



# ACCELERATING LEARNING: NARRATIVE DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON CATCH-UP FRIDAYS

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## ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of the study "Accelerating Learning: Narrative Documentation of Public Elementary School Teachers on Catch-Up Fridays" is to explore and document the experiences and strategies employed by teachers during designated remedial learning sessions. The qualitative narrative approach prioritizes the collection and analysis of stories and lived experiences. In the context of Catch-Up Fridays, this approach allows researchers to delve deeply into the narratives of teachers, exploring their experiences, challenges, successes, and reflections associated with this educational initiative. A total of twelve (12) participants were included in the study, divided into two groups: six (6) will participate in in-depth interviews (IDI), while the remaining six (6) will join the focus group discussion (FGD). The findings of this study have significant implications for both educational practice and policy. By exploring the impact of Catch-Up Fridays and the various strategies employed to enhance student learning and teacher professional development, this research highlights key areas for improvement in the classroom and broader educational settings. The future directions for DepEd, school principals, and teachers reflect a shared commitment to improving student outcomes through targeted support, professional development, and student-centered learning environments.

**KEYWORDS-** Accelerating Learning, Narrative Documentation, Public Elementary School Teachers, Catch-Up Fridays

## INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, Catch-Up Fridays have emerged as a strategic response to disruptions in the academic calendar, providing dedicated instructional time for remediation, enrichment, and focused learning. Amid challenges such as class suspensions due to inclement weather, curriculum constraints, and diverse student needs, educators in DepEd schools across the Philippines embrace this initiative as a means to accelerate learning and support student progress. However, logistical constraints, resource limitations, and varying levels of student readiness pose significant challenges. Through innovative problem-solving, collaboration, and community partnerships, teachers navigate these difficulties with resilience and dedication. Their narratives offer valuable insights into the realities of school work, the pressures of their profession, and the broader societal perceptions of educators, shedding light on both the challenges and transformative potential of Catch-Up Fridays in fostering academic success.

In Japan, Asai (2019), emphasized that the teachers have a long tradition of writing narrative teaching records to represent their practices, shaping their identities and relationships with students through storytelling. Teachers shape their identity through the reflective practice of writing narrative records, which promotes self-awareness, professional growth, and a deeper understanding of their teaching experiences. Simultaneously, teachers build intimate relationships with children in the classroom by understanding their individual needs, fostering trust and respect, and providing emotional support.

Additionally, Stapelberg (2019) narrated approaches have been used in pastoral counseling to explore teachers' stories and improve their well-being, especially where the education system faces significant challenges. Through reflective practices, emotional and spiritual support, and targeted professional development, this model fosters a supportive environment where teachers can thrive and develop into effective, fulfilled educators. By nurturing the whole person, this approach not only improves individual well-being but also enhances the overall quality of education within the school community.

The UNESCO (2021) report, Education in a Post-COVID World: Nine Ideas for Public Action, underscores the urgency of addressing the educational challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. The widespread closure of schools disrupted the learning trajectories of millions of students globally, with the most marginalized learners disproportionately affected. To combat these disruptions, the report emphasizes the implementation of targeted interventions, including remedial programs and catch-up initiatives, designed to address learning gaps and prevent long-term educational deficits. Such initiatives are critical in ensuring that no learner is left behind, particularly those in underserved and low-resource settings where access to digital learning tools was limited during the pandemic.

As Catch-Up Fridays continue to evolve and expand across DepEd schools, the narrative unfolds with a sense of optimism and possibility. With a steadfast commitment to educational equity, excellence, and inclusivity, educators envision a future where every student has the opportunity to thrive and succeed (Piotr, 2023).

Baluyot (2022), in Bridging Learning Gaps Through Supplemental Instruction: A Case Study in Philippine Public Schools, delves into the critical role of supplemental learning activities in mitigating the academic challenges faced by public school students. The study specifically highlights initiatives like "Catch-Up Fridays," designed to provide dedicated time for addressing gaps in student



learning, which were exacerbated by the disruptions of the pandemic. These sessions are tailored to reinforce core competencies, offering additional instructional support outside regular classroom hours. The research underscores the importance of aligning supplemental activities with the needs of students, particularly those who struggled with remote learning modalities during school closures. Baluyot's findings indicate that such programs not only enhance students' academic performance but also improve their confidence and engagement with the curriculum.

