggest that kinesthetic approaches can support reading development (Giles and Tunks 2019, 110), this method may not be widely adopted due to its complexity or limited alignment with other phonics strategies.

Moreover, the Decoding Approach's lower mean indicates that while teachers recognize its importance, it may not be as strongly emphasized as phonics and phonemic awareness. Decoding is essential for reading fluency, as it allows students to translate written symbols into spoken language (Stanovich 2018, 103). However, if not explicitly taught, students may struggle with **word recognition and comprehension.

Thus, the data indicate that Teachers' teaching Approaches are "highly utilized "as shown in the obtained overall mean of 3.42. This utilization highlights the teachers well instruction in phonics, phonemic awareness, and the Fuller Approach, emphasizing sound-letter relationships and CVC blending to develop early literacy skills. However, less emphasis is placed on the Piano approach and Decoding Approach which provides potential areas for professional development. Teachers may benefit from additional training in decoding strategies and motivational techniques to create a more engaging and balanced reading instruction framework.

Learners' reading proficiency. The summary of learners' overall reading proficiency based on assessment results. It shows the percentage score and its corresponding verbal description, providing insight into the current reading level of the learners as a basis for instructional planning.

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Table 3: Learner's Reading Proficiency

Variable	Reading proficiency percentage	Verbal Description
Reading Proficiency	85.66%	Instructional Level

Phil-Iri Reading Proficiency Scale per DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018: 95 – 100% Independent; 85-95% Instructional; Below 85%Frustration

Table 3 presents that the learners' reading proficiency is 85.66%, described as "Instructional Level." This means that learners still require teacher guidance and structured support to effectively comprehend texts. At this stage, students can recognize words and understand basic texts but have not yet developed full reading independence.

Furthermore, this indicates that 1st to 3rd-grade learners have not yet achieved independent reading, which requires mastery of decoding skills. If this gap persists, it may have long-term consequences, particularly as they transition to 4th grade, where reading comprehension becomes a fundamental expectation** for academic success.

Gillon (2018, 45) reaffirms that phonological awareness is a crucial predictor of reading success, particularly in the early stages of literacy. The study emphasizes that children who receive structured phonological training show significant improvements in word recognition and reading fluency. This finding is supported by Lonigan (2020, 112), who states that explicit instruction in phonemic awareness contributes to long-term gains in reading comprehension.

Furthermore, Snowling and Hulme (2022, 79) found that students performing at the instructional reading level require teacher scaffolding to successfully transition into independent readers. Their findings align with the current study, emphasizing the importance of early interventions in bridging the gap between expected and actual reading proficiency.

Additionally, Ouellette and Haley (2021, 203) argue that phonological awareness is directly correlated with early decoding skills. Their research suggests that children who do not develop adequate phonemic awareness tend to struggle with word recognition and comprehension in later school years.

Teacher's teaching practices in conducting reading instruction. The summary of the teaching practices adopted by teachers in the delivery of reading instruction.

Table 4: Teacher's teaching practices in Reading

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
1.Provides individual instruction (differentiated/ personalized)	3.51	Highly Practiced
2.Performs explicit instruction (systematic teaching in reading)	3.51	Highly Practiced
3.Employ instructional practices that promote vocabulary acquisition	3.27	Highly Practiced
4.Utilizes digitalization in reading	3.41	Highly Practiced
5.Collaborative professional learning (exchange best practices, analyze data and co-plan instructional strategies)	3.26	Highly Practiced
6.Attends regular training on reading	2.85	Less Practiced
7.Receives individual technical assistance or support in terms of developing appropriate reading material	2.97	Less Practiced
8.Sufficient time in the conduct of reading	3.00	Practiced
9.Collaborates with parents in support to child's development/ enhancement	3.51	Highly Practiced
10.Monitors learners progress in reading in partnership with school administrator and mentors	3.36	Highly Practiced
Over-all Mean	**3.26**	**Highly Practiced**

