

Lived Experiences of Teachers Implementing Reading Programs in Secondary Schools of Puttol District

Abstract :

The goal of this research was to describe the experiences of reading program implementers in Puttol District, Province of Apayao as reading program implementers. Employing phenomenological approach among seven teacher participants, in-depth interview was conducted which answered the four fundamental questions. Essential themes were generated out from their responses to the research questions. The findings uncovered the participants' lived experiences, and from it seven themes emerged: expecting students already know how to read, most students are slow readers, having a hard time implementing reading program to students, able to know the reading level of the students, able to influence students in reading, providing appropriate reading activities and able to know the learner's capacity in reading. The participants also shared the challenges they encountered as reading program implementers, from which emerged five themes: the absenteeism of learners, learners' lack of interest, the attendance of learners, providing time in reading implementation, and addition to workload. Further, for the coping mechanisms they revealed ten essential themes: conduct a meeting, prepared reading materials in different reading levels, peer-tutoring, providing differentiated activities, send letters to parents whose child is always absent, home visits, parents and students, students and co-teachers, ask parents to assist their child in reading, and

technical assistance from co-teachers Lastly, for the insights, eight themes emerged: use appropriate reading materials, develop time management, be patient, provide more time in reading activities, provide assistance to the reading programs implementers, provide specified time and teacher for reading implementation, improvement on learners' reading and comprehension skills, and upcoming high school students already know how to read. In view of the above, research and educational practices should continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of students in the new normal. Prioritizing early literacy interventions, continuous development of reading programs, and a coordinated effort to foster strong reading skills among students are essential steps towards a brighter educational future.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Program Implementers, Phenomenological approach, Pudtol District, Apayao

1. INTRODUCTION

The challenges faced by implementers of reading programs are complex, particularly in navigating the later emerging nature of reading failure as a problem among learners. They include the obstacles of language differences, cognitive intricacies, and the need for various instructional styles. This complex nature of these hurdles reiterates the necessity to fill holes in reading instruction and enunciates the pressing requirement for sophisticated, customized approaches in the transforming pedagogies.

Reading program implementers in Indonesia have struggled to enable students to obtain these literacy skills. Program implementers also have to come up with creative ways to tackle these issues, making it a necessity to develop strategies that provide the missing links, which have been worsened by the pandemic, and aid in improving students' literacy today (Effendy, 2021).

The recent English Phil-IRI Pre-Test in Pudtol District of the Schools Division of Apayao exposed students' facultative competency in reading skills. Stimulated by this challenge, reading program implementers are crafting vigorous action plans to tackle these gaps and empower students through improved literacy.

Hence, Project Pagbatayam now Project LEAP is strengthened, and hoped that with this reading program specifically for English, there will be a much better performance of the learners from Grades 1- 12 and that decrease of the data of non-readers will continue and hopefully will be zero. It is also hoped that with this program, all learners will be moved to the next grade level and that they will all be in the reading proficiency where they should belong.

Although the reading problem seems to be a very common issue, the researcher has yet to read any local study specifically on the lived experiences of Reading Program Implementers in the implementation of the reading curriculum. With this in mind, it was significant to conduct a study related to the implementation of the program through the lens of the reading program implementers as this would give a valuable glimpse not just into the program but including the challenges and coping mechanisms employed by its implementers. Studying the experiences of reading program implementers would highlight how educators were coping with the challenges of the new normal to provide quality education and meet issues, especially in terms of reading among students in the district, which could be a blueprint for future educational programs.

Research Questions

The study described the experiences of the reading program implementers in addressing reading implementation concerns in the new normal, the obstacles they faced, and how they dealt with the challenges. The following questions guided it;

1. What are the experiences of the reading program implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?
2. What challenges did the participants experience in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?

3. How do reading program implementers cope with the challenges of implementing reading programs?

4. What insights did the participants gain from their experiences in dealing with reading implementation ?

II. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research methodology in an effort to explore the experiences of reading program implementers in handling problems in reading implementation . In essence, it would help in gaining a deeper comprehension of a certain phenomenon that the participants are describing (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 2012).

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the secondary schools of Pudtol District, Province of Apayao Region CAR Philippines. These included Pudtol Vocational High School, Swan National Agricultural and Trade High School, Mataguisi Comprehensive National High School and Tawit National High School.

3.3 Research Participants

In determining the research participants of this qualitative-phenomenological study, Creswell (2013) suggests seven to fifteen participants. Therefore, there were seven participants for the In-Depth Interview (IDI) in this study.

