Teachers' Utilization of Innovative Reading Program to Address Struggling Readers in Garchitorena District

Franknel Bergonio Alde

Presented to the Faculty of Andragogy Department College of Education Partido State University Goa, Camarines Sur.

ABSTRACT

Summary:

This study aimed to determine the utilization of innovative reading programs by teachers to support struggling readers in Garchitorena district. A mixed-method explanatory sequential design was employed, combining quantitative surveys, qualitative focus group discussion (FGD), and key informant interviews (KII). The researcher computed the percentage of answered indicators with responses of 4 on teachers' professional competence, methods, and strategies used in the Project RIPARU and Project MMK,while the Wilcoxon signed test was used to analyze students' reading performance. 17 struggling students from Bahi National High School and 29 students from Pambuhan National High School were the respondents in this study. Additionally, FGD and key informant interviews (KII) solicited 8 students' and 2 school heads' responses on the effectiveness of the innovative reading programs. The results highlighted that teachers with professional competence significantly improved students' reading ability, while teachers without relevant training and seminar and language expertise were found to be less competent reading teachers. However, further training is recommended due to the slight improvement in students' reading behavior, indicating a need to adapt reading approaches continuously. Thus, the study revealed that the Project RIPARU of Bahi National High School in the Garchitorena district was utilized outstandingly, complemented with the right professional background and acquired relevant training, significantly improving students' reading performance.

The Problem and Its Setting

Background

Students who struggle with reading can benefit significantly from innovative reading programs (Spidell & Latty, 2018). These programs can help them develop their skills to become independent readers. However, the success of these programs depends heavily on the teachers who handle them. Effective reading programs should be implemented based on teachers' competencies, appropriate strategies, and support to give students the best chance of becoming proficient readers (Auld, 2023).

Differentiated strategies offered robust support in addressing the diverse learning needs of students. When teachers are highly aware of these differences and possess the competence to implement appropriate methods, such strategies can lead to significantly positive learning outcomes (Jenkins et al., 2025).

Teachers' competence encompasses the abilities, skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to achieve professional goals proficiently (Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualifications, 2003, cited in Ellis, 2019). This competence is crucial for improving performance and being capable of executing tasks (Nessipbayeva, 2012). Additionally, teachers can use innovative programs to help struggling students improve their comprehension and memory (Voyager Sopris Learning, n.d.). By adapting these programs and finding new solutions, these skilled teachers can turn struggling readers into successful readers.

However, despite various innovative reading programs, the gap between struggling and independent readers remains concerning. The data showed that the Philippines ranked bottom among 79 economies in 2018 and

75th out of 81 in the 2022 PISA results in English, below the OECD average. The 2020 Phil-IRI results revealed that 6.523% or 20,587 were struggling readers among 315,161 learners from Grades 4 to 6 in the Bicol region (Sadsad, 2020). Proven with the recent data, the 2023 RLA pretest results in the Garchitorena district indicated a sustained number of struggling students, with Bahi National High School recording 23% of its enrollment and Pambuhan National High School logging 31.64%, with a reading level of coping and deficit in English.

In response, the Department of Education (DepEd) actively promoted innovative reading programs in schools. To address the issue of struggling readers, they launched programs like the DepEd Memo. No. 173, s. 2019, or the "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa" (3Bs Initiatives) nationwide. This was followed by a regional enhancement, through the Regional Memorandum no. 157, s. 2019, or "Bawat Batang Bikolano Bihasang Bumabasa (5Bs) Program," implemented in the Bicol Region. Additionally, DepEd established DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2023 or National Learning Camp to improve learning outcomes and support teachers in their efforts.

Moreover, the National Educators' Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) and the Research Center for Teacher Quality (RCTQ) collaborated to develop higher-order thinking Skills (HOTS) - Professional Learning Packages (PLPs) training in Mathematics, Science, and English for Junior High School. This training focuses on helping teachers develop higher-order thinking skills and effective implementation of reading strategies. It is essential for teachers to have these skills (Mirbabayeva, 2020) in teaching reading strategies (Ghafournia, 2023; Pressley et al., 2006, cited in Koch & Spörer, 2017) because they play a crucial role in improving students' reading ability (Bustos & Lalas, 2017). Likewise, Stevenson et al. (2022) agreed that teachers must be adequately trained to respond to actions that undermine students' learning.

To increase literacy rates, Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School proposed innovative reading programs: Project RIPARU (Reading Intervention Program to Amplify Readers' Understanding) and Project MMK (Madya Magbasa Kita) Program, respectively. These programs aimed to improve reading proficiency levels in alignment with the National Learning Recovery Plan.

Hence, this research explores teachers' utilization of innovative reading programs for struggling readers in the Garchitorena district. The study examined how effectively teachers conduct and utilize these programs despite their varied fields of specialization. It also verified if teachers' competencies and strategies contribute to implementing reading programs adequately. The results addressed issues like effective strategy use and professional qualifications, guiding universities in aligning teacher competencies, and helping teachers and students enhance reading skills. Furthermore, this research served as a guide for other researchers on related topics.

Research Questions

This study examined how teachers utilized reading innovation programs to address struggling readers in the Garchitorena district. Specifically, the following questions were answered:

What are the professional competencies of reading teachers?

What methods do teachers use to implement the innovative reading programs?

How effective are the strategies employed by the reading teachers?

How do the innovative reading programs enhance students' reading performance?

Hypothesis

Ho: The innovative reading programs do not effectively enhance the students' reading performance.

Assumptions

Teachers are highly competent in conducting innovative reading programs, as observed by the students.

Teachers can implement an effective reading program that leads to student improvement.

Teachers' strategies were noticeably emphasized, which improved students' reading abilities.

Students' reading performance improved because of the effectiveness of the innovative reading programs.

Significance of the Study

This study provided a substantial contribution to the improvement of teachers' competence in teaching reading through innovative reading programs that can benefit the following:

Students. The study could be used as a framework for how the reading programs implemented in schools can be properly utilized and implemented to ensure positive results and continued improvement among struggling students.

Teachers. This study could serve as a basis for teachers to understand the importance of having an aligned teaching background and relevant training in reading instruction, especially for those striving to achieve competence as reading teachers, to ensure that each student receives the necessary support to succeed.

Parents. This study could serve as a call for more active parental involvement in dealing with students' reading dilemma, as they play an essential role in encouraging, monitoring, and directing their children's reading development. This study highlighted how parents' roles can affect students' performance in becoming better readers.

School Administrators. This study highlights the schools' need to align and formulate frameworks, policies, plans, and visions in promoting reading programs for the holistic betterment of students. To encourage a suitable reading environment, school administrators should provide teachers with current reading materials, organize professional development workshops for teachers, and promote the utilization and creation of reading areas or libraries in their schools.

Reading Coordinators. This could serve as a means of conducting and providing suitable reading programs that the reading experts or language teachers will handle. They can propose special programs for students' diverse reading levels, create reading intervention programs for problematic students, and conduct workshops to train teachers in the most recent reading instruction strategies.

Future Researchers. This study may help researchers look at greater possibilities for providing new knowledge on effectively teaching reading programs and integrating this literature into our daily teaching lessons. Researchers should perform longitudinal studies to evaluate students' progress in these programs and publish their findings to help shape best practices in reading education.

University. This study can serve as a guide for the university to update, plan, adapt, and conceptualize practical frameworks and curriculum to include reading subjects for in-service student-teachers based on the country's issues. The university should offer courses on research-based reading instruction methods and research to generate relevant reading materials and experience among future teachers that can assist students in improving their reading problems.

Other Stakeholders. This study may serve as a means to build a stronger linkage among stakeholders by giving and donating resources such as books, instructional materials, or food to motivate students to pursue their education with eagerness and love, especially in reading.

Scope and Delimitation

This study investigates the effectiveness of teachers' competencies in conducting innovative reading programs, Project RIPARU (Reading Intervention Program to Amplify Readers' Understanding) at Bahi National High School and Project MMK (Madya Magbasa Kita) at Pambuhan National High School, in improving literacy among struggling readers in Junior High School.

The researcher looked into teachers' competencies in instructional skills, classroom management, guidance skills, and professional and personal skills. For the study, two schools were selected: Bahi National High School, which has implemented an innovative reading program as an intervention to improve student performance, and Pambuhan National High School, where teachers have initiated efforts to enhance students' reading achievement.

Their specialized classes aim to assist struggling readers in achieving literacy proficiency. Both schools implemented innovative reading programs for students who did not meet the passing scores in the Rapid Literacy Assessment – Pretest for Junior High School students.

The study excludes four other schools: Binagasbasan National High School, Sumaoy Integrated School, Denrica National High School, and Burabod National High School, as they are part of the river cluster represented by Bahi National High School. Consequently, findings from the surveys and focus group discussions at Pambuhan National High School generalized to Toytoy Integrated School and Harrison Integrated School as a cluster.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE & STUDIES

This chapter presents the reviews of related literature, studies, theoretical and conceptual paradigms, and frameworks to provide insight for a better understanding of this study.

Teacher's Competence

DepEd Order No. 42, series 2017, titled "National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers" (PPST), establishes clear expectations and standards for teachers' professional development from the beginning to distinguished stages. It defines teacher competence as increasing teachers' knowledge, practice, and professional engagement to improve teaching quality and student outcomes. Enhancing teacher quality is prioritized for sustainable and long-term nation-building, as quality teaching is vital for quality learning.

Likewise, IGI Global. (n.d.) defined teacher competence as the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and personal characteristics, enabling the teacher to act professionally and appropriately, and Fauth et al. (2019) described teacher competence as the specific personal qualities such as (pedagogical content knowledge, self-efficacy, and teaching enthusiasm) that teachers need to meet the high demands of their profession based in their study entitled "The effects of teacher competence on student outcomes in elementary science education: The mediating role of teaching quality." The study revealed that it was positively related to student achievement.

In addition, a teacher's competence was a multidimensional construct (Jentsch and König, 2022; OECD, 2017) that included pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, classroom management skills, assessment practices, and the ability to create a supportive learning environment.

Moreover, teacher competence is one of the main factors supporting educational goal achievement. Teachers are entrusted with the crucial role of equipping students to excel within their communities, especially those struggling students. Their primary goal is to empower students to achieve their aspirations. Achieving this goal demands substantial effort, transforming individuals into capable, determined individuals who recognize the transformative power of literacy as a foundational step toward lifelong success. In this connection, Laurito's (2022) study on teachers' teaching reading competence and student performance in English revealed a significant relationship between the extent of teaching reading competence in classroom management, teaching practice, assessment, technological skills, and Grade 1 pupils' performance in English.

According to Chetty et al.'s (2014) study "Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood," students who were assigned to highly competent teachers showed improvement and were more likely to go to college, get better test scores, and become more successful adults. They emphasized teachers' competence in the students' reading performance.

Additionally, Sultan and Shafi (2014) investigated the impact of perceived teachers' competency on 500 students' performance, providing evidence for the mediating/moderating role of the class environment. The study found that perceived teacher competency influenced student success.

On the other hand, Lomsdal et al. (2022) studied 12 secondary school teachers in one Norwegian school with the title, "Teachers' perceptions of barriers related to implementation of daily physical activity in secondary school: Academic pressure and the need for new competence" revealed that teacher's competence in implementing reading programs or interventions should be focused on employing active learning and innovative strategies when planning and conducting reading instructions in secondary schools.

Meanwhile, Aindra et al. (2022) conducted a systematic literature review, "Method of teachers' competence and performance: A systematic theoretical study". The study revealed that improving teacher competence is a key goal of vocational revitalization. This is crucial because competence is fundamental for effectively managing the learning process and understanding the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the classroom, as evidenced by their performance.

Consequently, a 2019 study by Ellis titled "Teacher Competencies in Supporting Reading in English as a Foreign Language" revealed that while teachers acknowledged the importance of specific competencies, they struggled with applying them to support young English learners (aged 7-15) in developing foundational reading skills. The research suggested a potential gap in teachers' understanding of the theoretical underpinnings that inform effective reading instruction. This lack of clarity may cause students to underachieve in reading comprehension, falling short of the A2 benchmark on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

This means that teachers should have a firm grasp on the five reading skills (phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension), be conversant with the curriculum, and employ best practice pedagogical techniques to teaching reading (USAID, 2020). Struggling readers might benefit significantly from explicit training in phonological awareness, phonics, and decoding methods, as teachers' lack of understanding of communicative approaches (Chen, 2020) emphasizes a linguistic problem that requires teaching attention because low linguistic competence can affect student reading proficiency (Obiegbu, 2018).

Kiptoo et al.'s study, "Effect of Teachers' Competence in English Phonology on Reading Ability among Preschool Children in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya," found that teacher competency in English phonology had a significant positive effect on the reading ability of pre-school children. It is recommended that preschool teachers be trained to improve their competency in English phonology to improve the reading ability of preschoolers.

Rupley et al. (2009) emphasized that struggling readers are more likely to gain fundamental reading skills and strategies if the direct or explicit model of instruction is part of the teacher's teaching approach repertoire. Directly or explicitly teaching reading provides meaningful interactions that drive teachers to model lessons that can turn students into better readers. Additionally, the direct or explicit model has a component of the reading processes, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

That is why Belsky (2023) emphasized that teachers must undergo training in reading to possess the necessary skills to improve struggling pupils with reading. Most instructors acknowledge the impact of student actions demonstrating cognitive flexibility, inhibition, attentional control, planning, working memory, and automatic retrieval on reading and arithmetic success (Rapoport, 2016). Professionally, teachers must possess basic skills and training to teach our students. Without these skills, they cannot turn our students into wholesome individuals. Teachers must be jacks of all trades or very flexible in addressing problems in school, especially in utilizing reading programs for our students.

However, inadequate teacher training, ineffective teaching approaches, and a lack of specific and systematic phonics instruction may all lead to reading problems. A lack of training and familiarity with the program's features and instructional strategies might stifle its success. Providing extensive professional development

opportunities and continuing assistance for teachers is critical. Training should concentrate on program features, instructional strategies, data analysis, and troubleshooting common issues.

Further, Sun's (2021) study "Literature in Secondary EFL Class: Case Studies of Four Experienced Teachers' Reading Programmes in China" discovered that only two of the four aspects were used by the teacher participants: the language approach was primarily utilized to support reading programs, while the reader approach was primarily employed in writing-after-reading exercises. The study emphasized that teachers need training in implementing reading programs alongside implications for future practice. They must undergo reading training and possess technical know-how in providing programs to ensure their effectiveness. Professionally speaking, we cannot teach others what we do not know. That is why it is necessary that before the teachers conduct a reading program, they should possess the necessary skills.

On the other hand, the need for more individualized education and adequate assistance for struggling readers worsens their difficulties. Karadag (2014) revealed that prospective primary school teachers need a critical literacy mindset and need to be made aware of effective reading strategies. This study found that teachers empirically stated that they could not teach reading because they did not have the competency or necessary knowledge to conduct innovative reading programs successfully. This means that teachers must be trained to identify reading problems.

More importantly, students must learn how to read without negative judgment or prejudice from others, as the goal is to uplift their level of reading proficiency (Wolter et al., 2015). To foster conceptual changes among teachers, their ideas and the insufficiency of those views must be exposed. Only then will teachers be able to combine new and old knowledge of teaching and learning (Zhu et al., 2020).

Innovative Reading Programs

Innovation is about introducing new ideas that benefit learning. It can address various issues like increasing participation, improving academic achievement, and enhancing the learning environment (Llego, 2022; Kashef et al., 2012). Similarly, innovation could involve adapting existing approaches to better suit students' needs (Naz & Murad, 2017).

Moreover, reading activities or approaches should be conducted on innovative terms that enable reading experimentation, bringing reading themes closer to events or actions that are closely tied to the student's daily lives (Meza et al., 2022) such as differentiated instruction, continual progress monitoring, small-group interventions, peer-assisted learning, and one-on-one tutoring, which can all give focused assistance.

In addition, innovative reading programs frequently include interactive and technology-enhanced aspects that help engage and encourage struggling children. These applications include multimedia materials, gamification, and individualized learning experiences that may make reading more pleasurable and meaningful. Utilizing cutting-edge techniques and educational resources for the benefit of students is considered innovative teaching (Mandala et al., 2012, as cited in Naz and Murad, 2017).

Lee and Leu (2023) explored a more holistic approach, investigating the effects of reading programs integrating project-based learning on reading engagement and achievement. This study found that students in the project-based learning program group demonstrated significant increases in reading engagement and achievement scores compared to the traditional program group.

Similarly, a longitudinal study by Catts et al. (2015) underscored the critical role of language development in reading proficiency. The researchers found that early language skills strongly influenced later reading success. This indicates that interventions to enhance vocabulary and oral language skills can have long-term benefits for struggling readers.

Moreover, a meta-analysis by Filderman et al. (2021) highlighted the effectiveness of multisensory reading instruction, which incorporates different learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) to solidify letter-sound connections. This aligned with a study by Rahman and Hajar (2020) that showed promise in using audiobooks alongside traditional reading materials to improve fluency and comprehension.

In addition to phonics and language development, the role of motivation and engagement in reading has been explored extensively. For instance, Guthrie and Klauda (2014) argued that increasing students' motivation through engaging and relevant reading materials can significantly improve reading achievement. The finding suggested that students are more likely to persist in reading tasks when interested in the content, which can lead to improved skills over time.

Further, a meta-analysis by Wanzek et al. (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of different instructional strategies for struggling readers. The analysis revealed that explicit instruction, including guided practice and immediate feedback, mainly enhances reading skills. The study highlighted the importance of structured and systematic approaches to reading instruction for students who experience difficulties.

Moreover, technology played a role in supporting struggling readers. Hudson et al. (2020) explored the benefits of computer-assisted reading programs, which provide individualized instruction and practice opportunities. There is also a growing interest in using assistive technologies like text-to-speech software, which can help bridge some reading gaps. Recent research by Murtadho et al. (2023) explored the impact of digital literacy tools on struggling readers. Their findings indicated that digital tools like interactive e-books and literacy apps can provide additional support and scaffolding, making reading more accessible and engaging for struggling students.

Further, innovative reading programs boasted three key features that contributed to their effectiveness in honing students' development:

Initially, they prioritize engagement and interactivity. These programs leverage technology, multimedia elements, and even gamification to make reading informative, enjoyable, and stimulating (Djik et al., 2023). This approach fosters a positive association with reading, encouraging students to delve deeper into the world of words.

Moreover, blended learning, combining online and offline instruction, proved advantageous for English language learners, where one group displayed more significant gains in reading comprehension than those who received traditional instruction (Wang et al., 2023). Similarly, Zheng et al. (2022) explored the effectiveness of augmented reality games in improving reading fluency among elementary school students. Their results indicated significant improvement in the gaming group's accuracy and reading speed.