Legend: 4.0-3.25 Highly Practiced 3.24-2.50 Practiced 2.49-1.75 Less Practiced 1.74- 1.0 Not All Practiced

Table 4 shows that teachers highly practiced collaboration with parents in support of a child's development and enhancement, provided individualized instruction (differentiated/personalized), and performed explicit instruction (systematic teaching in reading), all of which obtained a mean score of 3.51. This implies that teachers are effectively utilizing the results of the Culturally Responsive Literacy Assessment (CRLA), which has been integrated into their classroom reading practices. It also indicates that teachers are making deliberate efforts to personalize instruction and maintain active communication with learners' parents to support reading development.

These findings are supported by the works of Tomlinson (2017, 26), Lantaka (2024, 18), and Archer and Hughes (2019, 43), who demonstrated that parental involvement significantly enhances student learning outcomes when compared to relying solely on teacher-led instruction. Their studies emphasize that when parents actively participate in their child's education, it leads to improved academic performance, higher motivation, and stronger literacy development.

However, the study also reveals that teachers attend fewer reading-related training sessions (M = 2.85) and receive limited technical assistance in developing appropriate reading materials (M = 2.97). This indicates a pressing need for increased professional development opportunities and instructional support. According to Garet et al. (2020, 134), continuous professional learning enhances teachers' instructional effectiveness and contributes to better student literacy outcomes. Furthermore, Snow et al. (2018, 59) highlight that providing teachers with

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adequate technical assistance strengthens their capacity to design and implement effective reading interventions.

Hence, the teaching practices reflected in Table 4 are classified as "highly practiced," as shown in the overall mean of 3.26. This suggests that while teachers excel in delivering personalized instruction and engaging with parents, challenges persist in accessing sustained professional development, receiving instructional support, and managing instructional time for reading.

Challenges encountered by the teachers teaching reading. Common challenges faced by teachers in implementing reading instruction.

Table 5: Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Reading

Statement	Mean	Verbal Description
1.Lack of knowledge in the delivery of reading instruction	2.71	Challenged
2.Inadequate learning supplies,	2.89	Challenged
3.Lack of support by the school in terms of the reproduction/ development of individualized material	2.82	Challenged
4.Overlapping of school activities and workload	3.35	Highly Challenged
5.Teachers disposition	2.79	Challenged
6.Academic schedule due to congested curriculum	3.33	Highly Challenged
7.Evolution of educational needs	3.28	Highly Challenged
8.Diverse learning needs	3.30	Highly Challenged
9.Difficulty in the effective use of assessment data to inform instruction	2.89	Challenged
10. Disparities in access to device and reliable internet connectivity	3.07	Challenged
11.Difficulty in allocating sufficient time for literacy-focused activities	3.28	Highly Challenged
Over-All Mean	**3.08**	**Challenged**

Legend: 4.0-3.25 Highly Challenged 3.24-2.50 Challenged 2.49-1.75 Less Challenged 1.74- 1.0 Not All Challenged

The findings in Table 5 reveal that the most significant challenges in teaching reading are overlapping school activities and workload (Mean = 3.3590), a congested curriculum (Mean = 3.3333), and diverse learning needs (Mean = 3.3077). These issues suggest that teachers are burdened with multiple responsibilities, limiting their capacity to deliver focused and effective literacy instruction. Research supports this observation; Kyriacou (2020, 58) and Day et al. (2018, 143) found that excessive workload contributes to teacher stress and negatively affects instructional quality. Likewise, a congested curriculum limits the time available for meaningful literacy engagement, forcing teachers to rush through essential lessons (Pavlakis and Roegman 2019, 229; Bautista et al. 2021, 24).

Addressing diverse learning needs also remains a challenge, requiring teachers to employ differentiated instruction and adaptive strategies to meet the varied abilities of students (Tomlinson 2020, 33; Darling-Hammond et al. 2022, 117).