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were the following: (a) the participants must be public-secondary school teachers at Pudtol, Apayao (b) with a position/designation from Teacher I-IV to Master Teacher I-IV, and (c) assigned to be a Reading Program Implementer for at least six months, (d) at least three years in service as public-school teacher and (4) implementing Reading Programs under Project Pagbatayam

3.4 Instruments of the Study

For a qualitative study, the researcher was the primary data collector. The researcher recorded, took notes, and performed an interview with each participant. Additionally, the researcher used an interview guide which was validated by the panel members. The researcher built a rapport first to the participants then asked questions about their experiences, challenges,

coping mechanisms, and insights as a reading program implementer in the new normal reading curriculum. The researcher practiced extreme caution by using open-ended questions.

3.5 Procedure

Qualitative researchers are involved in a series of undertakings in the process of data collection. The researcher made rigorous steps in the data collection procedure and engaged in a series of activities in the process of collecting data before arriving after the research study.

First, the researcher ensured that the study adhered to proper research protocols, thus would submit the research, and would undergo review, and would be checked by the thesis adviser and the panel.

Second, participants were identified with the use of the purposive sampling method. Some of the participants were recruited and contacted through the help of gatekeepers. The gatekeepers, therefore, asked to read and sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement form. The researcher ensured that the selected participants met the criteria and had experience in dealing

with school management. The research objectives and the entire methodology were explained to the selected participants. Also, the participants would be sent informed consent forms through emails and were asked to provide their e-signatures if they agreed to the conditions stipulated that their participation was voluntary and without coercion, in which they were willing to impart their knowledge as needed in the study.

Third, the individual in-depth interview was held at a specified time agreed upon by the participants after they had read and signed the consent letters. The guide questions for the interview were validated before the conduct of this study. To meet the needs of this study, the researcher established a series of scheduled meetings with the participants.

Following dates that were most convenient for them. Their roles and rights were thoroughly explained before the interview, and compensation was provided for their inconvenience. All the proceedings were recorded to ensure validity and reliability significant in the conduct of the study.

Also, the researcher asked permission from the participants to have the interview. Throughout the interview, their responses were noted down while

Lastly, a thematic analysis was conducted. The participants' responses were analyzed thoroughly based on the core ideas. An analyst assisted the researcher in ensuring the correct analysis of the data.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The measures that were undertaken in ensuring ethical considerations in this study was based on the principles of the Belmont Report in 1979. The researcher adhered to the fundamental principles of ethical consideration where respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were identified (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The researcher ensured that all the principles were addressed to protect the rights of the participants and made sure that the information gathered from them were kept private as well as their names.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions that explored the experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and the insights used by the public-school reading program implementers. The primary focus of the

investigation was to explore and understand the accounts of reading program implementers on the implementation of the school's reading programs under Project Pagbatayam from the Secondary Schools in Pudtol District.

4.1 What are the experiences of the reading program implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation in the new normal?

This section presents the results to the first major research question; 'What are the experiences of the

Reading Program Implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation ?' Data and information were gathered for this main study issue using three particular research questions. The purpose of the questions was to learn more about the research participants' comprehension of the Reading Program Implementers' experiences in addressing issues related to the implementation of reading.

4.1.1 Experiences in dealing with reading implementation

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What are your experiences in dealing with reading implementation ?' The responses generated three themes: expecting students already know

how to read, most students are slow readers, and having a hard time implementing reading program to students.

The theme expecting students already know how to read constituted the primary experience of reading program implementers in the department. It meant that students entering a particular grade or level are presumed to have acquired basic reading skills. It was assumed that students come into a new grade or educational setting with a certain level of readiness, which includes the ability to decode and comprehend written text.

Informant 1 pointed out that;

One of my experiences was when I implemented a reading program. I expected that my students already knew how to read, but it turned out that there were still some who could not read. It was challenging because instead of seeking help with reading, some of the children would deny it or pretend as if they already knew, but they did not. Maybe they felt embarrassed, considering they were teenagers and young adults, yet they could not read.

This was supported by informant 5, who also shared the difficulties and contended;

Actually, I had a hard time because, of course, we were aware that the children experienced learning loss due to the two years of the pandemic. Now, we can say that it was good to expect, because I taught Grade 7-10, and it was like an expectation versus reality situation. You expect that at this level, they should be quick readers, but you also have to consider that because of the pandemic, we know that they really do not read much. They hardly even answer the modules, so that was why even with simple words, I would be shocked because they struggle with reading and pronunciation. I also felt a bit disappointed because some of them read quickly, but when it comes to comprehension, most of them struggled. Some of them also did not follow punctuation. And when it came to questions, most of them could not even score half, mostly one out of eight, two out of ten, so implementing reading now is quite challenging.

The theme most students are slow readers suggests that most students have a lower reading speed or fluency than expected. Further, it implies a need to investigate and address factors contributing to this reduced reading pace within an educational context. Informant 3 narrated the difficulties as reading program implementer;

My experience was that most of the children could not read well after the pandemic, some of them even stuttered while reading, especially those who struggled with reading. They could read, but it was slow, not fast. So, it was quite challenging for me, considering that there were many slow readers

.However, as an adviser, it was mandated by DepEd that we become Reading Teachers, so it became automatic for us to handle reading.