One significant insight from the research is the critical role of community involvement and multi-stakeholder collaboration in implementing recovery strategies. Parents, local government units, and non-governmental organizations are often mobilized to support the logistics and resource requirements of these programs. The study also highlights the resilience and dedication of educators, who frequently go beyond their usual responsibilities to provide both academic and socio-emotional support to their students. Reyes and Dayagbil (2020) further discuss the opportunities for improvement, such as integrating disaster preparedness into the curriculum and adopting technology-enhanced learning to ensure continuity during disruptions. The study concludes by calling for a more systematic and well-funded approach to disaster-responsive education, advocating for policies that institutionalize flexible and inclusive strategies to build a more resilient education system in the Philippines.

One of the major challenges in implementing Catch-Up Fridays in public elementary schools in Davao del Sur is the inconsistency in student attendance. Many students fail to attend due to household responsibilities, financial constraints, or lack of interest, making it difficult for teachers to ensure that learning gaps are effectively addressed. Another issue is the limited availability of teaching and learning materials. Some schools struggle with outdated or insufficient instructional resources, making it challenging for teachers to provide engaging and effective remediation sessions.

Teacher workload is also a concern. With existing responsibilities such as lesson planning, administrative tasks, and regular teaching loads, Catch-Up Fridays add another layer of responsibility, leading to teacher burnout and fatigue. Additionally, there is a lack of parental support and involvement. Some parents do not fully understand the purpose of Catch-Up Fridays, leading to minimal reinforcement of learning at home. This affects the continuity of learning and slows down student progress.

Lastly, the absence of clear guidelines and monitoring mechanisms poses a problem. Without standardized implementation and proper evaluation, the effectiveness of Catch-Up Fridays varies from school to school, limiting its overall impact on student learning recovery.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

For students who were enrolled in an educational program at the time of a disruption, catch-up programs are suitable. While many of these students were appropriately old for their grade, some might have been overage, particularly in nations where students frequently arrive late for class or experience other interruptions in the educational system. The disruption, which may have been brought on by a crisis, conflict, or displacement, could have cost students anywhere from a few months to a full academic year. Through catch-up programs, kids can regain the information and abilities they lost while not in school and pick up new competences that they would have learned in the absence of the disruption. In order to help students restart their education, catch-up programs aim to put them back where they would have been in the curriculum had the disruption not happened (Andrabi et al, 2021).

Moreover, laws mandating parental involvement in schools may put pressure on schools, which could lead to a degradation of the learning environment. This work shows that parental involvement is an essential component of school leadership and the school improvement process since the learning climate is made up of a wide range of interactions inside and between schools. It is recommended that additional study be conducted using different quantitative or qualitative research approaches in order to better understand the conflicts that exist between the responsibilities that teachers play, principal leadership, and family participation (Alinsunurin, 2020).

Also, The findings of Liswaniso & Pretorius (2022) suggest that ongoing support for teachers to enhance instructional practices can lead to better teaching and learning outcomes. Effective reading instructional practices not only develop learners' decoding skills but also result in improved reading comprehension levels. Moreover, their study highlights the role of professional development programs in empowering teachers to adapt evidence-based methodologies within their specific classroom contexts. By focusing on building foundational literacy skills, such practices contribute to bridging learning gaps and promoting equity in education. The research further emphasizes that sustained teacher support, such as mentoring, coaching, and collaborative learning opportunities, is vital in ensuring that instructional innovations are consistently applied and refined over time. These findings provide valuable insights for designing interventions aimed at improving both teaching effectiveness and learner achievement.

Teachers participating in programs like Catch Up Fridays, which aim to address literacy difficulties, can have transformative experiences impacting both their personal and professional lives. Research emphasizes the importance of teacher training programs in enhancing teachers' abilities to engage in authentic inquiry-based science, develop pedagogical content knowledge, and strengthen their understanding of ecological systems (Kara, 2020).