Conversely, the least challenging factors are lack of knowledge in delivering reading instruction (Mean = 2.7179), lack of school support in developing individualized materials (Mean = 2.8205), and teachers' disposition (Mean = 2.7949). While some teachers may still benefit from additional training, most appear to have a solid foundation in literacy instruction (Moats 2020, 74; Piasta et al. 2021, 351). These results complement the findings in Tables 2 and 4, which indicate that teachers are generally well-prepared and actively apply effective reading strategies. Although the availability of individualized learning materials is not seen as a major issue, enhancing school-level support in material development may further improve instructional quality (Tomlinson 2020, 35; Zhao and Watterston 2022, 66).

Teachers' disposition, including their motivation, resilience, and adaptability, appears relatively stable. However, continued focus on teacher well-being and professional support remains essential for sustaining effective reading practices (Day et al. 2018, 145; Hargreaves and Fullan 2021, 58).

Thus, the findings underscore the importance of addressing major instructional barriers—such as workload, curriculum congestion, and learner diversity—while sustaining existing strengths in teacher competence and motivation. Continued investment in professional development, instructional resources, and teacher well-being will be vital in ensuring that learners are effectively supported in becoming proficient readers.

Significant relationship between the teacher's teaching practices in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency. Presents the result of the correlation analysis conducted to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' teaching practices in reading instruction and learners' reading proficiency.

Table 6: Significant relationship between the teacher's teaching practices in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency

Variables		r-value	p-value	Interpretation
X	Y			
Teacher's Teaching Practices in reading	Learner's reading proficiency	-.112	.498	Not significant

Significant level of 0.05

Table 6 discloses that there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' teaching practices in conducting reading instruction and learners' reading proficiency ($r = –.112$, $p = .498$). Since the computed p-value exceeds the assumed significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the null hypothesis—which states

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that there is no significant relationship—is accepted. This result suggests that teachers' teaching practices, as measured in this study, do not directly influence the reading proficiency levels of learners.

The absence of a significant relationship may be understood in the context of the challenges identified in Table 5. The most prominent barriers to effective reading instruction include overlapping school activities and workload (Mean = 3.3590), a congested curriculum (Mean = 3.3333), and diverse learning needs (Mean = 3.3077). These systemic constraints likely hinder the full implementation and impact of teaching practices. Teachers, overwhelmed by multiple responsibilities, may lack the time and flexibility required to personalize reading instruction and respond to learners' individual needs (Kyriacou 2020, 58; Day et al. 2018, 143).

Additionally, a congested curriculum limits instructional depth and forces educators to accelerate lesson pacing, leaving insufficient time to address reading comprehension issues (Pavlakis and Roegman 2019, 229; Bautista et al. 2021, 24). Moreover, meeting diverse learning needs requires differentiated instruction—an approach that demands more preparation, resources, and classroom support than many teachers can access (Tomlinson 2020, 33; Darling-Hammond et al. 2022, 117).

Thus, while teaching practices remain an important component of effective instruction, this finding underscores the need to address broader institutional and systemic barriers that can dilute their impact on learners' reading outcomes.

Significant relationship between the teacher's teaching approaches in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency. Below shows the result of the correlation analysis between teachers' teaching approaches in reading instruction and learners' reading proficiency.

Table 7: Significant relationship between the teacher's teaching approaches in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency

Variables		r-value	p-value	Interpretation
X	Y			
Teacher's Teaching Approaches in reading	Learner's reading proficiency	-.120	.468	Not significant