Moreover, participants were experiencing challenges while putting a reading program into action for students, which suggests difficulties in successfully introducing and carrying out the program. This could involve issues related to student participation, comprehension, or the overall effectiveness of the program in fostering reading skills and enthusiasm. It may require adjustments, additional support, or different teaching strategies to overcome these obstacles and achieve the desired educational outcomes.

There are challenges faced with the reading program implementer, informant 6 pointed out;

Based on what I observed from the teachers here, it was not really easy for them to implement, especially in our division, when it comes to reading, particularly the PHIL-IRI. The implementation of the FLAT approach was a bit challenging for the teachers initially because they did not receive proper orientation on how to conduct it. Some teachers had difficulty with PHIL-IRI, and here, the experiences of the teachers themselves were the ones guiding the students in reading. So, in the lower grades like Grade 7, they had a hard time with reading, even with letter identification. There were students who could not even identify three-letter words, so they struggled, partly due

to the learning gap caused by the pandemic. Based on my experience and what I observed in other classrooms, I could say that teaching reading to children is quite challenging.

In addition, informant 7 stated that her learners had difficulty reading even with the simple words;

The first thing is encountering children who really could not read, not even simple words. Some could read, but they also lacked comprehension; they did not understand when it came to questions. So, that was why, it was very difficult to conclude that they could not read and understand, so your expectations, especially during classes, left you disappointed.

4.1.2 Advantages of being a reading program implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 'What are the advantages of being a Reading Program Implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation ?' under the 1st major research question 'What are the experiences of the Reading Program Implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation ?' The following themes served as results, which were: able to know the reading level of the students and able to influence students in reading.

The results revealed that reading program implementers teachers had the ability to gauge the appropriate difficulty and complexity of reading materials that aligned with each student's skills and knowledge. It could help educators tailor their teaching strategies and select suitable texts to support individualized learning and literacy development. Informant 1 stated;

The advantage for me was that I could determine the actual reading level of my students. I knew their strengths and weaknesses in reading. At least, as their adviser and subject teacher, I knew where to focus and help them.

Informant 2 also added;

I was an adviser, so I was the one who taught my students to read. I could really see who could and could not read, or I could immediately know their specific reading profile.

Likewise, informant 5 substantiated by saying;

One of the advantages, is that you really get to know the strengths and weaknesses of the learners because you focus on them, and you will find out that some are lacking in reading skills, while others need to go back to basics because they struggle to catch up or keep pace with others, realizing that they have not mastered basic skills.

Having the capacity to inspire and motivate students to engage in reading activities voluntarily involves creating an environment and using teaching techniques that ignite students' interest, curiosity, and enthusiasm for reading, ultimately encouraging them to read more frequently and enjoy the process.

Stressing the importance of effective influence in reading can lead to improve literacy skills and a lifelong

love for reading among students, informant 3 emphasized;

The advantages for me were, first, I got to really know the children who could not read, and my expectations were adjusted. I expected to just teach, but this was the real scenario with the learners. Second, I became close to the learners and influenced them in reading, and we formed a connection. I was able to impart my knowledge, and I truly fulfilled my role as a teacher.

This was supported by informant 4, who said;

As an adviser, I saw more clearly which students really needed help in terms of reading.

4.1.3 Views on the most benefiting part as reading program implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.3 'What do you think is the most benefiting part as Reading Program Implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' under the first major research question 'What are the experiences of the Reading Program Implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' The themes which served as results were providing appropriate reading activities and able to know the learner's capacity in reading.

It was revealed that the participants are offering reading activities that are well-suited to the needs, abilities, and interests of the participants. This involves selecting and designing exercises, assignments, and materials that align with the specific goals and levels of the learners, ensuring they are both engaging and educational. Providing appropriate reading activities enhances comprehension, fosters reading skills, and promotes a positive learning experience. Informant 1 expressed;

I got to know my learners, and I knew where or what reading activities to provide that would relate to them based on their reading profiles.

This was supported by Informant 2 who uttered;

Providing the right intervention to the learners became easier for me because I knew their Reading Profiles. It was more convenient for me to determine which reading activities to give them.

The theme able to know the learner's capacity in reading means having the ability to assess and understand an individual learner's reading capacity, which includes their current skill level, comprehension abilities, and reading preferences. This knowledge enables educators to tailor instruction and reading materials to match the learner's capabilities and gradually challenge them to improve. Recognizing a learner's capacity in reading is fundamental for effective teaching and personalized learning experiences. Informant 1 expressed;

At first, it was like a real eye-opener for me. I reflected that as a teacher, I should not just limit myself to that; I should extend my service to the

children because I felt sorry for them. It was like, because of my role as a Reading Implementer, my compassion for the learners grew. Second, I felt more guided, especially in class. I knew where to focus because I was aware of their reading capacity, and I got to know them individually. So, I knew how to adjust my lessons.