The realm of personalized learning also yielded promising results. Kim et al. (2021) investigated the effects of adaptive learning software delivering personalized reading interventions. Students using this software demonstrated statistically significant gains in reading fluency and comprehension compared to a control group. Al-Harbi et al. (2023) further solidified the potential of technology by implementing a digital reading comprehension intervention for low-performing readers. This study documented significant improvement in reading comprehension scores and showed that these gains persisted over time.

Beyond core reading skills, Lai et al. (2024) explored the potential of digital storytelling to enhance narrative skills in young children. Their findings revealed significant improvements in story grammar and vocabulary usage among children who participated in digital storytelling interventions.

Several studies highlighted the effectiveness of interventions delivered outside traditional classroom settings. Foehr (2019) examined the efficacy of reading interventions delivered by tutors on mobile devices for students with reading difficulties. Students receiving mobile-based tutoring showed statistically significant improvements in reading fluency and comprehension. Dowhower (2021) investigated the effectiveness of reading interventions delivered through videoconferencing, specifically for students in rural areas. This study found that videoconferencing yielded results comparable to traditional in-person interventions, offering a promising solution for geographically dispersed populations.

The importance of social interaction in learning was emphasized by Zhang (2023), who examined the effectiveness of peer-assisted reading strategies for vocabulary development in middle school students. Students who participated in these strategies demonstrated statistically significant gains in vocabulary knowledge compared to a control group. Finally, Fuchs et al. (2022) explored the influence of family

involvement on the effectiveness of online reading interventions. Their research suggests that students with high levels of family involvement alongside the intervention achieved significantly more significant improvements in reading fluency and comprehension.

Secondly, innovative reading programs embrace personalized learning. They move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach by offering adaptive instruction tailored to each student's needs and learning pace (Briones, 2020). This ensures that students are challenged appropriately, both feeling safe and stimulate. Personalized learning fosters a more efficient and effective reading experience by catering to individual strengths and weaknesses.

Thirdly, innovative reading programs are data-driven. They incorporate regular assessments to identify students struggling with reading comprehension or fluency (Merto, 2019). These data allow educators to intervene early and provide targeted support. Tracking progress over time enables educators to measure the program's effectiveness and adjust as needed. This data-driven approach ensures that innovative reading programs are continually evolving to meet the specific needs of their student populations.

However, despite the numerous advantages offered by innovative reading programs, implementing them can present challenges. That is why various literature and studies unlocked two common hurdles and corresponding solutions to ensure these programs reach their full potential—firstly, navigating time constraints. Integrating innovative reading programs into existing curricula can be difficult due to time limitations. Department of Education Order 45, s. 2002 and DM No. 166, s. 2020 emphasized the importance of adhering to core learning objectives. Solutions exist through careful planning and collaboration, and schools can overcome this hurdle (Department of Education Order 45, s. 2002; Department of Education Memorandum No. 166, s. 2020). Effective strategies include streamlining existing lesson plans, identifying areas for potential overlap with the innovative program, or even advocating for curriculum adjustments where appropriate. This collaborative approach ensures efficient use of instructional time while maximizing the benefits of innovative reading programs for students.

Secondly, they ensure adequate teacher support. Teachers play a pivotal role in the success of innovative reading programs. However, educators may need help with program features, instructional strategies, or data analysis techniques. Training and support are crucial solutions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2000). Schools can address these challenges by providing additional coaching, resources, and professional development opportunities. This empowers teachers to confidently navigate the program, utilize its functionalities to their full potential, and effectively guide student learning. Such support fosters a positive learning environment for educators and students, ultimately leading to a more successful implementation of innovative reading programs.

Several studies and literature offered these issues with a more concrete and decisive approach to making innovation work and successful for implementation. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2000b) revealed that ongoing training should be provided on the program's features, instructional strategies, and data analysis techniques. Equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills is crucial for successfully integrating innovative reading programs. This empowers teachers to navigate the program's functionalities confidently, implement effective teaching strategies, and utilize data to track student progress and guide personalized interventions.

Additionally, DepEd Order 45, s. 2002; DM No. 166, s. 2020 emphasized school heads' strategies to integrate innovative programs while seamlessly adhering to the core learning objectives.

Moreover, teachers can gain valuable insights into students' reading abilities by conducting diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the school year (Tingrey, 2021). This allows for the prompt implementation of interventions tailored to address individual needs, maximizing the benefits of the innovative reading program and ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive. This is also the data that teachers used to propose plans for the identified students for the whole year to mitigate the problem in reading.

Whereas intervention research on teaching reading has provided empirical evidence that different, particular strategies are successful in increasing reading accuracy, reading fluency, and reading comprehension (Peters et

al., 2021). As supported by the Department of Education Order 45, s. 2002, also known as "reading literacy program in the elementary schools," which states that all pupils must read at the end of their primary level. Consequently, this program obliges all the schools in the country to provide a substantive and result-based solution. This allows teachers to make their innovation as stipulated in DM No. 166, s. 2020, also known as "Guidelines on proposals for curriculum innovations, income-generating projects, special programs, and publication of articles. This also adheres to enhancing curriculum competencies and improving learning outcomes and delivery of the K to 12 education. Thus, this memorandum encourages teachers and personnel to think creatively by empowering schools to start curricular innovations. Teachers' beliefs are recognized to have a powerful impact on implementing an innovation (Chen, 2020).

Nonetheless, the success of reading programs depends on educators' commitment and the community's support. Teachers alone cannot transform students' reading proficiency; it requires a collective effort. Students spend significant time with teachers, but community involvement, especially from parents, is vital. Parental engagement in reading can positively influence children's reading habits and comprehension (Clavel & Mediavilla, 2020).

Parents play a crucial role in their children's development (Etrainu, n.d), providing motivation and support. Their involvement in reading activities can significantly impact students' reading abilities (Blanch et al., 2012). Teachers and parents must collaborate to enhance children's reading competence, creating a consistent and supportive learning environment (Bendanillo, 2021; Al-Momani et al., 2014).

Finally, by focusing on these critical strategies, schools can create an environment that fosters successful integration and optimal utilization of innovative reading programs, ultimately leading to improved student reading outcomes.

Reading Strategies Use

Effective strategies are essential in regular schools to prevent reading difficulties (Pfost et al., 2012). Reading strategies provide students with skills to comprehend reading passages (Habok et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2021) because reading strategies are a set of particular, intentional, goal-directed mental processes or actions that regulate and alter a reader's efforts to decode a text, comprehend words, and create the meaning of a text (Weinstein and Mayer's, 1986, p. 315; Anastasiou and Griva,2009 cited in Sun et al., 2021; PISA, 2018). Reading strategies are crucial tools that assist people in understanding and analyzing various text genres. A reading strategy is a methodical plan or technique that readers use to improve their comprehension, interact with texts efficiently, and overcome reading difficulties. Making predictions, summarizing, visualizing, questioning, and monitoring comprehension, skimming, scanning, contextual guessing, and activating background knowledge belong to reading strategies (Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2013; Akkaya & Demirel, 2012; The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d.; Vacca et al., 2014).

Moreover, the association between students' knowledge of and application of reading strategies and their performance in reading comprehension has been the subject of numerous research investigations (Wilawan, 2022). Numerous reading strategies can result in excellent reading comprehension in the context of reading.

Regular reading practice helps students become more comfortable and proficient readers. Repeated reading is one way to support beginner readers. Having a child read the exact text more than once is known as repeated reading. Their word identification, understanding, and fluency all improve as a result. Allowing beginner readers to strengthen their phonics abilities is another way to assist them. Word-building exercises, phonics games, and phonics worksheets can help (Melesse & Enyew, 2020).

For beginner readers, phonemic awareness is a crucial technique. Studies show that acquiring a solid comprehension of language is essential for success in reading later (National Reading Panel, 2020). Phonics instruction and word recognition are facilitated by the ability of beginning readers to alter particular sounds in words through activities like blending, segmenting, and playing games that rhyme. Beginning readers can also develop their sight word recognition and fluency through repeated, closely supervised oral reading. Additionally, students' reading fluency and comprehension improve when they read familiar passages aloud

several times while receiving teacher guidance and comments. In a supportive setting, beginning readers can practice reading aloud to gain confidence and fluency in their reading skills.

Furthermore, active reading practices, such as annotation, provide struggling readers with tangible tools to engage with the material and achieve tiny, quick victories. Students will become more proficient readers and grow closer to understanding the material as they apply successful reading techniques more frequently (HorizonReading, n.d.). Moreover, reading strategy instruction can be regarded as a promising practice for improving reading comprehension and motivation (e.g., Huang & Wang, 2020; Spörer & Schünemann, 2014 cited in Wu, 2023) and it could boost reading strategy use and reading comprehension (Li et al., 2022) as strategies including explicit instruction can be used with any child who struggles to read, with or without learning disabilities (Wilson, Jr. 2016) and readers' reading abilities improve when proper methods are used proficiently, hence reading strategies should be designed and used effectively (Shoeharto et al., 2023) because the act of reading is not complete until ideas have been received and then passed along to others (Bangeni, 2024).

Students' Reading Competence

Reading competence is the ability of a person to understand and use the language in a meaningful context. Reading competence refers to a student's ability to meet the state board's grade-level reading expectations (Law Inside, n.d.). Students who are competent readers can easily make an intellectual judgment based on the text that they read. Students should be proficient readers because it sets the stage for future academic success. Regular readers of books gain strong cognitive abilities like enhanced focus and recall. Additionally, they increase their vocabulary and acquire new linguistic skills. This is the quality of someone who reads competently. Moreover, one of the core competencies that students develop during their elementary school years is reading competence, which is the capacity to read and comprehend what has been read. However, it is frequently not very developed when students leave elementary school (Pfost et al., 2012).

Students can be considered competent when they can understand complex reading texts under literal, interpretive, evaluative, and creative levels with less supervision (Vasay, 2016; Lilla et al., 2023).

On the other hand, young children at risk of reading difficulty encounter impediments in understanding and using foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Lara et al., 2018). Many students need help to learn reading (Djik et al., 2023). Moreover, some of these students need help reading simple English words. A student must understand the text to communicate its message with others and build their communication skills.

Moreover, it seems that neither language use nor socioeconomic status alone can fully account for the observed differences in reading competence (Lilla et al., 2023), as Dela Cruz (2022) highlighted that due to the lack of skill in the "accepted" English variety among the educated, people who are less educated may find it challenging to understand some information that indeed, according to Rezagah and Rezavipour (2018), make them become adequately literate in language.

Furthermore, English is the commonly preferred medium for teaching technical concepts (Dela Cruz, 2022). However, reading competence in a second language (L2) such as English has been a matter of concern among scholars because of the observed tendency among L2 and foreign language (FL) readers across the globe to manifest profound reading difficulties (Obiegbu, 2018). For example, the selected educated Nigerians in Obiegbu's (2018) study, still needed help to read up to the level of their perceived literacy training. Obiegbu (2018) believed that there are profound problems in the use of English in Nigeria, such as inadequate teaching of English as a second language due to lack of mastery of the text's meaning and grammatical structures.

On the other hand, students must use approaches or strategies to interact or connect with the text to understand the context and comprehend its meaning (Demirel, 2022). Strategic competence involves monitoring, judging, organizing, and applying strategies to process text (Ghafournia & Afghari, 2013). Moreover, Obiegbu (2018) explained that comprehension is a process of making sense of words, sentences, and connected text. Therefore, students need reading competence to understand and convert the text into a meaningful experience. Birnbaum

and Kröner (2022) found that reading competence, motivation, and attitude can contribute to pleasure in reading and writing.

Indeed, the ability of a student to read opens enormous and outstanding opportunities in this world, with significant challenges. Learning to read does not happen in a single day, where the next day, the person can correctly pronounce the words and easily make a judgment out of the text. This requires a particular period to learn how to read correctly. A student should be familiar with and aware of the phonemes or sounds of the letters to learn to read. This is the most essential part of reading. Once students know the sound, they can identify the meaningful combination of the sounds and the pattern.

Reading ability is essential for academic performance as well as lifetime learning. However, a considerable percentage of students, known as struggling readers, need help developing adequate reading abilities. Additionally, struggling readers may suffer from decreased motivation, frustration, and low self-esteem because of recurrent problems and scholastic disappointments. These emotional difficulties may delay their advancement even more. These are the barriers that will hold down their development.

Struggling Readers

English is prevalent across the various sectors in the Philippines, including education, media, and workplaces. However, an educational crisis, as evidenced by international assessments like in reading for Grade 5 wherein SEA-PLM (2019) found that the Philippines ranked 5th out of 6 participating countries and is one with the highest share of underperformers among all PISA-participating nations and economies, where more than 80% of students did not achieve a basic level of reading proficiency (PISA, 2018). Additionally, the Department of Education, Philippines (2020) revealed in 2019 that PHIL-IRI results, with 70,000 elementary students reported as struggling readers in both English and Filipino. National exams can help teachers prepare students for standardized tests (Chen, 2020), but the low reading competence remains disturbing.

These struggling readers often face challenges in grasping and expressing information due to difficulties in processing messages conveyed by others. Their reading proficiency lagged, resulting in poor exam scores, discouragement, and minimal scholastic progress (Tingley, 2021). This disparity created a significant gap between high-performing and struggling students.

Moreover, struggling readers often have a limited language repertoire, hindering their comprehension. Additionally, they may need help with context-dependent terms and subtle meanings and extracting information from texts, including making inferences and summarizing key concepts. Decoding words can be slow and laborious due to difficulties with sight words, phonics, and sound blending, all contributing factors to their struggle in reading (Dela Cruz, 2022).

Hence, a study by Seidenberg (2017) highlighted the importance of early intervention and the role of phonemic awareness in improving reading outcomes. He emphasized that children who struggle with reading often have difficulties with phonological processing, suggesting that targeted phonics instruction can be particularly beneficial. Moreover, roughly 20% of children struggle with reading fluency and comprehension (Jones et al., 2021). This can be due to various factors, including difficulty with phonemic awareness (understanding the sounds of letters) or decoding (sounding out words).

With the proper support and resources, struggling readers can develop the skills to unlock the joys of reading and explore the vast world of stories waiting for them. Addressing the diverse needs of these students through tailored interventions can significantly improve their reading abilities and help them become confident and independent readers.

Finally, struggling readers or at-risk students require significant attention from teachers to improve their proficiency. With intervention, these students will stay caught up (Glende, 2013), affecting their overall academic progress (Martins & Capellini, 2021). Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses is crucial for innovative reading programs, which should align with their proficiency levels. Formative assessments help monitor progress, and summative tests evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

Synthesis of the State-of-the-Art

In this study, teachers' competence was comprised of professional and personal skills based on (DO 42, s. 2017; IGI et al.; Fauth et al., 2019; Jentsch & Konig, 2022; OECD, 2017; Laurito, 2022; Chetty et al., 2014; Sultan & Shafi, 2014; Lomsdal et al., 2022; Aindra, 2022); and possessing adequate reading instructions on the five reading skills (Ellis, 2019; USAID, 2020; Obiegbu, 2018; Kiptoo et al., 2017); and adequate training to assist struggling readers (Rupley et al., 2019; Belsky, 2023; Rapoport, 2016; Sun, 2021; Karadag, 2014; Zhu et al., 2020)

Meanwhile, innovative reading programs improved students reading performance based on the studies of Llego, 2022; Kashef et al., 2012; Naz and Murad, 2017; Meza et al., 2022; Lee and Leu, 2023; Djik et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Al-Harbi et al., 2023; Lai et al., 2024; Foehr, 2019; Dowhowery, 2021; Zhang, 2023; Fuchs et al., 2022; Briones, 2020; Metro, 2019; NASEM, 2000; Tingrey, 2021; Peters et al., 2021, Chen, 2020; and Clavel and Mediaville, 2020.

Moreover, the study by Diamond (2006), Ghalebi et al. (2021), Silver at al. (2023), Genc-Ersoy (2021) emphasized the literacy skills of students while Learning for Justice (n.d.), Safrinti et al. (2020); Nardo (2017); Almagro at al. (2024); Banditvilla (2020); Dwiningtivas at al. (2020); Nguyen (2022) and Guetterman at al. (2018) cited in Fung et al. (2021) studies focused on the effectiveness of strategies used and employed by the teachers and Aguilera (2024) and Cpatete (2024) revealed that reading competence of students was improved by intervention programs.

Gap Bridged by the Study

This study aims to investigate how teachers in the Garchitorena district utilize innovative reading programs. Extensive research has been conducted to understand the implementation of these programs, drawing from related literature and previous studies. While there is a wealth of research on implementing reading programs, comprehensive studies have yet to explicitly focus on utilizing innovative reading programs in secondary schools within the Garchitorena district. These programs are more commonly implemented in elementary schools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework presented in Figure 1 highlights the relationship between Medley's Theory of Teacher Competence and Routledge's Implementation Science Theory in determining the effectiveness of an innovative reading program. This framework underscores the idea that both teacher competence and effective implementation strategies are critical factors in the success of educational interventions, particularly in reading programs.

Teacher competence encompasses the consistent knowledge, abilities, and skills a teacher possesses (Medley, 1977). According to Villegas (2022), Medley's teacher competence theory comprises five main categories: instructional skills, guidance skills, classroom management, and personal and professional skills. Instructional skills involve delivering practical lessons and fostering student understanding, while guidance skills focus on providing support and direction to students. Classroom management entails maintaining a conducive learning environment, and personal and professional skills include the teacher's ongoing development and ethical standards.

This study is anchored on teachers' competence in handling reading programs, which supports the idea that teachers should possess comprehensive capabilities across these categories. By understanding and enhancing these competencies, particularly in the context of innovative reading programs, we can ensure that teachers are well-equipped to foster literacy and improve educational outcomes. This foundation emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development and targeted training to meet the evolving demands of education.

This study also aligns with Routledge's (2024) Implementation Science Theory, which emphasizes the strategies used in implementing and evaluating interventions and discusses the outcomes of these

implementations. According to Harvard Catalyst, Implementation Strategies (IS) are the detailed procedures for adopting, integrating, and sustaining evidence-based interventions – essentially, the "how-to" components of driving change. Furthermore, the EIF Evaluation Hub (2021) notes that implementation evaluation examines whether critical components, including resources, activities, and population reach, are viable and achievable.

By integrating Medley's theory of teacher competence with Routledge's Implementation Science Theory, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the effectiveness of innovative reading programs. It highlights teachers' need to possess strong competencies in instructional skills, guidance skills, classroom management, and personal and professional development to implement these programs successfully. Additionally, it underscores the importance of detailed implementation strategies and rigorous evaluation to ensure that resources and activities are appropriately allocated and that the intended population is effectively reached.