Significant level of 0.05

Table 7 discloses that the significant relationship between the teacher's teaching approaches in conducting reading instruction and the learner's reading proficiency does not exist (r = –.120) with its probability of occurrence under the null hypothesis greater than the assumed α = 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the posited hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship is accepted. This implies that teachers' teaching approaches do not affect the reading proficiency of learners for the reason that other factors such as the students' prior knowledge, cognitive abilities, socioeconomic status, parents' involvement, or even the classroom environment might be more influential in shaping students' reading outcomes. Prior knowledge, familiarity with concepts and vocabulary, helps students understand and connect with texts, improving comprehension and retention. Cognitive abilities, strong cognitive skills like working memory, attention, and processing speed, enable students to decode words, retain information, and make inferences, leading to better reading skills. Socioeconomic status, higher socioeconomic status often provides better access to resources, books, and supportive learning environments, while lower socioeconomic status can limit these opportunities and create barriers to learning. Parental involvement, active parental engagement such as reading with children and supporting their learning, fosters language development and a positive attitude toward reading. Classroom environment, a supportive, resource-rich classroom with quality instruction and a positive reading culture motivates students to engage with reading and strengthens their literacy skills.

This further indicates that teachers' instructional methods alone do not directly determine students' reading success. Instead, several external and learner-centered factors—such as prior knowledge, cognitive abilities, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and classroom environment—play a more significant role in shaping reading outcomes. Research supports the idea that students' background knowledge and cognitive skills are strong predictors of reading comprehension. According to Snow et al. (2018, 85), familiarity with vocabulary and concepts enhances decoding and retention, while Nation (2019, 72) highlights that working memory, processing speed, and attention span are crucial in developing strong reading skills. If these cognitive foundations are weak, even the most effective teaching strategies may not significantly improve reading proficiency.

Socioeconomic factors also contribute to disparities in reading achievement. Neuman and Celano (2020, 103) found that children from low-income families have limited access to books, fewer literacy experiences, and reduced exposure to academic vocabulary, which can hinder their reading development. In contrast, students from higher-income backgrounds often benefit from literacy-rich environments that support reading growth regardless of instructional methods. Additionally, parental involvement plays a crucial role in literacy acquisition. Research by Sénéchal and LeFevre (2020, 192) demonstrates that children whose parents actively read with them, provide home literacy support, and foster a love for books tend to have higher reading proficiency than those without such support. This suggests that teacher instruction alone cannot compensate for a lack of parental engagement in early literacy development.

Furthermore, a supportive and resource-rich classroom environment significantly influences students' motivation to read. Gambrell and Marinak (2019, 48) argue that access to engaging reading materials, interactive discussions, and positive reinforcement helps build reading confidence and skills. Thus, while teaching approaches are important, they must be paired with a strong literacy culture and adequate learning resources to be effective. The findings from Table 5, which identified overlapping school activities, a congested curriculum, and diverse learning needs as the top challenges in reading instruction, further support this argument. Teachers struggling with excessive

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workload and rigid curricula may have limited ability to personalize instruction and address individual reading difficulties (Kyriacou 2020, 58; Pavlakis and Roegman 2019, 229), further diminishing the impact of instructional methods on student outcomes. Given these findings, it is evident that reading proficiency is influenced by a complex interplay of multiple factors beyond teaching approaches.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the teacher's approaches and practices in teaching reading are highly utilized. However, despite this high level of implementation, students' reading proficiency remains at the instructional level. This suggests that the complexity of reading instruction does not rest solely on teachers, as there is no significant relationship between their teaching approaches and practices. The primary challenge lies not in the methods themselves but in the limited contact time teachers have with students. Consistently implementing these practices is hindered by overlapping school activities, heavy workloads, curriculum congestion, and the diverse needs of learners.

Given these challenges, it is strongly recommended that the Department of Education review its policies regarding the scheduling of school activities and other responsibilities that may reduce teachers' instructional time. Additionally, continuous professional development in literacy instruction is essential to ensure teachers remain effective. Targeted training should focus on keeping veteran teachers updated with current best practices, encouraging mid-career teachers to innovate, and helping new teachers adapt to the evolving demands of literacy education. Future researchers are encouraged to explore other factors that may influence reading proficiency, such as learner characteristics, home support, and school conditions, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what drives reading success.

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