4.2 What challenges did the participants experience in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?

This section presents the results to the second major research question 'What challenges did the participants experience in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' Three specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the challenges that the participants experienced in dealing with concerns in reading implementation.

4.2.1 Challenges encountered in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1

'What challenges have you encountered in dealing with concerns in reading implementation in the new normal?' are presented in this section. The themes were: the absenteeism of learners and learners' lack of interest.

Participants revealed that absenteeism was viewed as a challenge faced by reading program implementers, which pertains to the difficulty of ensuring consistent student attendance in reading sessions. This issue can hinder the effectiveness of reading programs, as students may miss out on crucial instruction and practice. Overcoming this challenge may require strategies such as improving engagement, communication with parents or guardians, and addressing potential barriers to attendance, ultimately aiming to create a more conducive learning environment for reading. Informant 3 had this to say;

At first, I had a hard time teaching the learners because some of them were frequently absent due to family responsibilities. They were supposed to just attend classes here, but they were influenced by their family's needs, and the learners lacked parental support. It was as if once the learners went to school, they were left to their own devices, and it was up to the teachers to take care of them. In that kind of situation, it was difficult.

This was also affirmed by informant 4 who stated;

In the beginning, they were all present for reading, but in the middle, some started avoiding it because they felt embarrassed about being corrected by their classmates. They would also sometimes have conflicts with their

classmates, so eventually, they stopped attending school. So, managing the attendance and behavior of the children during the intervention period was one of the challenging aspects for me.

As the result showed, the learners' lack of interest is a significant challenge for reading program implementers, indicating that students are not motivated or engaged in reading activities. This issue can hinder the effectiveness of reading programs as it may lead to decreased participation, limited comprehension, and reduced enthusiasm for reading. Addressing this challenge often involves employing creative and engaging teaching methods, selecting interesting and relevant reading materials, and fostering a positive reading culture to spark students' interest and passion for reading. Informant 1 cited;

Managing the learner's interest was quite challenging. They knew when our Reading Day or time was about to end, and sometimes they would just leave, and worst of all, they would be absent. Another challenge was their confidence; they felt embarrassed to be taught because they were teenagers.

Lack of reading materials in consonance to the reading was also common to the reading program implementers, meanwhile, informant 2 revealed:

One of the challenges I encountered was the lack of reading materials that I could use for providing reading activities to the learners. In our area, there

were more learners who needed help, so our supply of materials could not suffice based on the number of students. Another challenge was teaching nonreaders; it was really tough, especially considering that I was a math teacher and teaching vowels like a, e, i, o, u was very challenging for me. The learners' interest in reading activities was also a challenge. They would participate when tested, but during the intervention, many would not cooperate because they found it tedious or boring. The worst part was that some of them would be absent every reading day, which for us was every Friday, so they really wouldn't attend school.

4.2.2 Thoughts on the most difficult part in dealing with concerns in reading implementation in the new normal

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 'What do you think is the most difficult part in dealing with concerns in reading implementation in the new normal' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the following themes were drawn, the attendance of learners and providing time in reading implementation.

It was revealed that it was a challenge to ensure consistent and punctual participation of students in reading sessions. Irregular attendance disrupted the continuity of the program and hinder students' progress, as they may miss essential lessons and practice opportunities. Addressing this issue

often involves implementing strategies to improve student motivation, engagement, and communication with parents or guardians to promote regular attendance and enhance the overall effectiveness of the reading program. Informant 2 noted;

I felt that the attendance of the learners was like, even if I had a lot of materials, and if the children were not there or if they lacked interest, it seemed like it was still useless.

Specifically pointed out by informant 3 that encouraging students to go to school were also difficult. She stressed;

The difficult part, ma'am, was figuring out how to get the learners back to school so they could participate in reading. Most of the time, their reason for being absent was because of financial difficulties, so I had to think of how to help them because their families were affected. The children were willing to read, but they also had empty stomachs.

Providing time in reading implementation suggests the challenge of allocating sufficient time within the curriculum for effective reading instruction and practice. This obstacle often arises due to competing

priorities and limited instructional hours, potentially leading to rushed or inadequate reading sessions. To overcome this difficulty, implementers may need to advocate for more dedicated reading time, restructure schedules, or adopt efficient teaching strategies to make the most of the available time for reading instruction. Informant 6 stressed:

For me, it is really about dedicating time to the learners to help them with reading, especially in this new normal where there seems to be an increase in those who need assistance, and our workload has also increased. As teachers, we are always bombarded with paperwork, urgent reports, and so on. So, I also noticed that advisers cannot focus as much on reading implementation because in their advisory classes, there are learners who really need that focus. But it is almost impossible for each one because they also have other tasks, including teaching their subjects in their teaching loads.