Ultimately, this framework provides a holistic perspective on improving reading programs. It emphasizes that for an educational initiative to be truly effective, both human factors (teacher competence) and structural factors (implementation science principles) must be optimized. Schools and policymakers can use this framework as a guide in designing teacher training programs and ensuring the structured and sustainable implementation of reading interventions. By doing so, it seeks to enhance educational practices and support the ongoing development of teachers in the Garchitorena district.

These theories served as the framework for determining the effectiveness of teachers' innovative reading programs to improve students' reading proficiency.
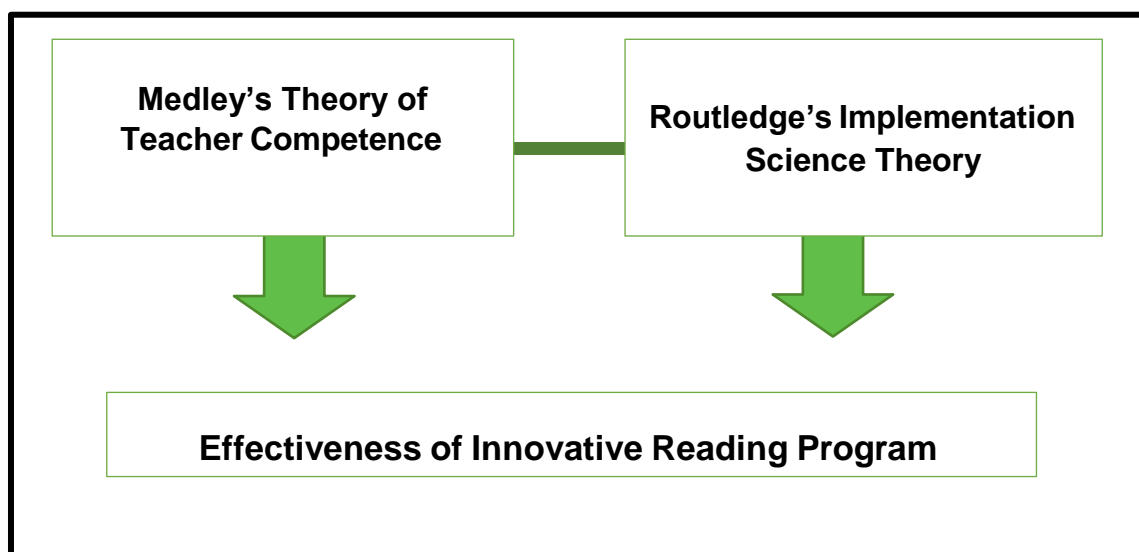

Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm

Conceptual Framework

Innovative reading programs involve implementing unique solutions to address the challenges of struggling students with low reading skills and inefficient study habits (Obro et al., 2021). Hence, the conceptual paradigm in Figure 2 presents a structured approach to understanding the essential elements that contribute to an Innovative Reading Program's success. It highlights the interconnectedness of teacher competencies, instructional strategies, strategy effectiveness, and program impact, each playing a crucial role in enhancing students' literacy skills.

At its core, Professional Competencies refer to teachers' instructional skills, guidance skills, classroom management, and personal and professional development (Villegas, 2022). Effective reading interventions depend on well-trained educators who can adapt teaching methods, implement differentiated instruction, and create an engaging learning environment to support struggling readers.

Next, the Teachers' Strategies Used stage focuses on instructional methods such as phonics-based instruction, guided reading, and home reading reinforcement. Strategies must align with students' needs and incorporate evidence-based approaches like Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics or the Marungko Method to enhance fluency and comprehension.

The third component, Effectiveness of the Strategies, involves assessing instructional techniques through pre-tests, post-tests, and student progress monitoring. Regular evaluations ensure the program remains responsive and effective in addressing literacy challenges.

Finally, the Impact of the Innovative Reading Program measures overall success, including improvements in reading comprehension, fluency, and student confidence. Beyond students, the program also benefits teachers, parents, and school literacy initiatives, contributing to higher academic performance and long-term reading motivation.

This framework underscores that a reading program's success relies on a combination of teacher competency, instructional methods, effective strategies, and measurable impact. It promotes ongoing evaluation and refinement to ensure students receive effective literacy instruction, leading to sustainable academic growth.

Thus, the conceptual paradigm serves as the foundation of this study, focusing on how teachers in the Garchitorena district utilize innovative reading programs to address the needs of struggling readers and improve their reading competence.
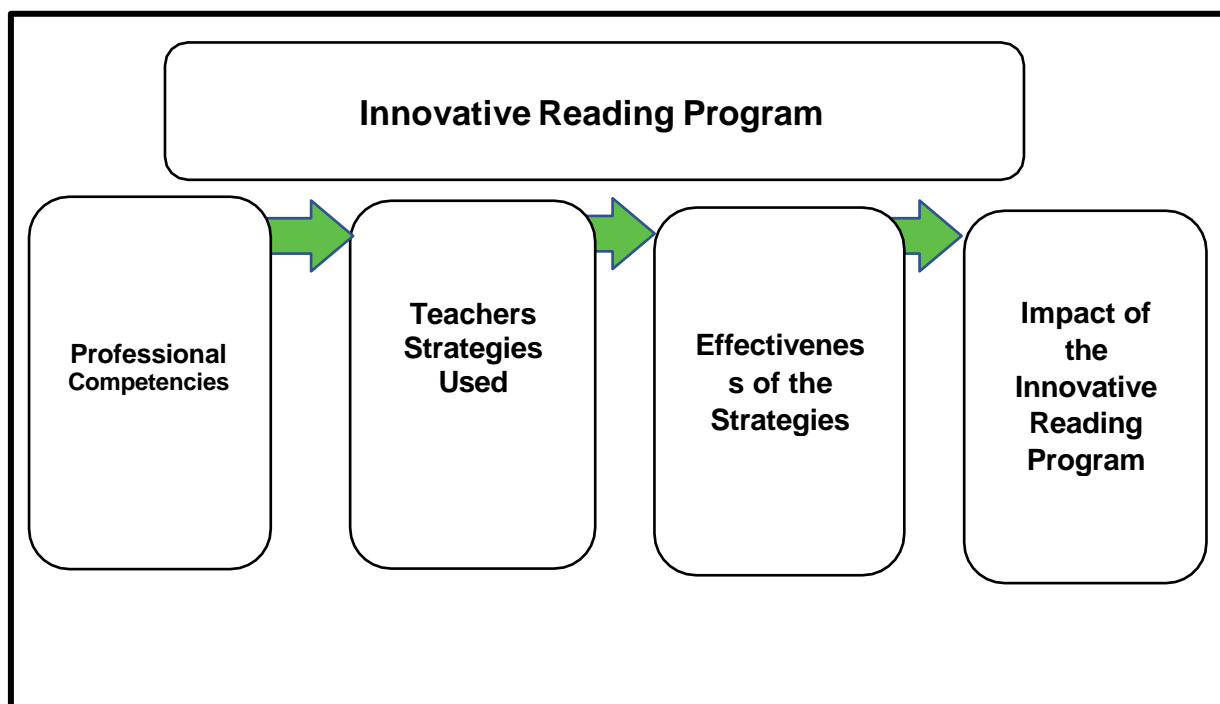

Figure 2. Conceptual Paradigm

Definition of Terms

To enhance clarity and facilitate a better understanding of this study, the following terms are defined both conceptually and operationally:

Innovative Reading Program - U.S. Dept. of Education (n.d.) defined that this program is designed to engage students in the learning process that makes reading learning more effective and enjoyable. In this study, an innovative reading program involves interactively introducing new concepts to help students improve their reading skills in a classroom setting.

Teachers' Competence - Teachers' competence includes teachers' professional qualifications and expertise in effectively implementing and teaching reading programs (Sultan and Shafi, 2014). In this study, teachers'

competence refers to the knowledge, abilities, skills, and behaviors that enable teachers to proficiently and creatively respond to various teaching situations.

Reading Competence - Students can decode words and independently understand and interpret the material they read (Smith et al., 2021). This study meanwhile, defines reading competence as the ability of an individual to read fluently and comprehend the text.

Strategy - Strategy refers to teachers' methods or techniques to facilitate reading instruction and improve students' reading abilities (Almoslamani, 2022). In this study, a strategy is a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a primary or overall aim.

Struggling Reader - Struggling readers as primarily a decoder who needs help critically analyzing and understanding the content of the text (Martins & Capellini, 2021). This study defines a struggling reader as an individual who cannot read fluently or comprehend the text they read.

Deficit Reader - A deficit student who accurately and automatically read fewer than 30% of the individual words presented during the assessment tasks (RM No. 363, s. 2023). This study defines deficit reader as a student who demonstrates significant challenges in reading proficiency.

Coping Reader - A coping reader has limited vocabulary, which hinders his or her ability to understand and engage even with simple texts. (RM No. 363, s. 2023). In this study, this refers to a student who has difficulty identifying and reading simple words.

Emerging Reader – As defined by the Rapid Literacy Assessment (RLA), an emerging reader is a student who accurately and automatically reads at least 50% of high-frequency words in reading phrases (RM No. 363, s. 2023). In this study, a student who is progressing in his or her reading skills and require support to enhance fluency and comprehension.

Established Reader – Is a student who demonstrates strong comprehension and fluency, and consistently meets or exceeds the expected literacy standards (RM No. 363, s. 2023). In this study, a student who consistently exhibits a high level of proficiency in reading and literacy is considered an established reader.

Utilization - It is the process of applying new or existing ideas and methods in teaching to improve educational outcomes (Baguio et al., 2024). In the context of this study, utilization refers to making practical and effective use of something.

Instructional Skills - Instructional skills is the adaptive application of teaching techniques and strategies tailored to specific learning objectives, student characteristics, lesson mastery, suitability of instructional materials, and practical application of lessons (Mallillin et al., 2023). This study defines a comprehensive set of abilities and competencies of the educators who effectively possess, deliver, and facilitate learning experiences within educational settings.

Classroom Management: This study refers to the adaptable implementation of strategies and techniques to maintain a productive environment through systematic routines, monitoring student progress and characteristics, and fostering independent work (Ahmed & Pierre, 2024). In this study, classroom management is the the skillful organization and coordination of classroom activities, resources, and interactions to create a conducive learning environment.

Guidance skills – Is assessing students' needs, providing appropriate resources, and monitoring progress, as observed through student feedback and performance improvements (Parveen & Akhtar, 2023). This study defines this term as the abilities and techniques educators use to support students in solving problems and achieving personal and academic goals.

Personal and Professional Skills – These are skills based on teachers' effectiveness in managing their personal development and professional responsibilities (Thompson, 2024). This study identifies self-awareness, emotional intelligence, time management, and professional skills, including job-specific

competencies, communication, teamwork, and leadership, as personal and professional skills that are crucial for teachers' competence.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains the research design, respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of the study.

Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed an explanatory sequential design utilizing mixed methodologies. This research design was used to comprehensively understand the teachers' competence in teaching reading to struggling readers. Qualitative methods such as FGD and KII were used to triangulate and confirm students' and school heads' responses and perceptions of teachers' competence. On the other hand, the survey was used to determine teachers' competence, methods, and strategies used in reading programs. A score analysis of the percentage of the Outstanding responses was used to measure teachers' professional competence and the reading program's effectiveness, while the students' scores in RLA were measured using the Wilcoxon signed test to analyze students' reading performance. This design is appropriate for the study as it integrates both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis through the complementary strengths of each approach.

Location of the Study

The study is conducted at Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School in the Garchitorena district. Bahi National High School is 11 kilometers from downtown Garchitorena, while Pambuhan National High School is downtown. These schools were purposefully selected for the study because no prior research has been conducted in these areas. As high schools, they must offer advanced learning competencies to their students. However, these schools experience flocks of struggling students who are faced daily with a high poverty rate and limited access to the internet and books, which often force these students to leave or miss school to earn money instead. These factors make the location unique for researching teachers' use of reading programs and their effectiveness on students' reading abilities.

Respondents

In this study, 60 respondents participated, comprising four teachers, 29 Grade 7 struggling students, one school head from Pambuhan National High School, eight teachers, 17 Grade 7 struggling students, and one school head from Bahi National High School. The teachers' background information was collected, such as the highest educational attainment, specialization, number of years teaching reading, list of relevant trainings and seminars attended, professional teachers' competencies, teachers' implementation of the innovative reading programs, and the strategies used in the reading program.

Sampling Methodology

The respondents in this study are two school heads, 12 teachers, and 46 students, purposively selected based on their qualifications. Both school heads of the Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School were selected as they were the authorities to foresee and respond to teachers' competence. Meanwhile, eight teachers from Bahi National High School and four from Pambuhan National High School were selected based on the following qualifications: they have a subject load at the Grade 7 level, and their involvement in the programs was pure volunteerism. Additionally, 17 students came from Bahi National High School, while 29 were bona fide students of Pambuhan National High School. These students were selected based on their RLA pre-test scores, which were 25 or below, with a reading ability level of deficit and coping.

Criteria for Determining Struggling Readers.

The students who had undergone FGD were selected based on the pool of 46 struggling students and volunteered themselves with signed parental consent to join the focus group discussion. Additionally, focus

group discussion respondents were selected based on the following criteria: students who had participated in the reading program, with some showing significant improvement and others showing no improvement during the program, and as assessed by the RLA pretest and posttest.

The Overview of Project RIPARU and Project MMK

Project RIPARU (Reading Intervention Program to Amplify Readers' Understanding) aimed to assess and improve the reading and comprehension skills of Grade 7 learners. The program began with the RLA assessment, identifying struggling readers through oral and comprehension tests. Of the 77 students tested, 17 scored 25 or below, classifying them as struggling readers, while 60 students scored between 26-50, meeting the criteria for good readers. Among the struggling readers, 5 were at the deficit level, and 12 were at the coping level, all exhibiting Level 1 reading behavior, characterized by word-by-word reading or lower proficiency. Thus, these students were enrolled in intensive reading sessions using *Alpha-Phonics for Beginners* to improve pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension.

To ensure parental involvement, a face-to-face orientation was conducted, where English teachers, subject teachers, and Grade 7 advisers discussed the students' test results, the program's objectives, and the reading intervention schedule. Communication letters were also sent to parents, advisers, and stakeholders. Identified students were placed in a special reading class for two months, focusing solely on structured reading instruction.

The intervention was held in the school library and Grade 7 classrooms, with sessions scheduled around students' subjects. English teachers and other subject teachers facilitated lessons using *Blumenfeld's Alpha-Phonics (A Primer for Beginning Readers)*, starting with alphabet sound mastery before progressing to word reading. Daily phonics drills reinforced letter-sound recognition. Additionally, home reading practice was encouraged to strengthen learning and promote family involvement. With over 100 lessons, students dedicated their daily routine to reading exercises.

Meanwhile, Project MMK, also known as "Madya Magbasa Kita," was a reading program initiative led by the four dedicated Grade 7 teacher-advisers of Pambuhan National High School. These teachers voluntarily devoted an hour every Saturday to help struggling readers improve their literacy skills. The program was conducted through home visitations, where they traveled to students' houses in nearby barangays, often requiring 30-40 minutes of travel time. Despite the challenges, they conducted these sessions using their resources and expenses.

The Marungko Approach served as the primary reading material during the intervention. This approach, which emphasizes the phonetic method, is designed to help early readers decode words by introducing letters and sounds in a specific sequence. It begins with the most commonly used letters in Filipino (such as *m, s, a, o, i, u*) before progressing to more complex ones. Focusing on phonemic awareness and gradual letter recognition, the Marungko Approach enables struggling readers to develop confidence in reading simple words before advancing to more challenging texts. Through this method, Project MMK aimed to build foundational reading skills and foster a love for reading among students.

Data Gathering Procedure

Pre-Data Gathering

The researcher sought approval from the school heads of Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School to collect data from their existing reading programs: Project RIPARU (Reading Intervention Program to Amplify Readers' Understanding) and Project MMK (Madya Magbasa Kita). The researcher also requested the school heads the names of the 12 teachers implementing reading programs (8 from Bahi NHS and 4 from Pambuhan NHS), along with data on 46 struggling students (17 from Bahi NHS and 29 from Pambuhan NHS), including their RLA pre-test and post-test scores and reading behavior results.

The researcher used an adapted, modified, and validated 4-point Likert scale survey questionnaire for students' assessment of teachers' professional competencies in terms of instructional skills, classroom management,

guidance skills, and personal and professional skills and another survey questionnaire for teachers sought the respondents' information such as highest educational attainment, specialization, number of years teaching reading, and list of relevant training and seminars attended; and teachers' utilization of the reading program, with indicators: (a). During implementation, and (b) teachers' strategies.

The researcher also conducted a focus group discussion and prepared eight questions to triangulate teachers' responses on indicators under methods and strategies used in the innovative reading program. Also, a key informant interview with eight questions was prepared before the data gathering for the school head to answer regarding their school's reading program.

During Data Gathering

The researcher distributed the survey questionnaires to the 12 teachers via Google Forms. Teachers answered a survey about their use of innovative reading programs, focusing on implementation and strategies. Meanwhile, the researcher visited each student's home individually to collect student responses, as they were on vacation in Garchitorena. Each respondent completed a survey on teachers' professional competencies. The researcher thoroughly explained all indicators to the students in their native language to ensure they understood the English and Tagalog transcripts in the questionnaires. Additionally, eight students participated in a focus group discussion, and two school heads were interviewed to validate the teachers' responses. The students' pre-test and post-test scores and reading behavior results were statistically analyzed using a Wilcoxon signed test to determine significant improvements in reading programs. This data was used for the result analysis.

Meanwhile, the researcher followed the following steps for the focus group discussion before initiating the session: First, the researcher prepared eight questions, such as two engagement questions: What is your current reading level? and What do you observe with your reading skills now? Five exploratory questions: Who, in particular, has helped your reading skills? What strengths have you learned during the innovative reading program? When your teachers teach you to read, how do they carry out the instructions? How do you feel about the consequences of not reading at your age? And one exit question: Is there anything else you would like to say about how important it is to undergo an innovative reading program for struggling students?

Next, eight student informants were identified. Finally, permission was obtained from both the parents and students, who signed consent forms to participate and have their information collected and recorded.

Additionally, this study followed the protocols for conducting the focus group discussion based on Eliot and Associates (2005): students will do the talking, there will be no right or wrong answers, answers will be confidential, and the session will be recorded. Additionally, students were given snacks as a simple incentive for their participation during the focus group discussion. This was facilitated to support problems 2 and 3 regarding implementing innovative reading programs and the effectiveness of teachers' teaching strategies for struggling students.