Additionally, Jones (2018) highlighted the significance of programs like MESH Support Group Facilitator Training in creating safe spaces for teachers to share personal stories, leading to improved self-understanding, relationships with colleagues and students, and teaching practices Teachers' enduring outcomes: personal and professional transformation. Sharing "secret stories" in support groups benefits self-understanding and well-being. The study underscores the transformative impact of sharing "secret stories" within support groups, which allows educators to reflect on their experiences, challenges, and emotions in a



nonjudgmental space. This process not only benefits their self-understanding and emotional well-being but also equips them with insights that inform more empathetic and effective classroom practices. Teachers often experience enduring outcomes from such programs, including deeper connections with their professional communities and a renewed sense of purpose in their teaching roles. These findings highlight the critical role of peer support and structured reflective practices in driving sustained personal and professional transformation for educators.

### Research Questions

This narrative aims to delve into the implementation process of Catch-Up Fridays in DepEd schools, shedding light on how educators plan, organize, and execute these additional instructional days to accelerate learning.

1. What are the experiences of teachers participating in Catch-Up Fridays?
2. How do teachers develop and employ coping strategies to address the challenges encountered during Catch-Up Fridays?
3. What insights can be drawn from the experiences of teachers on Catch-Up Fridays?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The qualitative narrative approach prioritizes the collection and analysis of stories and lived experiences. In the context of Catch-Up Fridays, this approach allows researchers to delve deeply into the narratives of teachers, exploring their experiences, challenges, successes, and reflections associated with this educational initiative.

The narrative approach prioritizes gathering in-depth accounts from teachers about their experiences with Catch-Up Fridays. Researchers can conduct interviews or focus group discussions to capture teachers' narratives, allowing them to express their perspectives on the initiative openly. This method enables researchers to understand how teachers perceive the goals of Catch-Up Fridays, what strategies they find effective, and the challenges they encounter.

Through focusing on narratives, researchers can delve into the specific contexts of DepEd schools where Catch-Up Fridays are implemented. Teachers' stories can shed light on how factors such as school culture, resources, student demographics, and community support influence the effectiveness of the initiative. This contextual understanding is crucial for interpreting the outcomes and recommending improvements tailored to each school setting.

Teachers possess valuable experiential knowledge gained from their day-to-day interactions with students during Catch-Up Fridays. Their narratives provide insights into the practical aspects of implementation, including classroom dynamics, student engagement levels, and instructional strategies that resonate with students. This experiential knowledge complements quantitative data by offering nuanced explanations and contextual nuances that statistics alone may not capture.

### Research Participants

In selecting participants for the study on Catch-Up Fridays in DepEd schools in Davao del Sur, researcher will prioritize individuals with direct experience in the initiative. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, researcher will employ purposive sampling, deliberately selecting participants from different grade levels, subject areas, and geographic locations within Davao del Sur. This will help capture the varied experiences and practices associated with Catch-Up Fridays across different school settings. The study will also consider participants with varying levels of engagement in the initiative, including those who have been involved since its inception and those who are relatively new to the program.

A total of twelve (12) participants will be included in the study, divided into two groups: six (6) will participate in in-depth interviews (IDI), while the remaining six (6) will join the focus group discussion (FGD). All data gathered during IDI and FGD will be recorded and analyzed systematically to summarize responses in an organized manner.

### Research Instrument

To gather comprehensive and meaningful data relevant to the deeper understanding of the narratives documentation of public elementary school teachers on catch-up fridays, this study employed a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument. This qualitative tool was designed to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, practices, and challenges faced by students working as fishermen.

### Data Analysis

The collected interview data will be analyzed using phenomenological analysis techniques, which involve a systematic exploration of the lived experiences described by participants. Researchers engage in a process of bracketing, setting aside preconceptions and biases, to focus solely on the participants' accounts. Through a process of thematic coding and interpretation, researchers identify common patterns, themes, and essences that emerge from the data, capturing the shared lived experiences of stakeholders.