4.2.3 The disadvantages of being a reading program implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.3 'What are the disadvantages of being a Reading Program Implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' After subjecting the responses to content analysis, this theme was drawn: addition to workload.

Addition to workload refers to the increased responsibilities and tasks that educators or program administrators must take on when implementing a reading program. This can include planning, preparing materials, assessing student progress, and providing additional support, which can strain their already busy schedules.

Managing this added workload can be challenging, as it requires effective time management and resource allocation to ensure that reading programs are executed successfully without overwhelming educators. Informant 2 noted;

For me, teaching reading, it was challenging. And with the added workload, I could not fully focus because my subject and class should have been my priority, but sometimes reading activities would take up a lot of time.

Further, informant 5 shared:

I would say that we could not really progress much at this level because it is still quite challenging. We have to work really hard to teach reading, and you can see some learners just staring when you ask them questions, not responding at all. It adds stress to the teachers, really. You might think, "I thought we'd only be teaching our subject for high school, why are we back to elementary?" But that is how it is; it is the gap between expectation and

reality. You expect that you will only have to teach in your competency, but what can you do when it comes to reading, which is even more challenging? I actually noticed this while teaching; during formative tests, some of the students would get very low scores, and their answers would be incomprehensible. How can you understand when they do not even know how to read? So, this is really the difficulty of a teacher's life.

4.3 How do reading program implementers cope with the challenges in dealing with reading implementation ?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their coping mechanisms with the challenges as reading program implementers. This was the gist of the third major research question, 'How do Reading Program Implementers cope with the challenges in dealing with reading implementation?' Six specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.3.1 Preparations in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 3.1, 'What are your preparations in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' The following were the themes: conduct a meeting and prepared reading materials in different reading levels.

The theme conducts a meeting emphasizes the building blocks necessary to establish better connections with colleagues. This step is crucial for coordinating efforts, sharing information, setting goals, and planning strategies to ensure the smooth execution of the reading initiative. It involves tasks such as scheduling, creating an agenda, and providing necessary materials to ensure that the meeting is productive and aligns with the objectives of the reading program. Informant 2 narrated;

One of our preparations was holding a meeting. Our Reading Coordinator conducted a meeting for us and oriented us on how to administer the test. Then, we proceeded to test the learners so we could determine their Reading Profiles. After identifying the nonreaders and frustration readers, we focused more on providing interventions for them. We prepared reading materials suitable for their reading level. During their vacant periods, especially every afternoon before going home, they would read in the reading corner.

Informant 4 mentioned about tapping the coordinator for meeting. She unveiled;

Before the implementation, what I did was, of course, attend the meeting and orientation conducted by our Reading Coordinator. We were oriented about how to use the assessment tool and the reports that we needed to

create, so we were well-guided. Then, when we created the reading charts for use during the intervention, that was also part of our preparations.

Prepared reading materials in different reading levels signifies the task of creating a variety of educational texts and resources tailored to the diverse reading abilities of the students. Reading implementers need to develop or select materials that encompass a range of difficulty levels, from beginner to advanced, to cater to the individualized needs of learners. This preparation ensures that students have access to appropriate reading materials that match their proficiency and supports their growth in literacy skills. Informant 2 stated;

We were required to set up a reading corner in our rooms, so what I did was I placed various reading books of different levels. There were books for elementary level and advanced level, so that when the children read, they could pick a book suitable for their reading level.

Meanwhile, informant 7 said;

I really enjoy creating charts and putting them up on the walls with hooks so the children can read them. That is how I prepared to help the children because I thought that if they produced their own work, it would be difficult

for me to do it all. Also, at the beginning, ma'am, I participated in the orientation, especially on how to use the reading tool, and we were oriented.

4.3.2 Strategies used in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.2, 'What strategies did you use in dealing with concerns in reading implementation ?' The following themes were created: peer-tutoring, and providing differentiated activities.

Peer-Tutoring means that the strategy employed by reading implementers in reading programs where students are paired together to help each other improve their reading skills. In this approach, more proficient readers, often peers within the same class or grade level, act as tutors to provide support, guidance, and assistance to struggling readers. Peer tutoring promotes collaborative learning, enhances reading comprehension, and fosters a sense of community and support among students, making it an effective and inclusive method for improving reading proficiency. Thus, Informant 2 mentioned about the peer- tutoring strategy employed. She cited;

During reading time, I would partner them up. For example, I paired Independent Readers with nonreaders, and the Instructional partner with

Frustration readers. It was like peer tutoring, and I would give points to those who made an effort to read to encourage them.

Further, Informant 4 explained;

I had them all read, and after consolidating the results of their Reading Profiles, I would then seek assistance from the language teachers. They would focus on teaching the Nonreaders because we wanted to ensure correct pronunciation. In class, most of the time, I would pair them up, matching those who could read well with those who struggled, creating a buddy system to encourage them.