Moreover, the researcher interviewed the school heads via Facebook Messenger for the structured key informant interview because the respondents were attending leadership training and were unavailable for in-person interviews. Consent was obtained from the school heads, and the study's aim was explained to them. The researcher prepared eight questions: four key questions: Do you have a regular assessment evaluating students' reading levels? Do you agree that the school must have a reading program? What are your programs that address struggling students? Do you agree that your teachers are highly competent in teaching reading? Two probing questions: What support do you give to the teachers? How can a principal help teachers make the reading program successful? There are two closing questions: Do you think teachers handling reading programs in your school are practical? Do you believe that the reading intervention in your school improves the students' reading proficiency?

Students and school heads were encouraged to answer in Bicol or Tagalog to express their thoughts freely and confidently. To ensure data accuracy, all responses were transcribed verbatim using a mobile recording application.

Post Data Gathering

For the quantitative data, the answers from the survey questionnaires for the students and teachers were collated and tallied, and the percentages of Outstanding responses per indicator were computed based on highest to lowest. In addition, the respondents' information was calculated based on the frequency and percentage. Moreover, the RLA scores of both students from Pambuhan National High School and Bahi National High School were retrieved from their respective reading coordinators with the approval of their school heads.

For qualitative data, the students' focus group discussion and school heads' key informant interviews were transcribed, translated into English, and analyzed using deductive thematic analysis to interpret the results following Routledge's Implementation Science Theory as the framework. A narrative discussion was conducted to summarize and highlight the answers to the key points given by the school heads.

Additionally, this study followed Fung's (2021) 6 steps in deductive-thematic data analysis: Step 1 – decide on a theory to be used, Step 2 – identify the main themes of the theory, Step – 3 identify the keywords of the themes, Step – 4 identify the codes from the data gathered, Step – 5, categorize the codes based on the themes, Step – 6 write the story based on the themes.

Data Generating Instruments

This study used modified and adapted questionnaires. The first questionnaire for students was adapted and modified from Villegas (2022). The survey questionnaire for students comprises 24 items, assessing the teacher's competence in instructional skills, classroom management, guidance, and personal and professional skills.

The second questionnaire was for teachers and was composed of two parts; the first part was composed of respondents' information, such as highest educational attainment, specialization, and a list of relevant training and seminars on reading. The second part of the questionnaire was about utilizing innovative reading programs with two indicators. Letter A indicators are composed of 21 items used to assess the teachers' implementation of innovative reading programs, which were adapted from the study of Merto (2019), while Letter B indicators are composed of 18 items used to assess teachers' strategies about teachers' strategies that were adapted from the study of Hasbrouck and Denton (2005).

Meanwhile, the second technique used in this study was a focus group discussion. A total of 8 struggling students of Pambuhan National High School and Bahi National High School are the respondents of the FGD. The informants were asked eight questions in 3 categories: engagement, exploratory, and exit. A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research method and data collection technique where a selected group of individuals discusses a specific topic or issue in depth, facilitated by an external moderator (Swiss TPH, 2017).

Moreover, the third technique used in the study was a structured key informant interview. Two school heads were the respondents. The informants were asked eight modified questions: essential, probing, and exit questions. Additionally, the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (n.d.) described vital informant interviews as qualitative, in-depth interviews with persons who know what is happening in the neighborhood.

Finally, a Wilcoxon signed test was utilized to assess students' reading performance in the innovative reading programs. The pre-test and post-test and the reading behavior results of 29 struggling students of Pambuhan National High School and 17 struggling students of Bahi National High School were collected and used for analysis and interpretation.

Reliability Test on the Adapted and Modified Questionnaires

The researcher asked permission to adapt and modify the questionnaires from their different studies. A few changes were made to the questionnaire following content validation to ensure its timeliness and relevance. An expert university professor and a public high school researcher-teacher evaluated the questionnaire. Their feedback was sought to determine the study's true objectives. After validation, revision was made to the 66

questions; 3 questions were found to be similar and merged as one, and 1 question was rejected because it was not significant. Thus, the final questionnaires were now composed of 63 questions.

According to Lavrakas (2008), a questionnaire is primarily a series of standardized questions, known as items, which follow a preset pattern to collect individual data on one or more specific subjects. The questionnaire is typically sent in a standardized fashion, that is, in the same manner to all survey respondents.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Results

Parts	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Methods Teachers Use	0.91	Remove indicator #12
Teacher Strategies	0.964	All indicators accepted

Furthermore, survey questionnaires are an approach for gathering statistical information about a population's characteristics, attitudes, or behaviors through a pre-planned sequence of questions. To ensure that all items of each indicator are reliable, the survey questionnaire underwent a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha.

Descriptive Equivalent of the Likert Scale

Table 2. The descriptive equivalent of the scale of the proportion

Scale	Descriptive Equivalent
4	Outstanding/Very Effective
3	Very Satisfactory/Effective
2	Average/Slightly Effective
1	Very Poor/Not Effective

Table 2 shows the descriptive equivalent of the scale of the proportion of the 63-item survey questionnaires used in this research for students with 24 items. For teachers with 39 items on a 4-point Likert scale with the following interpretations as follows: A scale of 4, having an understanding of Outstanding/Very Effective, a Scale of 3, having an interpretation of Very Satisfactory/Effective, Scale of 2, having an understanding of Average/Slightly Effective, and a scale of 1, having an interpretation of Very Poor/Not Effective.

Descriptive Equivalent of Score in Rapid Literacy Assessment

Table 3. The descriptive equivalent of scores in the RLA (RM No. 363, s. 2023)

Score	Reading Ability	Score	Reading Behavior
40-50	Establish	Level 4	Reads with automaticity, accuracy, and proper expression.
26-39	Emerging	Level 3	Reads accurately but does not observe punctuation marks or show signs of hesitation
8-25	Coping	Level 2	Reads words by chunks
0-7	Deficit	Level 1	Reads word by word or lower

Table 3 shows the descriptive equivalent of the score in the RLA based on RM. No. 363, s. 2023. To identify the reading ability of the students, the scoring guides below were followed: 40-50= Establish, 26-39 = Emerging, 8-25 = Coping, 0-7 = Deficit. Meanwhile, the following scoring criteria were observed to get the student's reading behavior: Level 4 = Reads with automaticity, accuracy, and proper expression. Level 3 = Reads accurately but does not observe punctuation marks or shows signs of hesitation. Level 2 = Reads words by chunk, Level 1 = Reads word by word or lower.

Data Analysis

The researcher used descriptive statistics such as percentages of Outstanding responses to analyze the data gathered for teachers' professional competencies from the scores of every indicator in terms of instructional skills, classroom management, guidance skills, and personal and professional skills. Additionally, frequency and percentage were used to analyze respondents' information separately from Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School to determine their personal and professional backgrounds, facilitating the connection between each school's teachers and their effectiveness in conducting reading programs.

Moreover, the data gathered from the teachers' answers in the questionnaire for the methods and strategies in innovative reading programs were assessed by computing the indicators' percentage of the outstanding responses. The researcher validated the teachers' responses through a thematic-deductive approach analysis of the students' responses in focus group discussions and the school heads' responses in key informant interviews.

Furthermore, focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data from struggling students. Deductive Thematic Analysis was employed, starting with predefined themes derived from existing literature and theoretical frameworks based on Routledge's Implementation Science Theory, to explore and interpret patterns and themes within the transcribed FGD and KII data. The recorded FGD sessions were transcribed, and the KII transcriptions were systematically analyzed. The researcher utilized a deductive approach, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and perspectives expressed by informants concerning the teachers' utilization of innovative reading program implementation and strategies. This deductive thematic analysis provided a structured and theory-driven exploration of student experience and perspectives in the innovative reading program. Themes related to guided reading and repeated exposure, phonics-based instructions, scaffolding learning and incremental progression, confidence and development-focused, effective implementation, instructional effectiveness, comprehension challenges, improved reading fluency, increased motivation and confidence, and successful innovative reading programs emerged within the predefined categories. This method allowed the researcher to uncover the multifaceted aspects of the struggles faced by learners and provided valuable insights into potential solutions.

Lastly, the effectiveness of the innovative reading programs was assessed separately using a Wilcoxon signed rank test on the pre-test and post-test results, as well as the reading behavior results, of 17 struggling students at Bahi National High School and 29 struggling students at Pambuhan National High School.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study, including the data gathered on professional competencies, the implementation of innovative reading programs, the strategies used, and how reading programs effectively enhance students' reading performance.

Respondents' Profile

The table below shows the teacher-respondents' professional and personal backgrounds based on age, gender, highest educational attainment, specialization, and related training and seminars attended.

Table 4. High School Teachers' Profile at Bahi NHS & Pambuhan NHS					
Personal and Professional Background		**Bahi NHS (N=8)**		**Pambuhan NHS (N=4)**	
		F	**%**	**F**	**%**
Age	20-30 years old	4	33.33%	0	0.00%
	31-40 years old	3	25.00%	4	33.33%
	41-50 years old	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

	51-60 years old	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Gender	Female	7	58.33%	4	33.33%
	Male	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
	Bachelor's Degree with M.A. units	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
	Master's Degree	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Master's Degree with Doctoral units	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Doctoral	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Specialization	English	2	16.67%	1	8.33%
	Filipino	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
	Social Studies	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
	Agricultural and Fishery Arts	1	8.33%	1	8.33%
	Science	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
	Mathematics	2	16.67%	0	0.00%
	MAPEH	0	0.00%	1	8.33%
Trainings	None	1	8.33%	3	25.00%
	1 to 2	6	50.00%	1	8.33%
	3 to 4	1	8.33%	0	0.00%
	over 5	0	0	0	0

Table 4 shows the demographic profile of eight teachers at Bahi National High School, which reflects a young and predominantly female workforce, with 33.33% aged 20-30 and 58.33% female. Most teachers (50%) have earned units in their master's degree, but none have completed a master's or doctoral degree, highlighting a need for further academic advancement aligned to reading instruction. This notable absence of advanced degrees and higher levels of training in teaching reading emphasizes the needs to address areas for potential growth in the teachers' professional competence.

On the other hand, the teaching staff at Pambuhan National High School is small and entirely composed of four female educators, all aged 31-40. While all teachers have pursued master's degree units (33.33%), none have completed a master's or doctoral degree, suggesting a need for further academic advancement. Specialization is diverse but limited, with one teacher each in English, Science, Agricultural and Fishery Arts, and MAPEH, while no representation exists for Filipino, Social Studies, and Mathematics.

Additionally, a notable concern is lack of training participation, as 75% of the teachers have had no professional training, and only one has attended 1-2 training sessions, such as a national learning camp, and reading seminars. This highlights an urgent need for capacity-building initiatives to enhance instructional competencies and professional development. Expanding subject specialization and structured training programs would further strengthen the quality of education at the school, especially in ensuring the success of the reading program. Consequently, a notable absence of advanced degrees and professional development aligned to reading was noted. The diverse specializations are a strength, but some gaps need to be addressed to

ensure a well-rounded implementation of the reading programs. This profile indicates areas for professional growth and timely development to effectively teach reading.

Professional Competencies

The table below shows the teacher-respondent's professional competencies in instructional skills, classroom management, guidance skills, and professional and personal skills.

Table 5.1 Students' Assessment of the Instructional Skills of the Teachers at Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School		
Indicators	**Percentage Response of O & VS**	
	Bahi	**Pambuhan**
My/Our teachers…		
1. Presents the objectives of the lesson for each session.	94.1%	65.5%
(1. Naglalahad ng mga layunin ng aralin para sa bawat sesyon.)		
2. Presents ideas/concepts clearly and convincingly and within the student's intellectual level.	88.2%	51.7%
(2. Ang guro ay naglalahad ng mga ideya/konsepto ng malinaw at nakakumbinsi at sa intelektwal na antas ng mag-aaral.)		
3. Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter in the delivery of the lesson.	88.2%	55.2%
(3. Nagpapakita ng kasanayan sa asignatura sa pamamagitan ng kumpyansa ng pagtuturo ng mga aralin.		
4. Presents well-organized materials that meet students' interests and needs.	94.1%	62.1%
(4. Naglalahad ng mga organisadong materyales na nakakatugon sa mga interes at pangangailangan ng mga mag-aaral.)		
5. Presents lessons using appropriate methods/techniques to ensure students' understanding and assimilation of lessons, like reading.	100%	69.0%
(5. Naglalahad ng mga aralin gamit ang naaangkop na pamamaraan / pamamaraan upang matiyak ang pag-unawa ng mga mag-aaral		
at pag-bagay sa mga aralin tulad ng pagbabasa.)		
6. Provides opportunities for application of concepts to demonstrate understanding of the lesson.	100%	69.0%
(6. Nagbibigay ng aplikasyon ng mga kopsepto upang maipakita ang kaalaman sa aralin.		
7. Provides differentiated assignments to students if necessary.	100%	82.8%
(7. Nagbibigay ng iba't ibang asignatura sa mga mag- aaral kung kinakailangan.)		

Legend: Shown only the percentage response of 4 (Outstanding/Very Effective) in % of total.

The students' assessment of teachers' instructional skills at Bahi National High School reflects an outstanding level of performance. This indicates that teachers effectively presented and delivered lessons, provided applications of the lessons, and provided differentiated activities.

The highest-rated aspects of percentage (100%) highlight teachers' strengths in using appropriate teaching methods, providing opportunities for concept application, and assigning differentiated tasks when necessary. These results suggest that teachers successfully cater to diverse learning needs and promote student understanding.

Meanwhile, the lowest-rated percentage indicators (88.2%) pertain to lesson clarity and subject mastery. While still outstanding, these areas suggest that slight improvements in communication and confidence in content delivery could further enhance instructional effectiveness.

The results affirm that overall, Bahi NHS teachers demonstrate strong instructional skills, effective lesson planning, and adaptability to students' needs. Continuous professional development in refining lesson clarity and deepening subject expertise can further elevate the quality of instruction.

On the other hand, the table also presents the assessment of teachers' instructional skills at Pambuhan NHS based on students' evaluations, highlighting the highest rating (82.8%) given for the provision of differentiated assignments when necessary, indicating that students appreciate personalized learning approaches. Meanwhile, the lowest rating (3.48) given was for presenting ideas and concepts clearly and convincingly, suggesting a slight area for improvement in ensuring clarity and comprehension.

Moreover, all indicators received an "Outstanding" interpretation, reflecting overall strong instructional performance. Generally, the average rating reflects a high level of satisfaction with the teachers' performance, indicating a strong and effective teaching approach that meets students' needs and interests. This positive feedback highlights the effectiveness of the teachers' pedagogical strategies and their ability to meet students' academic needs. However, continuous improvement in areas like concept clarity could further enhance instructional quality.

Table 5.2 Students' Assessment of the Classroom Management of the Teachers at Bahi National High School & Pambuhan National High School		
Indicators	**Percentage Response of O & VS**	
	Bahi	**Pambuhan**
My/Our teachers…		
1. Starts and ends class promptly.	29.4%	13.8%
(1. Nagsisimula at nagtatapos sa klase kaagad.)		
2. Provides an atmosphere conducive to learning.	94.1%	58.6%
(2. Nagbibigay ng kapaligirang nakakatulong sa pagkatuto.)		
3. Follows a systematic schedule of routine activities.	100%	51.7%
(3. Sumusunod sa isang sistematikong iskedyul ng mga gawain.)		

4. Checks students' work closely and frequently. (4. Sinusuri ang gawain ng mga estudyante na mabuti at madalas.)	100%	82.8%
5. Stimulates students' respect and regard for the teacher. (5. Pinasisigla ang paggalang at pagtingin ng mga mag-aaral sa guro.)	100%	62.1%
6. Let students do their assigned tasks with minimum supervision from the teacher. (6. Nagbibigay-daan sa mga mag-aaral na gawin ang kanilang mga nakatalaga na gawain na may konting na paggabay mula sa guro.)	100%	93.1%

Legend: Shown only the percentage response of 4 (Outstanding/Very Effective) in % of total.

The Bahi National High School students' responses to teachers' guidance skills revealed an outstanding overall performance. Teachers excel in creating a conducive learning environment, following systematic routines, closely monitoring student work, and encouraging respect and independence among students, all rated outstanding (100%). However, starting and ending class promptly received the lowest rating (29.4%), suggesting room for improvement in time management.

Overall, the results affirm that teachers effectively guide and support students, fostering discipline and responsibility while maintaining a structured and engaging learning environment.

Meanwhile, the table presents the students' evaluation of the teachers at Pambuhan NHS. The highest rating (93.1%) was given for allowing students to perform their assigned tasks with minimal supervision, suggesting that teachers effectively promote student independence and responsibility. The lowest rating (13.8) was for starting and ending classes promptly, indicating a potential area for improvement in time management.

Moreover, all other Outstanding indicators included were maintaining a conducive learning atmosphere (58.6%), following a systematic schedule (51.7%), checking students' work closely (82.8%), and fostering respect among students (62.1%). The overall percentage suggested that students generally view their teachers as highly effective in classroom management, with only minor refinements needed to further enhance time discipline.

Table 5.3 Students' Assessment of the Guidance Skills of the Teachers at Bahi National High School & Pambuhan National High School

Indicators	Percentage Response of O&VS	
	Bahi	Pambuhan
My/Our teachers…		
1. Shows genuine interest in students. (1. Nagpapakita ng tunay na interes sa mga mag-aaral.)	76.5%	62.1%
2. Accepts students as they are by recognizing their strengths and weaknesses as individuals. (2. Tinatanggap ang mga mag-aaral sa pamamagitan ng pagkilala sa kanilang mga lakas at kahinaan bilang mga indibidwal.	100%	82.8%

3. Handles class and students' problems with fairness and understanding. (3. Humahawak ng problema ng klase at mga mag-aaral sa pagkamakatarungan at pag-unawa.)	100%	69.0%
4. Listens and shows respect by considering students' opinions and suggestions. (4. Nakikinig at nagpapakita ng paggalang sa pamamagitan ng pagsasaalang-alang sa mga opinyon at mungkahi ng mga mag- aaral.)	100%	93.1%
5. Plans and organizes activities that foster camaraderie/ companionship among the learners. (5. Nagplaplano at nag-aayos ng mga aktibidad na nagpapalakas ng pakikipagkaibigan o pagsasama sa mga mag-aaral.)	100%	79.3%

Legend: Shown only the percentage response of 4 (Outstanding/Very Effective) in % of total.

Moreover, Bahi National High School students' assessment of the guidance skills of the teachers are outstanding. Teachers excel in accepting students, handling issues fairly, listening to student input, and fostering camaraderie, all receiving a perfect score of 100%. However, the lowest-rated indicator (76.5%) is showing genuine interest in students, suggesting a minor area for enhancement in personal engagement. Overall, the results highlight teachers' strong ability to support, understand, and connect with students, creating a positive and inclusive learning environment.