Creswell (2013) outlines six crucial stages in qualitative data analysis that are necessary for assessing and interpreting published research findings in the realm of education. This approach typically involves a systematic process of analyzing qualitative data, often following steps such as coding, categorizing, and thematic analysis.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the implications of the study's findings and explores potential avenues for future research and practice. The insights gained from this research on Catch-Up Fridays and the role of targeted support in enhancing both teacher and student development highlight several key implications for educational practice, policy, and teacher professional development. The findings suggest that a balanced approach to remediation, enrichment, and professional collaboration can significantly contribute to improving instructional practices and student outcomes.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of continuous teacher reflection, peer collaboration, and adaptive teaching strategies in fostering an environment of growth and engagement. The recommendations and conclusions drawn from this research provide a foundation for developing future initiatives that further promote individualized learning pathways, teacher empowerment, and positive student engagement.

In the following sections, the implications for practice will be discussed, followed by suggestions for future research directions that can build upon the findings of this study.

### Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for both educational practice and policy. By exploring the impact of Catch-Up Fridays and the various strategies employed to enhance student learning and teacher professional development, this research highlights key areas for improvement in the classroom and broader educational settings. The integration of targeted support, individualized learning pathways, and professional collaboration offers valuable insights that can be leveraged to improve instructional practices and foster more effective teaching environments.

### Main Theme 1: Connecting to Student Learning and Engagement

This theme underscores the importance of building strong connections with students to foster engagement and support their academic growth. The following subthemes provide a deeper understanding of how this can be achieved:

The findings indicate that targeted remediation plays a crucial role in addressing gaps in students' learning, particularly for those who struggle with core skills. Schools and educators should prioritize the development of personalized remediation strategies, which may include additional tutoring, specialized resources, and flexible scheduling, to ensure that struggling students receive the help they need without feeling overwhelmed.

To cultivate an environment where students feel confident and actively participate, teachers must create a safe and inclusive space. By acknowledging individual strengths and fostering positive reinforcement, teachers can encourage students to engage more deeply in their learning. Schools may consider integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) programs to enhance students' self-esteem and motivation to participate in academic activities.

Differentiated instruction allows teachers to cater to diverse learning styles and paces, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed. The study suggests that personalized attention through small group work or individualized tasks is key in supporting both high-achieving and struggling students. Schools should invest in teacher training for differentiated teaching techniques and ensure that resources are available to support these approaches.

Creating a positive classroom environment is essential for maintaining student engagement. The study points to the effectiveness of strategies such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, and the use of varied instructional methods to keep students motivated. Schools and educators should emphasize the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships, as well as incorporating interactive and stimulating activities to maintain a vibrant learning atmosphere.

### Main Theme 2: Elevating Teacher Reflection for Enhanced Professional Growth

Teacher reflection is a critical component of professional development that can lead to improved teaching practices and student outcomes. This theme highlights the need for teachers to engage in reflective practices to continuously evolve in their roles.

The ability to adapt to changing classroom dynamics and students' needs is essential for effective teaching. Teachers who are flexible and open to modifying their teaching approaches tend to create a more responsive and supportive learning environment. Schools should encourage teachers to embrace a growth mindset and provide them with the tools and support to make timely adjustments to their teaching strategies.

Teachers who use targeted instructional strategies are better equipped to address the varying needs of their students. This subtheme suggests that teachers should incorporate data-driven practices and formative assessments to adjust their instruction. Professional development opportunities should focus on equipping teachers with the skills necessary to implement targeted interventions and evidence-based teaching practices effectively.

Collaboration among teachers is vital for the sharing of successful teaching strategies and creating a supportive professional community. Schools should establish regular opportunities for peer observation, collaborative planning, and knowledge exchange to foster a culture of continuous improvement. By encouraging teachers to learn from each other, schools can collectively elevate teaching practices and student outcomes.

Reflective practices enable teachers to critically evaluate their own teaching and make informed adjustments. The study suggests that schools should support structured reflection time and provide teachers with regular feedback from both peers and



administrators. Creating a culture where teachers are encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices regularly will contribute to ongoing professional development and enhanced instructional quality.