Providing differentiated activities is a strategy employed by reading implementers in reading programs to accommodate diverse learning needs and abilities among students. It involves tailoring reading activities, assignments, and materials to match each student's individual skill level, interests, and learning style. This approach helps ensure that all students can engage with the reading program effectively, promoting better comprehension, engagement, and overall success in improving their reading skills. Informant 6 had this to say;

We really provided differentiated activities for Reading, so since each subject area had its own reading programs, the subject teachers were responsible

for deciding what reading activities to assign and give to the students. For example, in MAPEH, specifically Music, their lesson involved teachers playing videos of songs for the students. Activities like that were conducted with a whole-class approach to make the children enjoy and become interested.

Moreover, informant 3 pointed out;

One of the strategies I used was having the students do concept noting before the class. While they were taking notes, they were also reading. Then, during our class, everyone would read, unlike before when it was mostly just the teacher reading, especially the questions. Now, it's different; all the students read, for example, "Okay, students, let's read this one," and then we would discuss it. So, in most of my classes, it was a whole-class approach to reading where everyone would read and then answer the questions.

4.3.3 Solutions employed on the challenges encountered in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.3, 'What are the solutions you have employed on the challenges you encountered in dealing with concerns in reading

implementation?' the themes generated were to send letters to parents whose child is always absent and home visits.

The theme sends letters to parents whose child is always absent means that a solution employed to address the challenge of student absenteeism in reading implementation. This strategy involves communicating with parents or guardians to inform them about their child's frequent absences from reading sessions, sharing the importance of regular attendance, and seeking their support in improving their child's participation in the program. By engaging parents in this way, educators aim to create a collaborative effort between the school and home environment to mitigate absenteeism and enhance the effectiveness of the reading program. Informant 1 mentioned about the process of embracing challenges. She cited;

Like when our students were absent, I would send a letter to their parents and then conduct a home visit. I would talk to the parents about the situation of their child, especially if they needed help with reading but could not attend school due to absences. Sometimes, it made me happy because the parents of those students were willing to help their child with reading, saying that they would assist their child in reading, so I provided them with reading materials.

Further, informant 3 explained;

My solution was to address the attendance issue with the students. I would call the parents' attention through written communication and verify from their parents if it was indeed true that they were absent. If that didn't work, I would partner with anecdotal records and conduct home visits. I did whatever I could to reach out to them.

Home visits involves educators or school personnel visiting students' homes to directly engage with parents or guardians, discuss concerns related to reading participation or performance, and collaboratively find solutions to overcome obstacles to learning. Home visits serve as a proactive and personal approach to bridge the gap between the school and home environment, aiming to improve student attendance, engagement, and overall success in the reading program. Informant 2 mentioned about the process of doing home visits. She cited;

Regarding my concern about attendance, my solution was to conduct home visits because it is not difficult to do home visits now, unlike during the pandemic when there were many protocols in place. During these home visits, I would check on the students and talk to their parents. Sometimes, I would leave reading materials with the parents, especially if they were willing to help their child read.

4.3.4 Person involved in coping with challenges in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.4, 'Who helped you in coping with challenges in dealing with concerns in reading implementation ?' The following themes were generated: parents and students and students and co-teachers.

The participants revealed that the parents and students actively involved in addressing challenges related to reading implementation . Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's reading education by ensuring regular attendance, providing a conducive home environment for reading, and actively engaging in communication with educators. Students, on the other hand, are essential participants in the reading program, and their cooperation, motivation, and effort are pivotal in overcoming challenges and achieving success in reading during these unprecedented times. Informant 7 explained;

The students, my students, because I would ask them where their house is when I do a home visit. And, of course, I also follow up with the parents about their students.

Nevertheless, informant 3 also shared;

My students and their parents. The PTA primarily focused on providing financial aid, especially in

supporting the Reading Projects here at school.

The participants shared that students and colleagues who collaborate to address challenges in reading implementation. Students are active participants in the reading program, and their engagement, attendance, and willingness to adapt to new learning formats are critical for success. Co-teachers, typically referring to educators working together in a collaborative teaching model, played a role in designing and delivering effective reading instruction, supporting students' needs, and adapting strategies to overcome challenges in the changing educational landscape.

Informant 5 mentioned;

My co-teachers, my students, and the internet, especially when I needed to search for materials or attend webinars that could help me as a reading teacher. Also, our school administration was very supportive, especially in providing supplies for making materials, and they would even take the time to reproduce materials for us, considering how busy we advisers were. Lastly, the parents were willing to support their children's reading. Some

even volunteered to read to their children at home, so we provided them with reading materials.

4.3.5 Assistance sought that helped with the challenges in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

Presented in this section were the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.5, 'What assistance did you seek to help you with the challenges in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' the following themes were generated: ask parents to assist their child in reading and technical assistance from co-teachers.