In addition, the table also presents the students' responses to the teachers at Pambuhan NHS. Among the indicators, the highest rating (93.1%) was given for the teachers' ability to listen and show respect by considering students' opinions and suggestions. This suggests that students appreciate being heard and valued in the classroom. The lowest rating (69%) was for handling class and student problems with fairness and understanding, which, while still outstanding, indicates a potential area for continuous improvement.

Other highly rated aspects include accepting students for who they are (79.3%) and fostering camaraderie among learners (93.1%), both highlighting the teachers' efforts in creating an inclusive and supportive environment. The overall percentages confirmed that students perceive their teachers as highly competent in providing guidance, ensuring that students feel supported both academically and personally.

Table 5.4 Students' Assessment of the Professional and Personal Skills of the Teachers at Bahi National High School & Pambuhan National High School

Indicators	Percentage Response of O & VS	
	Bahi	Pambuhan
My/Our teachers…		
1. Maintains emotional balance and is not over-critical or over-sensitive. (1. Nagpapanatili ang kanyang emosyonal na balanse at hindi over-kritikal o napakasensitibo.)	100%	89.7%
2. Shows composure amid difficult situations. (2. Ipinapakita ang pagiging kalmado sa gitna ng mahirap na sitwasyon.)	100%	79.3%
3. Shows fairness and impartiality to all students: no favoritism. (3. Nagpapakita ng makatarungan at walang kinikilingan sa lahat ng mga mag-aaral:	100%	79.3%

walang pinapaburan.)		
4. Shows resourcefulness and creativity, and has initiative.	100%	75.9%
(4. Nagpapakita ngn mapamaraan at malikhain at may inisyatibo.)		
5. Has good diction and a clear and modulated voice.	100%	55.2%
(5. Ay may magandang diksyon at malinaw at modulasyon na boses.)		
6. Exudes and is open to suggestions and criticism from the class.	23.5%	13.8%
(6. Nagpapalabas at bukas sa mga mungkahi at kritisismo mula sa klase.)		

Legend: Shown only the percentage response of 4 (Outstanding/Very Effective) in % of total.

The Bahi National High School students' scores on the items concerning the teachers' personal and professional skills yielded an outstanding rating. Teachers excel in emotional balance, composure, fairness, resourcefulness, and communication skills, all receiving a perfect score of 100%. However, openness to suggestions and criticism received the lowest rating of 23.5%, indicating a need for improvement in accepting student feedback. Overall, the results affirmed that teachers demonstrate strong professionalism, adaptability, and fairness, contributing to a positive and well-managed learning environment.

On the other hand, the students of Pambuhan National High School have rated their teachers highly across several key areas of personal and professional skills. The teachers excel in maintaining emotional balance, staying composed in difficult situations, and showing fairness to all students. They consistently demonstrate creativity, resourcefulness, and initiative, contributing to an engaging learning environment. Their clear communication, with good diction and voice modulation, ensures effective delivery of lessons. However, there is room for improvement in their openness to suggestions and criticism, as this area received a slightly lower score. Overall, with an average rating, the teachers are considered "Outstanding" in their personal and professional skills.

Manner of Implementation of Innovative Reading Program

The following data showed the respondents' answers to the activities while implementing the innovative reading programs.

Table 6. Methods Used by the Teachers in the Implementation of an Innovative Reading Program at Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School

Indicators	Percentage Response of O/VS	
	Bahi NHS	Pambuhan NHS
1.1 Providing differentiated instruction to different types of readers: "Read Aloud and Ask" Activity	75.0%	50.0%
1.2 Providing differentiated instruction to different types of readers: EVA (Everyday Reading Activity)	37.5%	25.0%
1.3 Providing differentiated instruction to different types of readers."Discover A New Word Through Reading Activity."	50.0%	0.0%
2. Providing and developing different materials for diverse learners for different reading activities.	62.5%	0.0%

3. Considering pacing for mastery of the lesson	100.0%	50.0%
4. Utilizing picture clues to aid students in reading	50.0%	50.0%
5. Utilizing illustrations in word recognition	50.0%	25.0%
6. Integrating ICT-based instruction in teaching reading	75.0%	0.0%
7. Providing explicit instruction on critical reading priorities	62.5%	50.0%
8. Providing a vocabulary garden to enhance learners' vocabulary skills.	62.5%	50.0%
9. Using peer-assisted instruction.	87.5%	75.0%
10. Integrating reading within and across curriculum teaching areas	87.5%	50.0%
11. Engaging learners in Directed Reading Thinking Activities.	50.0%	25.0%
12. Building activities that capitalize on children's natural curiosity and sense of playfulness	75.0%	50.0%
13. Including language activities that develop listening and expressive skills	62.5%	25.0%
14. Involving parents in the remediation teaching	62.5%	25.0%
15. Building phonemic awareness activities into instruction in Letters and Sounds	87.5%	25.0%
16. Stimulating the students' interest in reading through creative storytelling.	37.5%	25.0%
17. Tapping stakeholders to support the program	50.0%	0.0%
18. Using tutoring or small group instruction for children who require additional instructional support	87.5%	25.0%
19. Providing a merit system to those parents who are advocates of reading	37.5%	0.0%
20. Using individualized modular instructional materials	62.5%	25.0%
21. Exposing students to more hands-on learning through field experience, such as mentoring and collaborative activities.	100.0%	25.0%

Legend: Shown only the percentage response of 4 (Outstanding/Very Effective) in % of total.

The data in Table 6 reveals a comprehensive and outstanding implementation of the Project RIPARU at Bahi National High School. The teachers demonstrated more robust and diversified methods during the implementation of innovative reading strategies compared to the Pambuhan National High School teachers. Across all 21 indicators, Bahi National High School teachers reported consistently higher percentages of responses of Outstanding or responses of 4, indicating a more proactive and comprehensive approach to enhancing students' reading abilities.

Among the various methods, two stood out, both of which achieved a full 100% response rate: considering pacing for mastery of the lesson and exposing students to hands-on learning through field experience. These indicated that teachers are not only aware of the diverse learning needs of their students but also provide

opportunities for experiential learning through mentorship and collaborative activities—practices that are in line with modern, student-centered approaches to education.

Additionally, several methods also achieved high marks, with percentages of 87.5%, such as the use of peer-assisted instruction, integration of reading across curriculum areas, small group instruction for children needing additional support, and activities that build phonemic awareness. These techniques reflect the teachers' strong focus on collaborative learning, curriculum integration, support for struggling readers, and phonics instruction, which are critical components of a successful reading program.

Moreover, other strategies, including the development of varied reading materials, ICT-based instruction, vocabulary building, and creative storytelling, received percentage scores between 62.5% to 75%. This showed that the Project RIPARU has effectively balanced both traditional and modern instructional approaches to reading.

Although most methods were rated outstanding, a few strategies scored slightly lower, ranging from 37.5% to 50%. These included providing differentiated instructions to different types of readers like every day reading activity (EVA), creative storytelling, tapping stakeholders for support, and providing merit systems to parents. While still effective, these areas may benefit from additional support, training, or resources to maximize their impact.

Thus, the teachers are shown to be employing a wide range of effective methods, ensuring that instruction is varied, inclusive, and engaging. By continuing to support and refine all areas, especially those involving community and stakeholder involvement, they can further elevate their competence in teaching reading for the success of their innovative reading program and foster a lifelong love for reading among their students.

The table also shows the methods used by teachers at Pambuhan National High School in implementing an innovative reading program. The overall assessment reported significantly lower engagement across most indicators, lower than that of the Bahi National High School teachers.

Peer-assisted instruction received a slightly higher percentage of 75, indicating its effectiveness in supporting student learning through collaboration, while the rest of the methods used by teachers received 50% percent ratings including providing differentiated instruction through activities like "Read Aloud and Ask" and "EVA (Everyday Reading Activity)," considering pacing for mastery, utilizing picture clues, providing explicit instruction, enhancing vocabulary skills with a vocabulary garden, integrating reading across the curriculum, and building activities that capitalize on students' natural curiosity.

Meanwhile, methods such as utilizing illustrations in word recognition, engaging learners in directed reading thinking activities, including language activities, involving parents in remediation, building phonemic awareness, stimulating interest through creative storytelling, using tutoring or small group instruction, and exposing students to hands-on learning experiences received 25% of outstanding responses. These methods are effective but still have room for improvement.

However, the lowest rating (0% of outstanding) was given to providing a merit system for parents who advocate reading, tapping stakeholders, and ICT instructions, suggesting this area needs significant enhancement.

Generally, the assessment reflects a need for improvement in the implementation of diverse methods to support reading development by the teachers at Pambuhan National High School, with particular strengths in differentiated instructions and peer-assisted learning.

Level of Effectiveness of Strategies Used in Innovative Reading Program

The following data shows the respondents' answers to the strategies used while implementing the innovative reading programs.

Table 7. Strategies Used by the Teachers in the Implementation of Innovative Reading Program at Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School

Indicators	Percentage Response of O/VS	
	Bahi NHS	Pambuhan NHS
Teaching Comprehension Strategies	37.5%	0.0%
Organization and Planning Effective Instruction for Struggling Readers	62.5%	25.0%
Encouraging Student Effort	87.5%	50.0%
Engaging Students in the Lesson During Independent Work	75.0%	75.0%
Facilitating Students' Successful Completion of Lesson Activities	100.0%	75.0%
Teaching for Fluent Reading	100.0%	50.0%
Teaching Vocabulary like Spelling	87.5%	50.0%
Organizing and Managing Small - Group Reading Instruction	62.5%	25.0%
Providing Explicit Instruction	87.5%	25.0%
Providing Corrective Feedback	87.5%	25.0%
Getting the Most Out of the Core Reading Program	100.0%	25.0%
Modeling of Instructional Tasks	62.5%	50.0%
Providing Multiple Opportunities for Students to Practice	75.0%	50.0%
Engaging Students in the Lesson During Teacher -Led Instruction	87.5%	50.0%
Engaging Students in Meaningful Interactions with Language	87.5%	75.0%
Using the Results of Assessments to Plan Effective Instruction	87.5%	25.0%
Effective Phonics Instruction	100.0%	50.0%
Teaching Phonemic Awareness	100.0%	50.0%

Legend: Shown only the percentage response of 4 (Outstanding/Very Effective) in % of total.

Table 7 shows that the teachers at Bahi National High School demonstrated stronger and more consistent implementation of key reading strategies, as evidenced by the high percentages across various instructional strategies used, with the results indicating that the teachers' strategies were highly effective in fostering literacy and comprehension among students.

The several highest-rated strategies are as follows: facilitating students' successful completion of lesson activities, teaching for fluent reading, maximizing the core reading program, effective phonics instruction, and teaching phonemic awareness, all received a perfect 100% very effective rating. These findings highlight the importance of structured reading instruction and reinforcement in ensuring that students grasp essential literacy skills.

Other highly rated strategies, including encouraging student effort, engaging students in teacher-led instruction, providing corrective feedback, and using assessment results to plan instruction, each received an 87.5% with a very effective rating. These emphasized the significance of motivation, interactive learning, and data-driven teaching approaches in improving reading proficiency.

Although rated very effective, some strategies received slightly lower ratings, such as teaching comprehension strategies (37.5%) and organizing small-group reading instruction (62.5%). These areas may present opportunities for further refinement and innovation to enhance their effectiveness.

This data that shows teachers at Bahi National High School consistently receiving high rating, reflects their dedication and strong competence in providing high-quality reading instruction, ensuring that students develop essential reading skills in improving their academic performance.

On the other hand, the strategies used by the teachers at Pambuhan National High School revealed an effective rating as to their implementation. This suggests that while the strategies employed by teachers are generally effective, they remain to be lower in effectiveness compared to the school's other projects, thus needing improvement in certain areas.

The strategies that received higher percentages (50%–100%), highlight the teachers' success in fostering student motivation and participation, encouraging student effort, engaging students during independent and teacher-led instruction, facilitating successful completion of lesson activities, teaching fluent reading, vocabulary instruction, modeling instructional tasks, and providing multiple opportunities for practice and were all rated highly. Additionally, engaging students in meaningful language interactions, implementing effective phonics instruction, and teaching phonemic awareness also scored within this range. These high ratings reflect the teachers' strong ability to create an engaging and skill-building reading environment for students.

Meanwhile, strategies such as organizing and managing small-group reading instruction, providing explicit instruction, corrective feedback, maximizing the core reading program, organization and planning for struggling readers, and using assessment results to plan instruction were rated very satisfactory (25%). While still effective, these areas have the potential to reach outstanding levels with further refinement. Enhancing these aspects could lead to a more structured and data-driven reading program that better supports diverse learning needs.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated strategies include teaching comprehension strategies (0% of very effective rating). These data reveal that students may need more targeted support in understanding and interpreting texts, as well as improved instructional planning for those experiencing reading difficulties, which is crucial for the progress of struggling students.

While the assessment highlighted many strengths in student engagement and foundational reading skills for both schools, it also identifies key areas for improvement, particularly in reading comprehension and support for struggling readers. By addressing these gaps, Pambuhan National High School can further refine its reading program, ensuring a more comprehensive and effective approach to literacy development.

Innovative Reading Program Effect on Reading Performance of Struggling Students

The following data show the student-respondents' Reading Ability (Pre-test, Post-test), and Reading Behavior scores during and after implementing the innovative reading programs.

Table 8. Grade 7 Students RLA Pre-test, Post-test, and Reading Behavior Results of Bahi NHS

Respondents	PRE-TEST				POST-TEST		
	RLA Score	Reading Level	Reading Behavior		RLA Score	Reading Level	Reading Behavior
1	5	Deficit	1		7	Deficit	1
2	4	Deficit	1		23	Coping	3

3	5	Deficit	1		5	Deficit	1
4	4	Deficit	1		15	Coping	1
5	6	Deficit	1		6	Deficit	1
6	8	Coping	1		32	Emerging	3
7	9	Coping	1		33	Emerging	3
8	11	Coping	1		35	Emerging	3
9	12	Coping	1		30	Emerging	2
10	15	Coping	1		45	Established	4
11	18	Coping	1		26	Emerging	1
12	9	Coping	1		24	Coping	3
13	8	Coping	1		7	Deficit	1
14	12	Coping	1		20	Coping	2
15	14	Coping	1		40	Established	1
16	15	Coping	1		18	Coping	2
17	13	Coping	1		42	Established	2

Note: **Reading Ability**: Deficit – 0-7, Coping – 8-25, Emerging – 26-39, Established – 40-50 **Reading Behavior**: Level 1 - Reads word by word or lower; Level 2 - Reads words by chunk; Level 3 - Reads accurately but does not observe punctuation marks or shows signs of hesitation; Level 4 - Reads with automaticity, accuracy, and proper expression.

Pre-test and Reading Behavior Results. Table 8 shows the rapid literacy assessment pre-test scores and their corresponding reading and reading behavior levels of 17 struggling Bahi National High School students before the innovative reading program. As shown on the table, 12 learners with student numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 have a coping reading level with RLA pre-test scores ranging from 8 to 18. Meanwhile, students 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are considered deficient because their pre-test scores range from 4-6.

On the other hand, the reading behavior of Bahi National High School students is at level 1, which can be translated into "reads word by word."

Post-test and Reading Behavior Results. Table 12 shows the rapid literacy assessment post-test scores and the corresponding reading and reading behavior levels of 17 struggling Bahi National High School students after the innovative reading program. As shown on the table, four learners with respondent numbers 1, 3, 5, and 13 have deficit reading level with RLA post-test scores ranging from 5-7. Three learners with respondent numbers 2, 4, 13, 14, and 16 have reading levels under coping with RLA post-test scores 13 and 18. Meanwhile, respondent numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11 consider their reading level Emerging because their post-test scores range from 26-35. Three learners with respondent numbers 10, 15, and 17 are supposed to have a reading level established because their scores range from 40 to 45.

On the other hand, the reading behavior of respondent numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, and 15 is level 1, which can be translated into "reads word by word," while student number 9, 14, 16, and 17 have a reading behavior of level 2 or they read words by chunk. Respondent numbers 2, 6, 7, 8, and 12 have reading behavior of 3, which

means they read words accurately but do not observe punctuation marks or show signs of hesitations. Meanwhile, respondent number 10 has a reading behavior of 4, which means he reads with automaticity, accuracy, and proper expression.

The researcher employed a Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to check whether the innovative reading program effectively enhanced the students' reading performance at Bahi National High School. At a 5% significance level, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test of the scores for the pre- test and post-test yielded a computed z-value of 3.6 and a p-value of 0.952. The reading behaviors showed a calculated z-value of 3.65 and a p-value of 0.0000, indicating that the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9. Grade 7 Students RLA Pre-test, Post-test, and Reading Behavior Results of Pambuhan NHS

Respondents	PRE-TEST			POST-TEST		
	RLA Score	Reading Level	Reading Behavior	RLA Score	Reading Level	Reading Behavior
1	3	Deficit	1	5	Deficit	1
2	5	Deficit	1	7	Deficit	1
3	3	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
4	4	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
5	5	Deficit	1	7	Deficit	1
6	4	Deficit	1	7	Deficit	2
7	3	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
8	2	Deficit	1	5	Deficit	1
9	1	Deficit	1	7	Deficit	1
10	6	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
11	3	Deficit	1	7	Deficit	1
12	4	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
13	5	Deficit	1	5	Deficit	1
14	4	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
15	3	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
16	2	Deficit	1	5	Deficit	1
17	2	Deficit	1	6	Deficit	1
18	5	Deficit	1	5	Deficit	2
19	10	Coping	2	13	Coping	2
20	10	Coping	1	14	Coping	2

21	10	Coping	2	15	Coping	2
22	13	Coping	2	15	Coping	2
23	15	Coping	2	23	Coping	3
24	15	Coping	2	22	Coping	3
25	14	Coping	2	15	Coping	3
26	15	Coping	2	22	Coping	3
27	13	Coping	1	14	Coping	2
28	9	Coping	1	15	Coping	3
29	12	Coping	1	13	Coping	2

Note: **Reading Ability**: Deficit – 0-7, Coping – 8-25, Emerging – 26-39, Established – 40-50 **Reading Behavior**: Level 1 - Reads word by word or lower; Level 2 - Reads words by chunk; Level 3 - Reads accurately but does not observe punctuation marks or shows signs of hesitation; Level 4 - Reads with automaticity, accuracy, and proper expression.