### Main Theme 3: Empowering Learners Through Targeted Support and Extended Opportunities

Empowering students involves providing them with the support and opportunities to take ownership of their learning while also offering pathways for academic mastery and personal growth.

Personalized learning pathways enable students to progress at their own pace and focus on areas where they need improvement. This approach allows students to develop a deeper understanding of content and achieve mastery on their own terms. Educational systems should focus on creating flexible learning pathways, utilizing technology and formative assessments, and offering personalized support to ensure that all students can achieve their full potential.

When students take ownership of their learning, they become more motivated and engaged in their academic journey. Teachers should empower students by providing them with choices in their learning, involving them in goal setting, and encouraging self-directed learning. Schools should promote student agency through activities that allow students to make decisions about how and what they learn, fostering a sense of responsibility and autonomy.

Providing students with opportunities to explore beyond the traditional curriculum, such as through field trips, real-world applications, and collaborative projects, helps to expand their horizons and fosters deeper engagement with learning. Schools should ensure that these opportunities are accessible to all students, regardless of background, and integrate them into the curriculum to enhance students' overall academic experiences and learning outcomes.

Building students' confidence is essential for developing a positive learning identity, which influences their motivation and academic success. Teachers should focus on providing constructive feedback, celebrating achievements, and creating a classroom culture where students feel valued and capable. Schools should invest in programs that nurture social-emotional learning and self-efficacy, empowering students to approach challenges with confidence and resilience.

The implications of these findings suggest that educational systems should focus on providing tailored support to students, promoting professional development for teachers, and fostering an environment of continuous improvement. By addressing both the academic and personal needs of students and equipping teachers with the tools to reflect on and improve their practices, schools can create a more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environment. Future educational reforms should incorporate these practices to ensure that students and educators alike can thrive in an evolving educational landscape.

### Future Directions

#### Department of Education (DepEd):

DepEd should focus on the formal integration of structured programs like “Catch-Up Fridays” or similar initiatives to ensure consistent support for struggling learners. They should allocate resources for continuous professional development that includes evidence-based teaching strategies, remediation, and differentiated learning.

Also, DepEd should prioritize the continuous training of teachers on adaptive teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, and the use of formative assessments to monitor student progress. Regular and updated training sessions on new educational trends, including digital tools for remote learning, will be essential in ensuring that teachers stay equipped with the necessary skills.

#### School Principals

School leaders should prioritize creating an inclusive, student-centered learning environment. This includes ensuring that resources are allocated to support both remediation and enrichment activities. Principals should encourage teachers to personalize learning based on students' unique strengths and weaknesses.

Additionally, Principals should create a school culture that values student voice and agency. By providing students with opportunities to take ownership of their learning, such as through project-based learning or inquiry-based approaches, principals can ensure that students are active participants in their educational journey. Principals should support teachers in implementing strategies that cultivate critical thinking, self-regulation, and a growth mindset among students. Building a positive school culture should be a key priority for principals. Creating an environment that fosters trust, safety, and respect helps ensure that students feel supported and are more likely to engage fully in their learning. This also involves addressing the mental health and well-being of both students and staff.

#### Teachers

Teachers should be encouraged to embrace flexibility in their teaching approaches, tailoring instruction to meet the varying needs of students. This includes integrating differentiated learning strategies, using formative assessments to monitor progress, and adapting teaching methods based on individual student needs.

Moreover, Teachers should actively engage in professional development opportunities that focus on enhancing instructional practices. This could include attending workshops, engaging in peer observation, and participating in study groups. Teachers should make reflective practice a regular part of their professional lives, ensuring that they remain responsive to changes in students' needs and educational research.



The future directions for DepEd, school principals, and teachers reflect a shared commitment to improving student outcomes through targeted support, professional development, and student-centered learning environments. DepEd can facilitate the development of supportive policies, principals can lead the charge in fostering a collaborative and inclusive school culture, and teachers can continue to enhance their practices through reflection and ongoing professional learning. Together, these efforts will contribute to the holistic growth of students, preparing them for success in the classroom and beyond.

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