Sharing proactive involvement of parents in supporting their child's reading education during the challenges presented, opinions were a huge opportunity for not just new perspectives, but to create a culture of innovation inside the school. This strategy encourages parents to actively engage in their child's reading journey by dedicating time to read together, discussing reading materials, and providing a nurturing environment for learning. By seeking parents' assistance, educators can enhance the reading experience for students and strengthen the partnership between home and school to overcome the challenges of remote or hybrid learning.

Informant 1 narrated;

I would assist them in teaching their children to read, and they were willing to help with the reading process as well, so I would leave reading materials with them. I really appreciated my parents because they had a positive attitude toward assisting in their child's development.

Moreover, sharing of expertise from colleagues was mentioned by informant 5 who uttered;

During my home visits, I would ask the children questions and inquire about their whereabouts. I also requested assistance from the parents to help their children. I would seek technical assistance from my co-teachers, especially from our Reading Coordinator, on how to properly provide interventions to the children.

Many teachers in schools involved in collaborating with their colleagues to address challenges related to reading implementation in the new normal. This assistance often included sharing expertise in online teaching tools and platforms, instructional strategies for remote learning, and best practices for adapting reading programs to virtual or hybrid environments. Co-teachers working together can provide valuable support and guidance to navigate the technical aspects of remote education, ultimately helping ensure the success of reading programs.

Informant 5 revealed;

That technical assistance from my co-teachers, supplies from the administration, and support from my students and parents were crucial. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't handle all my students by myself, so I sought help from them.

4.4 What insights did the participants gain from their experiences in dealing with reading implementation?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their insights with the challenges of being reading program implementers. This was the gist of the fourth major research question, 'What insights did the participants gain from their experiences in dealing with reading implementation?' Five specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.4.1 Thoughts for other reading program implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 4.1, 'What can you share to other Reading Program

Implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' The generated themes were- use appropriate reading materials and develop time management.

Use Appropriate Reading Materials involved carefully selecting reading materials that are suitable and align with students' reading levels and interests. By ensuring the appropriateness of materials, educators can enhance engagement, comprehension, and overall reading program effectiveness in the evolving educational landscape. Informant 2 stated;

So, what I can share with my co-Reading Program Implementer are probably the things I've learned along the way in implementing reading programs. New insights that I believe they need, or materials like books and approaches to address our reading challenges.

The theme develop time management involves efficiently allocating and organizing instructional time, and balancing various aspects of the reading program to optimize student engagement and achievement. By mastering time management, implementers addressed the unique demands of remote and hybrid learning environments, ensuring that reading programs are delivered effectively and efficiently in the new normal. Informant 6 stated;

As a reading coordinator or implementer, it was crucial to have good time management skills, and we needed to understand the needs of the students, especially when it came to sudden reports that needed to be submitted.

Meanwhile, informant 5 said;

Having time management can help have a work-life balance. This should be planned well by the teachers.

4.4.2 Advice to give to other reading program implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 4.2, 'What advice will you give to other Reading Program Implementers in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' The theme was be patient.

The findings showed that the research participants perceived the challenges in handling reading program in school should be taken lightly. This view was grounded on the belief that for a responsibility to be done well, this should be done with love and passion.

Informant 1 narrated her view about taking challenges lightly, she said;

We needed to have a lot of patience, especially dealing with the behavior of the children nowadays who seem to be more preoccupied with other things than reading. So, we really had to be patient and creative in our interventions to boost their interest in reading.

Further, informant 5 substantiated;

Be patient. Be resourceful. Be patient, especially when you have something you want to achieve, and you cannot meet your target because the students are not cooperating. Then, be resourceful, of course, because what we download or receive as materials is not enough. We should search for other resources that we can use for our learners who are at different reading levels.

4.4.3 Recommendation to give to DepEd authorities regarding the reading implementation

The results in this section were taken from the responses to the specific research question 4.3, 'What recommendation will you give to the DepEd authorities regarding the reading implementation?' under the 4th major

research question, 'What insights did the participants gain from their experiences in dealing with reading implementation?' This was the theme drawn from the responses: provide more time in reading activities and provide assistance to the reading programs implementers.

Provide More Time in Reading Activities. This theme is a vital recommendation for DepEd authorities when it comes to reading implementation. It suggests allocating additional dedicated time within the curriculum for reading instruction and practice to compensate for any potential learning gaps caused by disruptions in education. This approach prioritizes literacy development and can help students catch up on reading skills, fostering a stronger foundation for their overall academic success in the challenging circumstances. Informant 1 mentioned about providing more time in reading activities. She revealed;

I hope they will allocate more time for reading activities because for me, it's difficult to just insert reading during my vacant time, and it's not just my responsibility. I wish there could be a separate session intended solely for reading, and it should be given to the Reading Teacher who has the proper seminar when it comes to giving reading interventions.