Pre-test and Reading Behavior Results. Table 9 shows the Rapid Literacy Assessment pre-test scores and corresponding reading and reading behavior levels of the 29 struggling readers at Pambuhan National High School before the innovative reading program. As reflected in the table, the first 18 learners have reading levels under deficit with RLA pre-test scores ranging from 1 to 6. Meanwhile, the student numbers 19-29 have their reading level as "coping" because their pre-test scores range from 9-15.

On the other hand, the reading behavior of the students 1-18, 20, 27, 28, and 29 is level 1, which can be translated into "reads word by word," while students 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 have a reading behavior of level 2 or they "read words by chunks".

Post-test and Reading Behavior Results. Table 14 shows the rapid literacy assessment post-test scores and corresponding reading and reading behavior levels of 29 struggling students at Pambuhan National High School after the innovative reading program. As shown on the table, four out of 18 learners have reading levels under deficit, with RLA post-test scores ranging from 5-7. Eleven (11) learners, which are students 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 have reading levels under coping with RLA post-test scores ranging from 13-23, which means that most of the students did not improve their reading levels.

On the other hand, the reading behavior of the student 1-5, and 7-17 is level 1, which can be translated into "reads word by word," while students 6, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, and 29 have a reading behavior of level 2, or they "read words by chunk". Students 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28 have reading behavior of 3, with an interpretation that they read words accurately but do not observe punctuation marks or show signs of hesitation.

 These results show that almost all students in Pambuhan NHS have not improved even after the implementation of the innovative reading program.

The researcher employed a Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to check whether the innovative reading program effectively enhanced the students' reading performance at Pambuhan National High School. At a 5% significance level, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test of the scores for the pre and post-test yielded a computed z-value of 4.71 and a p-value of 0.0000, while the reading behaviors showed a *calculated* z-value of 4.71 and a p-value of 0.0000, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's discussion of the data gathered regarding professional competencies, implementation of innovative reading programs, strategies used, the effectiveness of the strategies, and how reading programs effectively enhance students' reading performance.

Respondents' Personal and Professional Profile

Teachers' professional attitudes, values, qualifications, and skills can contribute to their effectiveness in teaching reading (İlğan et al., 2022). Rather than focusing on the teachers' age, the study emphasizes the importance of meaningful tasks, methods, and the teaching of reading strategies, demonstrating that even young teachers can successfully adapt and engage in effective reading programs.

In this study, most of the teachers at Bahi National High School hold bachelor's degrees with M.A. units, which are supposed to provide a strong foundation for teaching by fostering professional growth and expertise in reading instructions. However, less than half of the teachers specialize in English (25.00%) and Filipino (25.00%) - disciplines crucial and essential to understanding reading as a fundamental component of language learning (Safrianti, 2020). This lack of specialization of other teachers may impact their confidence in teaching reading and could affect struggling student improvement, as their pedagogical preparation may not align with reading instruction. Dixon and Oakhill (2024) highlighted in their study that teachers' professional knowledge and their motivation to implement effective reading strategies play a significant role in student outcomes.

However, the absence of a professional background in literacy can be bridged by training or seminars (Sun, 2021b & Karadag, 2014b). Teachers' relevant experience and acquired knowledge in teaching reading can further strengthen their confidence in assisting students who struggle with or are unable to read, as data shows that nearly all eight teachers participated in one to four reading-related training sessions. This training helps to fill the gaps in educators' professional background to develop a foundational understanding of reading instruction. This has significantly impacted students' reading performance at Bahi National High School through Project RIPARU.

Meanwhile, although teachers at Pambuhan National High School hold degrees with M.A. units, their specializations are not directly related to teaching reading. And only one of the four teachers, who is an English teacher, had undergone relevant training, while the other three, who specialize in science, agriculture, and MAPEH, lacked any background in reading instruction, putting them at a disadvantage. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that inadequate training in reading instruction can negatively impact student performance (Belsky, 2023; Rapoport, 2016). This gap in teachers' preparations has contributed to the stagnant reading levels of students at Pambuhan National High School, who have not shown any significant improvement.

Therefore, this study underscores the importance of continuous, reading-focused professional development for teachers, regardless of their prior experience or specialization, to ensure effective reading instruction and improved student outcomes. This study further suggested that a literacy-related specialization, combined with relevant training, can play a critical role in enhancing the reading performance of struggling students. This finding is supported by several studies that emphasize the necessity for all educators, regardless of their specialization, to have participate in trainings to enhance student learning outcomes (Nyatsikor et al., 2020). This was further strengthened by McGuire (2023), and Stevenson et al. (2023), saying that if teachers without a language specialization undergo professional development and training, they can teach reading effectively. On the other hand, teachers who lack knowledge of language instruction and reading pedagogy may achieve poor results and fail to improve the performance of struggling readers (Mohammed, 2018).

Additionally, a recent study by EdCom 2 (2024) revealed that specialized teachers tend to exhibit higher confidence and competence in their classrooms. This means that when teachers teach based on their professional expertise and educational background, they are found to be more effective. The school heads of Bahi NHS and Pambuhan NHS stressed the importance of providing continuous professional development

opportunities to deepen teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills during the focus group discussion, highlighting the following themes:

Confident and Development-focused

The school principals expressed complete confidence in the reading program's teachers' expertise, noting their ability to engage students in stimulating reading deliberations. However, they emphasized the importance of continuous professional development through Learning Action Plan (LAC) sessions and external training to refine their skills. While the teachers are certified, additional focus on fostering a love of reading is needed. Informant 1 highlighted the need for organized resources and adequate training as shown in the following excerpts:

Informant 1: (Oo naman, masisiguro ko na ang nagtuturong guro ay may sapat na kaalaman at magsasagawa ako ng LAC sessions upang madaragdagan ang kanilang strategy sa pagturo.) I can ensure that the teaching teacher has enough knowledge, and I will conduct a LAC session to understand their teaching strategy.

In addition, she also underscored the importance of attending trainings and seminars as intervention in overcoming students' reading ability as shown in the following excerpt:

Informant 1: (Magbibigay ako ng sapat na training or seminar o magpapadala ako ng teacher na mate-training na may kaugnayan sa kung anong intervention ang maaring gawin sa mga nahihirapan magbasa.) I will provide adequate trainings and seminars or send a teacher to train them on what intervention can be done for those with reading difficulty.

Furthermore, when asked what factors that could make the intervention effective, Informant 1 mentioned resources organization and availability will help, as shown in the excerpt:

Informant 1: (Masasabing magiging epektibo kung magiging maayos at maging available ang resources na gagamitin sa pagsasagawa.) It can be said that it will be effective if the resources used in its implementation are organized and available.

while Informant 2 noted the effectiveness of fun and engaging teaching methods, as evidenced by improved student reading abilities from assessments as shown in the following excerpt:

Informant 2: Yes. Every teacher can make his or her students learn to read in fun and engaging ways.

Informant 2: By conducting LAC sessions to enhance their ability to teach reading.

Informant 2: Yes. They are effective because, based on the assessments they conducted, I can tell that the students improved their reading ability and understood what they read.

This ensures that even if teachers are assigned to teach different subjects, they can still effectively teach reading. Both school heads emphasized the significance of relevant training, such as Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, to adapt, integrate, and update new and existing pedagogical skills, which are crucial for addressing students' reading challenges. They also noted that incorporating new teaching methodologies into existing practices is essential for improving students' reading performance.

This finding aligns with Bushey (2024), who emphasized that ESL (English as a Second Language) companies successfully hire diverse instructors, regardless of academic background, who have helped first-language students learn English, even when those students have minimal or no prior knowledge of the language. These companies provided training programs specifically designed to ensure that all instructors acquire the necessary skills to deliver effective English instruction. Although these instructors are selected for their strong command of English, they are still required to undergo a series of specialized training sessions, particularly in teaching reading instruction. This is crucial, as teaching reading is highly conceptual and demands more than just personal fluency in the language.

Consequently, these studies suggest that teachers without proper training may unintentionally develop biases or misconceptions about teaching reading due to their limited conceptual awareness of effective reading instruction, leading to the failure of the reading program.

Thus, this research underscores that continuous professional development and relevant training in literacy are vital in equipping educators with the pedagogy needed to meet the diverse needs of struggling learners.

Teachers' Professional Competence

According to Medley's (1977) framework, effective teaching is characterized by competences in knowledge, skills, and values. In this research, teachers from Bahi National High School demonstrated exceptional proficiency or outstanding performance in teaching reading, as evidenced by the 46 struggling students' feedback across four categories: 1) Instructional Skills, 2) Classroom Management, 3) Guidance Skills, and; 4) Personal and Professional Skills.

Moreover, Bahi National High School teachers emerged to have a higher rating from the students, which can be translated as being more competent than the Pambuhan National High School teachers in terms of teaching reading. Bahi National High School teachers appeared to possess the highest percentages in Instructional Skills and Guidance Skills respectively, which highlighted their strong competences. This research underscored a recent study that if teachers have a significant instructional skills background, such competence can build up teaching competence to help learners with reading difficulty (Gallagher et al., 2023).

Furthermore, their guidance skills significantly underscore the importance of fostering a classroom environment where students feel heard and valued. Such an environment promotes a sense of belonging and supports positive student-teacher relationships, which are crucial for academic success and improved reading performance. This aligns with Mitra's (2018) study, which found that guidance skills help students engage and increase their motivation in the learning process. Teachers need to show students that they are valued through avoidance of prejudice and comparisons to others. This approach helped increase students' self-confidence and awareness throughout the reading program, fostering trust in their teachers.

This research reveals that Bahi National High School teachers' effective classroom management and personal and professional skills both scored high. This shows their ability to supervise and manage students' learning, leading to the attainment of higher ratings for teaching effectiveness. Similarly, personal and professional skills enable educators to manage classroom dynamics effectively and create a supportive learning environment (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). This study suggested that while these skills scored lower, it showed that teachers have been able to display a strong and highly competent presence to the students during the implementation of the reading program.

Meanwhile, Pambuhan National High School teachers received outstanding evaluations in several categories. Some of these indicators fall under classroom management like "starting and ending class promptly," received higher rating while personal and professional skills, such as "exuding and being open to suggestions and criticism from the class," received the lowest rating, indicating a need for major improvements.

Categorically, the low rating of in-classroom management is due to the irregular implementation of Project MMK, teachers' preparedness and competence which students have noticed. This inconsistency has negatively impacted students' reading performance, as they were not regularly engaged in the reading sessions, leading to a high tendency of stagnation.

However, Pambuhan National High School teachers have received high ratings in guidance skills which is in accordance to Medley's theory, which emphasizes Kumar's (2025) study on the importance of teachers showing a deep connection and strong engagement in employing reading instructions. This indicates that teachers were able to recognize their students' strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to plan and use few appropriate teaching methods.

Additionally, based on Medley's theory, to be deemed competent, teachers must acquire and apply the latest research-based reading strategies in their teaching practices. However, while Medley established qualifications

based on indicators across four categories, these do not serve as the sole determinant of effective reading instruction in both Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School. This is largely since some teachers lack an in-depth reading background and the necessary competency-based skills to fully support the reading programs. This is further corroborated by students' responses in the assessment, where, despite the programs being highly effective, some teachers did not demonstrate the required competency in managing the reading program. Feedback from school heads, however, confirmed that these teachers are highly skilled and pedagogically competent because of their acquired experience from the training in teaching struggling students, emphasizing themes of confidence and development, as highlighted in the interviews. Nevertheless, both school heads reiterated the need for continuous and comprehensive literacy training among teachers, to ensure they are fully committed and competent in delivering effective reading programs.

Overall, Medley's theory (1977) assessment results indicate that teachers' personal and professional skills are crucial for students' well-rounded improvement. The lack of these skills may hinder students' progress. Clearly, the teachers' prior knowledge and existing professional qualifications do not necessarily mean they are highly competent in teaching reading. This underscores the need for teachers to be personally and professionally skilled and qualified, with relevant training and literacy-aligned degrees, to deliver effective reading instruction. Without these qualifications, students may not be given enough opportunities to express their thoughts and seek clarifications and suggestions on unclear lessons, which can result in students' reading performance being low or showing no improvement.

Manner of Implementation of Innovative Reading Program

Bahi National High School received the most favored indicators utilized methods by teachers during the implementation of Project RIPARU. This study highlighted that the teachers have outstandingly executed the reading program in their school and further enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes in literacy programs. However, although most indicators were outstanding, a few indicators may need improvement and focus to attain the highest percentage of effectiveness of the program by stimulating students' interest in reading through creative storytelling, providing differentiated instruction to different types of readers like EVA (Everyday Reading Activity), and providing merit system to those parents who are advocacies of reading.

In the study conducted by Indriani and Sujeta (2023), it was revealed that when teachers used creative storytelling, which could include creative narratives, it significantly enhanced children's engagement and reading interest, improved memory recall, supported early literacy development, and promoted creative thinking. This method could be highly impactful if all the teachers at Bahi National High School implemented it, and may potentially lead to significant improvements among struggling readers at school. Surely, these teachers have to inculcate and instill in their students the importance of habitual reading as it will help them develop a love for reading.

Meanwhile, differentiated instruction strategies, including methods like Everyday Reading Activity (EVA), could be applied by the teachers in Project RIPARU to effectively address diverse student needs. A recent study by Magableh and Abdullah (2021) highlighted the method of differentiated instruction significantly improving reading engagement in special classes. By tailoring instruction to individual learning styles and abilities, teachers can better support struggling readers to foster a consistent reading habit and enhance literacy skills.

Additionally, implementing a merit system for parents who advocate for reading can significantly enhance children's literacy development. A recent study of Pelletier (2025) highlighted that parental support including recognition and rewards, positively impacts children's reading motivation and habits. This is the reason why teachers at Bahi National High School might always acknowledge parents' efforts and provide a merit system to encourage them more to continuously support the program and actively participate in all the school's initiative towards the improvement of the students' reading performance.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the teachers' methods was strongly affirmed by students' responses during the focus group discussions, which emphasized how teachers successfully implemented Project RIPARU, the

"Reading Intervention Program to Amplify Readers' Understanding." Furthermore, students consistently expressed that teachers effectively executed approaches that resulted to the following themes:

Guided Reading and Repeated Exposure

Several informants (4, 2, 5, 7, and 8) mentioned that teachers would read first, modeling pronunciation, and then would have students repeat the words as shown in the following excerpts:

Informant 4: (Pinapabasa po ako sir. Pag hindi pa po marunong magbasa, lagi pong pinapabasa ako ni sir hanggang sa maging magaling po. Halimbawa pag may mali, tinatama po nila.) They let me read, Sir. When I didn't know how to read yet, sir always made me read until I became good at it. For example, when something is wrong, they correct it.

Informant 2: (Pinapabasa po kami isa-isa sa unahan. Tapos pagkatapos po magbasa, pinapaintindi po sakin. May lesson po, halimbawa yung ibang teachers ako yung magbabasa tapos sila yung magpapaintindi sakin.) We are asked to read one by one. Then, after reading, I understand. There is a lesson; for example, the other teachers will read it and let me know.

Informant 2: (Binabasa po muna ni teacher tapos sinusulat sa board yung salita. Tapos yung pronunciation po ng word, siya po muna bumabasa saka niya po pinapasunod samin.) The teacher reads and then writes the word on the board. Then, he reads the word's pronunciation first and makes us follow.

Informant 7: (Yung letter tinuturo sakin at pag tapos na kami, pinapabasa na ako.) The letter was being taught to me, and when we finished, I was asked to read it.

Informant 5: (Pinabasa po ako ng letter at tinuturo sakin yung tunog. Iniisa-inisa po kami magbasa.) He made me read the letter and taught me the sound. Each of us is asked to read.

Informant 8: (Pinabasa ako sa libro. Tinuturoan ako pakonti-konti papano magbasa.) I was made to read the book. I was taught little by little how to read.

These statements align with the guided reading strategy, where teachers provide support through direct modeling and structured practice (*Fountas & Pinnell, 2017*). Informant 4 emphasizes corrective feedback, which is crucial for developing accuracy and fluency (Ehri, 2017).

Phonics-Based Instruction

Informants 5 and 6 highlighted phonics-based methods, where teachers explicitly teach letter sounds before progressing to whole words, as shown in the following excerpts:

Informant 6: (Tinuturuan po ako, yung letter muna isa-isang pinabasa samin yung salita pa-isaisa.) I was being taught the first letter. We were told to read the words one by one.

Informant 5: (Pinabasa po kami sa storybook. Tinuturo po samin at ine-explain samin. Minsan siya yung nagbabasa muna tapos susunduan naming yung binasa niya.) They made us read the storybook. They teach us and explain to us. Sometimes, they read first, and then we follow what they read.

This approach is supported by extensive research, indicating that phonics instruction enhances early reading skills by strengthening decoding abilities (National Reading Panel, 2019; Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018). Teaching phoneme awareness and letter-sound correspondence is essential for literacy development, particularly for struggling readers. This can be seen in the following excerpts:

Informant 7: (Tulad din sa kanya, binabasa muna ng teachers saka kami susunod.) Like him, the teachers read first, and then we follow.

Scaffolded Learning and Incremental Progression

Informants 3, 7, and 8 described a step-by-step approach, where teachers introduce reading gradually as seen in the following excerpts:

Informant 3: (Pa-konti-konti po nila kaming pinabasa hanggang sa matuto.) They made us read little by little until we learned.

Informant 7: (Tulad din sa kanya, binabasa muna ng teachers saka kami susunod.) Like him, the teachers read first, and then we follow.

Informant 8: (Pinabasa ako sa libro. Tinuturoan ako pakonti-konti papano magbasa.) I was made to read the book. I was taught little by little how to read.

Scaffolded learning, which involves gradually reducing teacher support as students gain proficiency, is effective in literacy instruction (Vygotsky, 1978; McVee et al., 2019). Informant 5 noted that additional time is needed for reading practice, reinforcing the importance of differentiated instruction to meet individual learning needs (Tomlinson, 2017).

Informant 5: (Pinabasa po ako ng letter at tinuturo sakin yung tunog. Iniisa-inisa po kami magbasa.) He made me read the letter and taught me the sound. We need more time to read.

Additionally, these were seconded by the school heads' response from the KII of effective implementation. Data generated have proven that this program allowed teachers to boost students' abilities by engaging them in literacy skills, guiding them through frequent reading, focusing on phonics instruction, and supporting them until they were able to read independently. This is in accordance with the International Literacy Association (2023) study, which found that the methods highlighted resulting to the program's success relies on teachers' activities that engage students in literacy skills enhancement.

Effective Implementation

The school heads emphasized two key strategies for ensuring the success of reading programs: consistent implementation and strong support with progress monitoring. They recognized that well-structured reading programs are essential for students' academic growth, particularly for those struggling with reading and comprehension.

One school head stressed the importance of maintaining and consistently implementing reading programs, stating, *"Implementing and maintaining each program is enough to make it more effective." ("Ang pagpapatupad ng bawat programa at pagpapanatili nito ay sapat na para mas maging epektibo ito.")* This perspective highlights the need for structured and sustained efforts in executing reading interventions to achieve meaningful progress.

Another school head emphasized the value of providing support and encouragement to both students and teachers. They also pointed out the necessity of conducting post-assessments to track learners' reading progress, stating, *"Providing support and encouragement, as well as conducting post-assessments on the reading program, helps monitor the progress of learners."* By regularly evaluating students' reading performance, teachers can identify areas for improvement and adjust their instructional strategies accordingly.

These insights underscore that successful reading programs require not only consistent execution but also continuous support and systematic evaluation. By ensuring the sustainability of reading interventions and closely monitoring of student progress, schools can create an environment where struggling readers receive the necessary guidance to develop essential literacy skills.

Furthermore, the Project RIPARU had integrated the Implementation Science Theory by Routledge (2024) of a detailed process in adapting, integrating, and implementing evidence-based practices of conducting a reading program, which led to successful outcomes. That's why Project RIPARU is a highly effective initiative in

supporting literacy development, demonstrating the impact of well-structured reading interventions, and the importance of continuous teaching evaluations in enhancing student learning outcomes.

On the other hand, teachers at Pambuhan NHS barely utilized and implemented the methods outlined in Project MMK, which resulted in a higher percentage rating for almost all indicators. This suggested that the teachers had not fully incorporated the recommended methods into their reading initiatives, ultimately affecting the program's ability to produce effective results. Out of the 23 indicators, at least 2 indicators received a "Satisfactory" rating, and more than half received a "Very Satisfactory" rating, highlighting that many teachers were not fully aware of the essential methods required for the program. While it is evident that they made efforts, there remains a need for a well-planned and more comprehensive approach to implementing the reading program. As Wexler (2024) emphasized, appropriate methods and materials must be integrated into a well-designed professional development framework to be effective.

However, it is also worth noting that teachers admitted that they did not implement several key methods that could have significantly supported their reading instruction. These included providing differentiated instruction such as the "Discover a New Word Through Reading" activity, integrating ICT-based instruction in reading, and tapping stakeholders to support the program. These methods are critical components that should have been employed. However, due to the teachers' limited experience and expertise in reading instruction, their inability to incorporate modern educational resources, and a lack of initiative to engage external support were either overlooked or avoided.

Moreover, the recent study by Dean et al. (2021) emphasized the role of ICT tools in enhancing reading instruction, showing that they can significantly boost student engagement and performance. In today's classrooms, technology is an essential element because tools such as televisions, speakers, and tablets can effectively capture students' attention and interest. Additionally, given the shortage of essential reading books in the department, technology provides a cost-effective alternative. Teachers could avoid the expense of reproducing printed materials for programs like Project MMK by using digital tools. Unfortunately, the continued reliance on traditional methods may have contributed to declining student interest in reading, as the use of technology could have supported more effective and engaging instruction.

Moreover, Cabarillos (2024) highlighted that stakeholder engagement plays a vital role in improving outcomes for struggling readers. By involving parents, barangay officials, local government units, and non-governmental organizations, they can significantly support and sustain reading programs. With open communication, shared responsibility, and consistent updates, the success of such programs becomes more attainable. Despite Project MMK being designed as a community-based initiative, its implementers failed to effectively engage stakeholders, missing an opportunity to create strong partnerships that could have ensured the program's continuity. However, the lack of coordination between teachers and community members (parents and barangay officials) resulted in missed chances to collaboratively monitor students' progress.

Furthermore, the lowest-rated indicator among the methods was the implementation of a merit system for parents who are advocates of reading. This underlines the importance of building strong relationships between teachers and parents, as parents can be vital partners in students' reading development. Beyond forming partnerships, recognizing and incentivizing parents' involvement through a merit system is an effective way to show appreciation for their contributions and encourage sustained engagement in reading programs.

Clearly, despite the efforts of Pambuhan NHS teachers, the reading program failed to fulfill its core purpose due to lapses in consistent and effective implementation. The intervention program was designed to enhance student outcomes and promote positive change (Early Intervention Foundation, n.d.). But this goal was not realized. Despite numerous studies demonstrating the effectiveness of such programs, Project MMK has proven to be ineffective and unsuccessful. This can be attributed to several factors, including insufficient professional preparation and training in literacy instruction, as well as the irregular implementation of the program. Because successful implementation requires adequate teacher training and resources to address barriers such as time constraints, diverse students' needs, and varying levels of teacher qualifications, the program implementation was affected.

This highlighted the importance of teachers possessing in-depth knowledge and training in reading instruction. Had teachers underwent specialized training, utilized available technology, and built partnerships with stakeholders, they could have overcome many of the obstacles and better utilized the resources available to them. Without this foundation, they are more likely to face challenges like those experienced in Project MMK.

Moreover, recent studies emphasized that consistency is essential in implementing reading programs to effectively support struggling readers. At Pambuhan NHS, however, Project MMK was conducted only once a week for a single hour. This inconsistency significantly undermined the program's objectives and contributed to low student engagement. This approach contradicts the finding of Sears (2023), who stressed the importance of regular and structured reading activities to foster student motivation and improve overall reading proficiency.

Moreover, it was also contradictory to Sparks' (2022) findings that an effective reading program requires a minimum of 30 to 90 minutes of daily instruction to produce measurable improvements in reading skills. Furthermore, George (2024) stressed that highly structured, evidence-based instruction, such as that based on the Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading System, should be implemented for 60 to 120 minutes per day to maximize literacy gains. Given this, it is evident that teachers at Pambuhan NHS should allocate more time to reading instruction, as insufficient exposure to reading activities negatively impacts struggling students' learning and skill acquisition. These results revealed that teachers' competence and strategies alone are inadequate to improve students' reading performance. Therefore, it must be complemented by a well-structured, consistent, and regularly implemented reading program to achieve positive and successful outcomes.

Furthermore, one of the factors that may explain the ineffectiveness of the reading program is the teacher-student ratio. At Pambuhan NHS, there are 29 struggling students, but only 4 teachers are assigned to handle the reading program. This results in a ratio of approximately 1:7. This data is further inconsistent with Schwartz et al.'s (2012) study, who found that a 1:1 teacher-student ratio yields higher literacy outcomes, and that literacy performance tends to decline as group size increases. This suggests that the number of teachers involved in Project MMK was overwhelmingly insufficient to effectively address the needs of all struggling students and achieve a high literacy rate.

Ultimately, the manner and limited implementation time of Project MMK created a major setback in helping students develop their reading skills. With minimal time dedicated to reading activities, students had insufficient opportunities to engage and improve, which likely hindered their reading development further.

Level of Effectiveness of Strategies Used in Innovative Reading Program.

This study found that the strategies employed by teachers in Project RIPARU were highly effective in significantly improving students' reading abilities. Teachers reported that they were able to successfully implement these strategies within the reading program. While most indicators received outstanding scores, the teaching of comprehension strategies received the lowest rating among them. This suggests that more emphasis should be placed on implementing comprehension strategies in the classroom. Although teachers did not place much emphasis on this strategy, as they focused more on foundational lessons such as phonics instruction and phonemic awareness, the strategies implemented in Project RIPARU still contributed to students becoming more proficient readers.

This finding aligns with the study by Banditvilai (2020), which emphasized that reading comprehension should be explicitly taught as a skill to help students effectively understand what they read. After all, the primary objective of the reading program is to holistically enhance students' reading skills.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the teachers' strategies was further supported by students' responses during focus group discussions, which highlighted the theme of instructional effectiveness within Project RIPARU. Students noted that structured instructional strategies significantly enhanced their reading comprehension and fluency, while also boosting their confidence in expressing ideas. Additionally, they acknowledged that these pedagogical approaches played a vital role in improving their overall academic performance, as stronger

reading skills contributed to better understanding across various subjects. These findings support and reinforce the Implementation Science Theory (Routledge, 2024), which emphasizes the importance of strategic implementation and evidence-based reading interventions in helping struggling readers develop essential literacy skills.

Instructional Effectiveness

Several informants (2, 5, 6, and 8) reported noticeable progress in their reading abilities. Informant 2 explicitly acknowledges initial difficulties but credits the teacher's instruction for their improvement as shown in the statement:

Informant 2: (Medyo nag-improve po sir yung pagbasa, yung mahina ka sa una tapos papabasa-basahin ka ng teacher mo at mas lalo   akong nag-improve.) "(My) Reading has improved a bit, sir; I   was weak at first, but when my teacher taught me to read, I   improved even more."

Similarly, Informants 6 and 8 emphasize that they have become better at reading, indicating that the strategies employed have facilitated skill acquisition.

Informant 6: (Natuto po akong magbasa.) "I learned to read." and Informant 8 remarked, (Mas nagi po akong magaling at umayos yung pagbabasa ko.) "I became better, and my reading improved."

This suggested that the instructional methods—whether phonics-based, whole language or other reading interventions—have yielded positive results.

These observations aligned with contemporary research emphasizing the efficacy of explicit and systematic reading instruction. Such instruction often incorporates phonics-based methods, which have been shown to enhance foundational reading skills (Thompson, 2024). For instance, a recent article discusses the complexities and debates surrounding reading instruction methods in the U.S., emphasizing the necessity of a balanced approach that integrates phonics with other teaching strategies to accommodate the diverse needs of students (The Atlantic, 2025).

The overall sentiment is one of progress, but the responses lack specificity about the strategies employed. The effectiveness of reading instruction depends on evidence-based approaches, including scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and interactive engagement.

On the other hand, strategies such as teaching comprehension emerged as the least utilized by teachers at Pambuhan National High School (NHS) in their implementation of Project MMK. This trend mirrors that of the Bahi NHS, where teaching comprehension also received the lowest score. These findings suggest that teachers may have deprioritized comprehension skills in favor of focusing on phonics and phonemic instruction. This coincides with the students' responses during focus group discussions, where many reported ongoing challenges with reading comprehension despite participating in the reading program. These difficulties were particularly evident among nearly all struggling readers at Pambuhan NHS and approximately one-fourth of those at Bahi NHS. The study highlights the need for teachers to be critically mindful in effectively utilizing all reading strategies, as the primary goal of any reading program is to holistically develop students into proficient readers.

Comprehension Challenges

However, Informant 5 highlighted a lingering challenge: (Gumaling na ako magbasa pero minsan, hindi ko naiintindihan yung iba kong binabasa.). "I've gotten better at reading, but sometimes, I can't understand some words that I am reading." This highlighted a persistent issue, while their reading skills have improved, comprehension remains a struggle. This points to a potential gap in instruction, perhaps an overemphasis on decoding words rather than fostering deeper comprehension strategies such as inferencing, summarization, and critical thinking. Effective reading instruction should balance fluency with comprehension to ensure meaningful learning. This underscores the importance of not only teaching decoding skills but also fostering higher-order thinking

Additionally, the indicator under teaching strategies, specifically the organization and planning of effective instruction for struggling readers, received a very satisfactory rating of 2.75. This suggests that teachers did not effectively deliver instruction to students who are participating in Project MMK. This finding is consistent with the professional competencies and manner of implementation observed in Project MMK. Highlighting that those teachers themselves were not able to execute a well-planned reading instruction to mitigate the reading dilemma of the students through the Project MMK.

Recent studies underscored the critical importance of structured organization and planning in delivering effective instruction to struggling readers. Neglecting these strategies can significantly hinder students' reading development. For instance, a study by Stevenson (2015) revealed that students who were not provided with structured planning and clear goals exhibited increased latency in task engagement, indicating delays in starting and completing reading tasks. This suggests that the absence of organized and effective instructional strategies can lead to decreased student engagement and slower progress in reading skills.

Thus, the reading strategies employed by Pambuhan NHS teachers during the Project MMK ("Madya Magbasa Kita") program did not significantly contribute to the reading improvement of struggling readers. These strategies were inconsistently observed and implemented throughout the intervention period, which resulted in no improvement among the struggling students.

Innovative Reading Programs Effectively Enhance the Reading Performance of Students

This study found that the innovative reading program (Project RIPARU) effectively enhanced almost all of the students' reading performance. The data showed a measurable increase in reading performance under Project RIPARU, which was also verified through the students' responses in the focus group discussion, highlighting two recurrent themes which they believe have enhanced their performances: 1) improved reading fluency; and 2) increased motivation and confidence. Several studies support the idea that effective reading programs develop reading competence in struggling students by using proven instructional practices (Diamond, 2006). Similarly, Aguilera's (2014) study found that students who participated in intervention programs showed significant improvement. Since all the computed Z-values (3.6, 3.65, 4.71, and 4.71) exceed the critical value of 1.96, the differences observed between the pretests and posttests, as well as in reading behavior, showed improvement but were not significant. Although Project RIPARU had a meaningful and positive impact on students' academic performance and reading behavior, as supported by strong evidence against the null hypothesis, the p-value indicates only minimal improvement in overall reading performance. This is due to some students scoring lower after the reading program, which affected the overall results. In contrast, while Project MMK yielded a higher tabulated value, the evidence was not sufficient to conclude that its specific innovative reading program produced a statistically significant improvement. Despite this, the school principals' responses highlighted that a successful intervention reading program is achievable if it is properly and well-implemented.

Successful Innovative Reading Program

Reading programs are essential for developing reading and comprehension skills, with interventions tailored to help students facing difficulties.

Informant 1: (Tama, malaking tulong sa bawat mag-aaral ang pagbabasa para mapaunlad ang kanilang kasanayan sa pagbabasa at pagunawa. Gayundin, matuturuan din ang mga mag-aaral na nahihirapan magbasa.) Reading is a big help to every student in developing their reading and comprehension skills. Likewise, students who have difficulty reading can also be taught.

That is why the school heads of both schools, Bahi National High School and Pambuhan National High School, ensured their students' continued learning in reading by providing remedial sessions after school, focusing on every student, especially the struggling readers.

Informant 1: (Oo, para masisiguro ang patuloy na pagkatuto ng mga mag-aaral sa pagbabasa, magbibigay ako

ng remedial or catch-up na isasagawa sa hapon pagkatapos ng klase.) To ensure students' continued learning in reading, I will provide remedial or catch-up lessons to be conducted in the afternoon after school.

Informant 2: Yes, to address the students struggling with reading and comprehension. Reading programs help struggling learners to read effectively and efficiently.

To do this, reading programs were anchored from RLA and PHIL-IRI results to gauge student levels as baseline to create a well-planned remediation program for slow readers in order to enhance their reading skills and not be left behind with their academic performance. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Informant 2: We have RLA and PHIL-IRI to gauge the students' levels. We also conduct reading remediation for slow readers to enhance their reading skills further.

Additionally, adapting successful reading programs used in other schools, these interventions have proven effective in improving reading proficiency by monitoring progress and using varied teaching methods.

Informant 1: (Ipapatupad ko Ang Project TUTOK na layunin nitong matuturuan ang bawat mag-aaral lalo na yung mga struggling readers.) I will implement the intervention called Project TUTOK to focus on every student, especially struggling readers.

Informant 2: Adapting successful reading programs widely used in other schools. Reading interventions and remediations help a lot in teaching reading to struggling learners.

Thus, these school heads agreed that reading intervention programs improved struggling reading performance.

Informant 2: Yes. Reading intervention helps and improves struggling learners' reading proficiency by monitoring their reading progress and development.

Informant 1: (Naniniwala ako na epektibo ang reading program or intervention dahil naniniwala ako na bawat mag-aaral ay mas natuto kung may ibang paraan ng pagtuturo.) The reading program or intervention is effective because students learn better with a different teaching method.

However, it was noted that while nearly all struggling students in Project MMK showed no significant improvement in their reading abilities and behaviors, only one student progressed to Level 4 in reading behavior, the highest recorded improvement. This suggested that the majority of Project MMK participants exhibited no measurable improvement in their reading performance and reading behavior that lead to the ineffectiveness of teachers' competence due to varied reasons resulting to unsuccessful implementation of the reading program.

Additionally, a focus group discussion provided insights into how innovative reading programs contribute to students' reading performance. A thematic analysis of the responses revealed two major impacts: improved reading fluency, and increased motivation and confidence. These findings align with contemporary research on evidence-based reading instruction (Duke & Cartwright, 2021; Ehri, 2022).

Improved Reading Fluency

Several informants (4, 7, 8) explicitly mention their ability to read better, highlighting enhanced fluency as shown in the following excerpts:

Informant 4: (Masaya po sir kasi nakakabasa na ako at nakakaintindi na ako.) I'm happy because I can read and understand.

Informant 7: (Masaya din, marunong na ako magbasa. Maiitindihan ko na yung lesson at hindi na ako mahihirapan at makakasabay na ako sa klase.) I'm happy too. I can read now. I can understand the lesson, and I won't have any difficulty, and I can keep up with the class.

Informant 8: (Masaya ako kasi gumagaling na ako magbasa. Nakakabasa na ako ng English pakonti-konti.) I'm happy because I'm getting better at reading. I can read English little by little.

These informants' narratives prove how improved reading fluency enhances learners' comprehension and performance. Their experiences support theoretical frameworks in guidance skills of the teachers that impact the reading proficiency of the learners. This is further supported by a recent study that says structured and repetitive practice helps students develop automaticity in word recognition and eventually improved their reading skills (Rasinski & Young, 2023).

Increased Motivation and Confidence

Informants 2, 4, 7, and 8 express happiness and satisfaction with their reading progress as shown in the following excerpts:

Informant 2: (Maogma po ta nakanood man ako tapos naintindihan ko na man ang tigtukdo). I'm happy because I learned something and can already understand the lessons.

Informant 4: (Maogma ta nakabasa at intindi na ako). I'm happy because I can read and understand.

Informant 8: (Maogma po ako ta nagmaray man pagbasa ko. Nakakabasa na ako ning English padikit-dikit). I'm happy because I'm getting better at reading. I can read English little by little).

Motivation is a key factor in reading development, as engagement in literacy activities directly impacts learning outcomes (Guthrie & Klauda, 2016). The ability to keep up with lessons (*Informant 7 - Yes, I can read well*) and the recognition of reading as a tool for future success (*Informant 5: To help myself keep up with the lesson and to find a good job*) suggest that innovative reading programs foster both academic and personal growth. Research supports that student-centered, engaging instructional methods enhance both motivation and long-term reading success (Gambrell & Marinak, 2019).

Overall, the findings reinforce that innovative reading programs, when properly implemented with the right strategies and frequent engagement, can lead to tangible improvements in reading abilities and behaviors.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the study's summary, findings, and conclusions regarding the teachers' utilization of the innovative reading program to address struggling readers in the Garchitorena district.