Similarly, informant 2 said;

I recommend that DepEd should allocate enough or more time for reading so that we, as reading implementers, can focus, and if they really want to address the reading problem, they should provide enough training and seminars. It is not easy because, as you know, it all happened so suddenly that everyone had to teach reading after the pandemic, which was quite shocking. So, there should be enough training. Additionally, they should provide materials, or if they cannot provide them, they should conduct training or seminars about crafting reading materials that involve everyone.

Provide Assistance to the Reading Programs Implementers. The result showed that research participants wanted to entail offering training, resources, and guidance to educators responsible for executing reading programs. By ensuring that implementers had the necessary support, tools, and professional development, DepEd could enhance the quality and effectiveness of reading initiatives during these challenging times, ultimately benefiting students' literacy development. This was what informant 5 said;

Give assistance to the Reading Program Implementers because, of course, they are the ones in charge. They should be aware of our needs, such as whether the teachers need training first or if we need seminars before we conduct activities like this. For me, let us provide support like this, but we should not assume that everyone is fully trained in how to address these issues, especially for those who are relatively new to the service. So, I hope

they receive appropriate assistance if they genuinely want to see improvements in reading-related problems.

Also, informant 4 said:

I think it would be great if they could provide us with a tool that is easier and more straightforward to use. Our current tool, PHIL-IRI, is quite a lengthy and time-consuming process, especially when we have to assess each child one by one in a classroom. So, I hope they can offer a revised Reading Assessment Tool that is simpler for us. Also, I hope they consistently provide us with support and plans for reading so that we can stay focused, as it can be confusing when things change every year.

4.4.4 Suggestions to give to help improve the reading implementation

The themes in this section were from the responses to specific question 4.4, 'What suggestions can you give to help improve the reading implementation?' The theme was: provide specified time and teacher for reading implementation.

Participants revealed that it is a valuable recommendation to enhance the effectiveness of reading programs. This approach entails allocating a

designated time slot in the curriculum solely for reading instruction and designating a qualified teacher who specializes in literacy development. By prioritizing reading and ensuring expert guidance, educational institutions can better address the challenges of remote or hybrid learning and foster improved reading skills among students . This was echoed by Informant 2:

There should be dedicated time for reading included in the class program. This time should be designated as "Reading Time" and should be integrated into the curriculum as a separate component from the English subject.

To reinforce, Informant 3 said:

Perhaps, it is my hope that there should be a dedicated teacher whose sole focus is on reading. Because, of course, we have many responsibilities, and our strengths are limited. So, I hope there is a position specifically for a Reading Teacher. Or if that is not possible, then perhaps we can expose teachers to relevant training on conducting reading activities suitable for the current class setup.

4.4.5 Hopes and aspirations as a reading program implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation

The theme in this section was from the responses to specific question 4.5, 'What are your hopes and aspirations as a Reading Program Implementer in dealing with concerns in reading implementation?' This was the last specific research question for the 4th main research question. The themes were improvement on learners' reading and comprehension skills and upcoming high school students already know how to read.

Improvement on Learners' Reading and Comprehension Skills. This theme is hoped to achieve significant improvement in learners' reading and comprehension skills. This goal involves tailoring instructional methods, materials, and assessments to effectively address the challenges of learning environments. By nurturing students' reading abilities and comprehension, the implementer aims to ensure that students can adapt to the changing educational landscape and continue to thrive in their reading and academic endeavors. Informant 2 stated;

So, I really wish that after every school year, if not 100% improvement, at least we can see some improvement in the children's reading, especially in their comprehension. I hope that the improvement won't be limited to the classroom but extends to the entire school.

Importantly, Informant 4 uttered:

I had no other prayer, except that my students, when they reach the next grade level, can read well and comprehend properly. It is heartbreaking to see a child struggling in class just because they cannot read. So, I hope that they can all read well.

The participants revealed that as a reading program implementer, the hope and aspiration when dealing with concerns in reading implementation in the new normal are that incoming high school students already possess strong reading skills. This would provide a solid foundation for more advanced reading and comprehension strategies, allowing educators to focus on higher-level literacy skills and critical thinking. Ultimately, the goal is to build on this existing reading proficiency to prepare students for academic success and personal growth in high school and beyond. Informant 3 said:

My hopes were, of course, that all the children would be able to read because reading is a basic skill that is beneficial in our lives. A child who cannot read cannot be expected to understand their lessons, so it's a pity and challenging for us. So, I hope that the children will learn how to read and understand, especially when they reach Junior High School.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal some essential points about implementing a reading program on-campus learning environment. Program implementers' experiences underline the importance of adaptive strategies that take into account the wide variety of students' reading abilities. The implementation of differentiated instruction and early interventions results in inclusive and efficient learning environments, highlighting the importance of flexibility and individualization in order to gain insight into future reading program design.

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