Research Question No. 1: What are the professional competencies of reading teachers?

Finding: Teachers' professional competence is characterized by instructional skills, classroom management, guidance abilities, and personal and professional skills. Teachers from Bahi National High School have sufficient qualifications to be competent reading teachers. Although half of them were not language teachers, almost all acquired relevant knowledge and training in teaching reading, which provided them with enough knowledge for reading instruction. Meanwhile, the majority of Pambuhan National High School teachers had neither formal pedagogical backgrounds nor relevant training, which compromised their competencies and made them less effective reading teachers.

Conclusion: Teachers' professional competencies in teaching reading are aligned with their professional backgrounds and are complemented by necessary specialized training, creating competent reading teachers. However, teachers at Pambuhan National High School were not equipped with necessary skills specifically in reading instruction to properly utilized the reading programs. Thus, teachers should be equipped with language aligned courses and relevant training and seminars to improve the reading performance of the struggling readers.

Recommendation: Teachers should enhance their competence in teaching reading by attending professional pedagogy courses and participating in relevant training and seminars to continuously update their knowledge

and skills for new approaches and strategies in reading instruction. Furthermore, reading teachers should share their skills with other teachers to effectively implement innovative reading programs.

Research Question No. 2: What methods do teachers use to implement innovative reading programs?

Finding: The most commonly used methods by teachers at Bahi National High School included exposing students to hands-on learning through field experiences, such as mentoring and collaborative activities, and considering pacing for mastery of the lessons. The highest percentage of outstanding from Bahi National High School teachers underscored the positive outcomes in students' reading development, attributed to activities that effectively stimulated their progress in reading under Project RIPARU. Meanwhile, Pambuhan National High School teachers frequently used peer-assisted lesson instruction in their Project MMK. Although they exerted efforts in their reading program, it was not sufficient to gain positive results.

Conclusion: Teachers implementing the methods in the innovative reading program brought significant improvement in students' reading performance in Project RIPARU, which effectively enhanced students' proficiency levels in reading. It is crucial for teachers to actively engage parents and stakeholders in the continuous monitoring and guidance of their children's reading progress and to provide necessary teaching aids. This collaborative approach and program's structured implementation can lead to improved outcomes in students' reading performance.

Recommendation: The study proved that teachers' competence enhance students' reading performance. Project MMK was not successful because it highlighted concerns regarding teachers' oversight of the importance of involving parents and other stakeholders, integrating ICT, providing differentiated materials in the program, and well-planned, well-structured reading program, timeliness of the program, distance of the areas where students live.

Research Question No. 3: How effective are the strategies employed by the reading teachers?

Finding: The strategies used by the teachers in Project RIPARU were outstanding. Successful strategies included facilitating students' successful completion of lesson activities, teaching fluent reading, maximizing the core reading program, effective phonics instruction, and teaching phonemic awareness. These strategies were further supported by focus group discussions (FGDs), where students highlighted how their teachers' instructional effectiveness significantly improved their learning. Meanwhile, Project MMK teachers' strategies low percentage of outstanding responses, wherein teachers engaged students in meaningful language instruction. However, this was not enough, as most of the strategies used were notably weak, as confirmed by students' feedback, where they encountered comprehension challenges despite the teachers' reading program initiatives.

Conclusion: The strategies utilized by the teachers in Project RIPARU proved highly effective. Both teachers' responses and student feedback from FGDs aligned, underscoring the success of these strategies in fostering students' reading development. However, due to inexperience in reading instruction, Project MMK teachers were not able to fully utilize the strategies effectively, resulting in teachers' ineffectiveness to successfully improve students reading performance.

Recommendation: This study emphasized the importance of strengthening students' comprehension skills. It is highly recommended that teachers focus on teaching comprehension strategies and on organizing and planning effective instruction for struggling readers, as these approaches significantly support students in building a solid foundation in language familiarization, word recognition, and strong communication skills.

Research Question No. 4: How do innovative reading programs enhance students' reading performance?

Finding: Students' reading ability and reading behavior improved under Project RIPARU at Bahi National High School. This improvement is evidenced by the data from their pre-test and post-test results. On the other hand, due to a lack of professional qualifications and ineffective methods and strategies employed, students under Project MMK at Pambuhan National High School showed no improvement.

Conclusion: The project RIPARU was effective as it improved the reading performance of the struggling readers of Bahi National High School. However, there could have been other factors besides the teachers' lack of formal training in teaching reading that might have hindered the project's (MMK) success in addressing the issue at hand at Pambuhan National High School.

Recommendation: The schools should continue the reading programs until the district's literacy rate has improved, as reflected in the end-of-school-year literacy assessment. This emphasizes the importance of innovative reading programs in supporting the improvement of struggling students. A continuous plan of action for implementing the innovative reading program is crucial to consistently improving and enhancing students' reading abilities and behaviors such as consistent implementation of the innovative reading program within the school to avoid compromise the effectiveness of the program and for continuous update of teachers' skills and knowledge aligned to reading instructions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

1. Aguilera, A. B. (2014). Strategy Intervention To Enhance Reading Comprehension Of 15-Year-Old Students In Mexico. White Rose eThesis. https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/6747/1/phd_thesis_ethesis_correct_pages.pdf
2. Aindra, A. D., Wibawa, A. P., & Nurhadi, D. (2022). Teacher's competence and performance: A systematic theoretical study. *International Journal of Education and Learning*, *4*(1), 65–80. https://doi.org/10.31763/ijele.v4i1.397

3. Alda, R. et al., (2020b, August 31). Teacher Education Institutions in the Philippines Towards Education 4.0. http://ijlter.net/index.php/ijlter/article/view/266.

4. Almagro, R. E., Flores, L. C., Amora, M. V., & Bauyot, M. M. (2024). Implementation Practices of reading programs in elementary Education in Davao de Oro: a multiple case study. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, VIII(I), 779–794. https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2024.801059

5. Auld, S. (2023, February 3). Reading daily improves comprehension and student performance. ACC Blog. https://www.acc.edu.au/blog/reading-comprehension-student-performance/

6. Babbin, E., EdD. (2024, April 2). Questions to ask about the school's reading instruction. Understood. https://www.understood.org/en/articles/checklist-questions-to-ask-about-the-schools-reading-instruction

7. Banditvilai, C. (2020). The effectiveness of reading strategies on reading comprehension. International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, 46–50. https://doi.org/10.18178/ijssh.2020.v10.1012

8. Belsky, G. (2023). What Is Executive Function? | Understood. Understood. https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-executive-function

9. Bendanillo, M. (2021). Parental Involvement In Relation To Students' Reading Performance. ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.46360/globus.edu.220212014

10. Birnbaum, L., & Kröner, S. (2022). A Review on Antecedents and Consequences of Leisure Reading and Writing in Children. SAGE Open, 12(3), 215824402211138. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221113823

11. Blanch, S., Duran, D., Flores, M. R. P., & Valdebenito, V. (2012). The Effects of a Peer

12. Tutoring Programme to Improve the Reading Comprehension Competence Involving Primary Students at School and their Families at Home. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 46, 1684–1688. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.361

13. Brackett, M. A., & Rivers, S. E. (2014). Transforming students' lives with social and Emotional learning. In R. Pekrun & L. Linnenbrink-Garcia (Eds.), *International handbook of emotions in education* (pp. 368–388). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-09239-019

14. Briones (2020). Sulong EduKalidad a move to innovate PH education, | Department of Education. https://www.deped.gov.ph/2020/02/14/sulong-edukalidad-a-move-innovate-ph-education-says-briones/

15. Briones calls for innovation unity in 2021 National Brigada Eskwela Kick-Off |Department of Education. (2021, August 7). https://www.deped.gov.ph/2021/08/07/briones-calls-for-innovation-unity-in-2021-national-brigada-eskwela-kick-off/

16. Bushey, C. (2024, November 20). No degree, no problem: US employers look beyond college credentials. *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/2c2558fe-fc6e-4a92-b54a-c78aede7336b?utm_source

17. Cabarillos, R. D. (2024, July 5). *Exploring Stakeholders Engagement In School Development: A Mixed Methods Investigation Of Insights And Strategies*. https://cmc.edu.ph/research/index.php/journals/article/view/155?utm_source

18. Castles, A., Rastle, K., & Nation, K. (2018). Ending the Reading Wars: Reading Acquisition from Novice to Expert. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *19*(1), 5–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100618772271

19. Chetty, R., John N. Friedman, & Jonah E. Rockoff. (2014). "Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood."*American Economic Review*, 104 (9): 2633–79.DOI: 10.1257/aer.104.9.2633

20. Clavel, J.G. and Mediavilla, M. (2020), "The intergenerational effect of parental enthusiasm for reading," Applied Economic Analysis, Vol. 28 No. 84, pp. 239-259. https://doi.org/10.1108/AEA-12-2019-0050

21. Cpatete. (2024, February 2). Innovative educational interventions to enhance reading

22. proficiency. EMU Online. https://online.emich.edu/degrees/edu/masters-of-arts/reading/interventions-to-enhance-literacy/

23. Cruz-Roa, R. (2024). Critical Reading inside a Cross-curricular Approach. *HOW*, *31*(1), 107–122. https://doi.org/10.19183/how.31.1.652

24. Curran, k (2021). **BENEFITS OF READING 20-30 MINUTES A DAY.** HTTPS://WWW.D128.K12.IL.US/O/NAVAJO/ARTICLE/438700?UTM_SOURCE

25. Dean, J., Pascoe, M. & Le Roux, J., 2021, 'Information and communication technology reading interventions: A scoping review', Reading & Writing 12(1), a294. https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v12i1.294

26. Dela Cruz, F. Y. B. (2022). On the status of English in the Philippines. UP Working Papers In Linguistics. Retrieved April 23, 2023, from https://linguistics.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/24-On-the-Status-of-English-in-the-Philippines.pdf

27. DepEd. (2023, July 6). DepEd to conduct National Learning Camp to enhance learning outcomes, support teachers | https://www.deped.gov.ph/2023/07/06/deped-to-conduct-national-learning-camp-to-enhance-learning-outcomes-support-teachers/

28. Dixon, M., & Oakhill, J. (2024). Exploring teachers' teaching reading comprehension: knowledge, behaviours and attitudes. *Education 3-13*, *52*(7), 963–978. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2357884

29. DM 173, s. 2019 – Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiative) | Department of Education. (2019, November 22). https://www.deped.gov.ph/2019/11/22/november-22-2019-dm-173-s-2019-hamon-bawat-bata-bumabasa-3bs-initiative/

30. DO 014, S. 2023 – Policy Guidelines on the implementation of the National Learning Camp | Department of Education. (2023, July 5). https://www.deped.gov.ph/2023/07/05/july-5-2023-do-014-s-2023-policy-guidelines-on-the-implementation-of-the-national-learning-camp/

31. DO 42, s. 2017 – National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers | Department of Education. (2017, August 11). https://www.deped.gov.ph/2017/08/11/do-42-s-2017-national-adoption-and-implementation-of-the-philippine-professional-standards-for-teachers/

32. DepEd: Non-readers figure in Bicol premature | Department of Education. (2020, February 17). https://www.deped.gov.ph/2020/02/17/deped-non-readers-figure-in-bicol-premature/

33. Diamond, L. (2006). Implementing and Sustaining an Effective Reading Program. The Consortium on Reading Excellence, Inc. https://www.shastacoe.org/uploaded/Dept/is/general/Teacher_Section/COREBriefingPaperK-8Reading.pdf

34. Díaz-Iso, A., Velasco, E., & Meza, P. (2022). Interventions to improve reading competence: a Systematic review. Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364154004Interventions_to_improve_reading_competence_a_systematic_review

35. Durrance, S. (2015, December 10). Are teachers prepared to teach reading? - Southern Regional Education Board. Southern Regional Education Board. https://www.sreb.org/blog-post/are-teachers-prepared-teach-reading

36. Dwiningtiyas, G. N., Sofyan, D., & Puspita, H. (2020). TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION. JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy), 4(2). https://doi.org/10.25157/jall.v4i2.3682

37. Early Intervention Foundation (n.d). How to conduct an implementation and process evaluation. EIF Evaluation Hub. https://evaluationhub.eif.org.uk/implementation-and-process studies/#:~:text=What%20is%20an%20implementation%20%26%20process,reach%20%E2%80%93%20are%20practical%20and%20achievable.

38. EdCom 2 (2024). *EDCOM 2 consultations highlight need to train teachers for specialization*. EDCOM 2. https://edcom2.gov.ph/edcom-2-consultations-highlight-need-to-train-teachers-for-specialization/

39. Ellis, M. (2019). Teacher competencies in supporting reading in English as a foreign language. Lubelskie George, J. (2024, June 26). *Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Reading System®: What you need to know - Wilson Language Training*. Wilson Language Training. https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/announcements/orton-gillingham-and-wilson-reading-system-what-you-need-to-know/ https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED567059.pdf

40. EIF Evaluation Hub (2021). *Step 4: Conducting an implementation and process study*. EIF Evaluation Hub. https://evaluationhub.eif.org.uk/implementation-and-processstudies/#:~:text=What%20is%20an%20implementation%20%26%20process,reach%20%E2%80%93%20are%20practical%20and%20achievable.

41. Ellis, M. (2019). Teacher competencies in supporting reading in English as a foreign language. *Lubelskie Materiały Neofilologiczne/Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature*, *43*(3), 73. https://doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2019.43.3.73-87

42. Evans, O. G. (2023). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/bronfenbrenner.html

43. Fletcher, A. (2017). *The Guide to Student Voice*. Common Action Publishing. https://adamfletcher.net/books/the-guide-to-student-voice/

44. Fung, C. et al. (2021). Perception and Benefits of Writing Personalized Weekly e-Learning Journals and the Effect on University Students' Academic Self-efficacy. 10.11575/ajer.v67i4.69349

45. FutureLearn. (2024, January 26). *What is classroom management? - FutureLearn*. FutureLearn. https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/what-is-classroom-management

46. Genç-Ersoy, B.. (2021). Stakeholder views on early literacy, reading, and writing acquisition in preschool. Journal of Qualitative Research in Education, 25, 255-286. doi: 10.14689/enad.25.11

47. Ghafournia N., Afghari A. (2013). Relationship between reading proficiency, strategic

48. competence, and reading comprehension test performance: A study of Iranian EFL learners. International Education Studies, 6(8), 21–30. https://doi.org.10.5539/ies.v6n8p21

49. Ghalebi, R., Sadighi, F., Bagheri, M. S., & Gilakjani, A. P. (2021). A study of vocabulary

50. Learning strategies among high and low Iranian English vocabulary learners. Cogent Education, 8(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2020.1834933

51. Graham, L. J., White, S., Cologon, K., & Pianta, R. C. (2020). Do teachers' years of experience make a difference in the quality of teaching? Teaching and Teacher Education, 96, 103190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103190

52. Guidelines on proposals for curriculum innovations, income-generating projects, special programs and publication of articles. SDO Camarines Sur. (n.d.). Retrieved April 23, 2023, fromhttps://8452840150705882723456970.preview.editmysite.com/uploads/8/4/5/2/8452840/166_s._2020.pdf

53. Gumarang, B. K., Jr. & Briggete K. Gumarang (2021). Unraveling Deterioration in the Quality of Philippine Education. https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=16912

54. Gustian, K., Hermagustiana, I., & Sunggingwati, D. (2023). Exploring The Teacher Agency Regarding Implementing Flipped-Differentiated Learning in The Context of EFL Learners. https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i1.4239

55. Harvard Catalyst (n.d.). *Implementation science.*. https://catalyst.harvard.edu/community-engagement/implementation-science/

56. Hattie, J. (2012). Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning. Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Visible-Learning-for-Teachers-Maximizing-Impact-on-Learning/Hattie/p/book/9780415690157

57. Hasbrouck & Denton (2005). The Reading Coach: A How-To Manual for Success. Longmont, CO: Sopris West Education Services. Retrieved from https://studylib.net/doc/7518763/teacher-needs-survey---oregon-reading-first-center

58. Heacox, D. (2012). Making Differentiation a Habit: How to Ensure Success in Academically Diverse Classrooms. Free Spirit Publishing. https://www.teachercreatedmaterials.com/estore/files/samples/899399s.pdf

59. Hicks, J. (2018). The Effectiveness of Reading Interventions for Middle School Students with Learning Disabilities [Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies, Walden University]. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7157&context=dissertations

60. Hulu, A. (2020). The impact of teachers' guidance on students' learning motivation. *Reseach Gate*. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200311.004

61. İlğan, A., Aktan, O., & Sevinç, Ö. S. (2022). Professional and personal characteristics of excellent teachers. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364938202_Professional_and_personal_characteristics_of_excellent_teachers

62. Iheakanwa, Juliana Uloma; Obro, Sunday; and Akpochafo, Williams Pius, "Reading Ability, Study Habits and Students' Academic Performance in Social Studies" (2021). Library Philosophy and Practice (ejournal). 5675. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/5675

63. Indriani and Sujeta (2023). Fostering reading interest through digital storytelling for young learners. Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn). Vol. 17, No. 2, May 2023, pp. 301~306. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1386142.pdf

64. International Literacy Association. (2023). Enhancing Reading Comprehension through Innovative Programs. https://www.literacyworldwide.org/meetings-events/ila-digitalevents?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwnK60BhA9EiwAmpHZw8_bGO1sY5gSiO3p7cQVrzlLxPTyyRGC6iNe3f5TS7eHYMgbKLN9RoCrlsQAvD_BwE&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwnK60BhA9EiwAmpHZw8_bGO1sY5gSiO3p7cQVrzlLxPT-yyRGC6iNe3f5TS7eHYMgbKLN9RoCrlsQAvD_BwE

65. Jason E. Cartoneros and Lilibeth S. Galvez, 2023. Literary SOS: The Interventions of Teachers to Struggling Readers. United International Journal for Research & Technology (UIJRT). 5(1), pp14-18. https://uijrt.com/paper/literary-sos-interventions-teachers-struggling-readers?utm_source

66. Jenkins, K et al. (2025, February 26). Strengthen Literacy instructions. NASSP. https://www.nassp.org/publication/principal-leadership/volume-25-2024-2025/principal-leadership-march-2025/strengthening-literacy-instruction/?

67. Kumar, P. (2025, March 25). The Essential Role of Guidance in Education: An Introduction • Teachers Institute. *Teachers Institute*. https://teachers.institute/guidance-counselling/essential-role-guidance-education-introduction/

68. Karadag, R. (2014). Primary School Teacher Candidates' Views towards Critical

69. Reading Skills and Perceptions of their Competence. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 152, 889–896. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.09.339

70. Kiptoo et al., (2017). Effect of Teachers' Competence in English Phonology on Reading

71. Ability among PreSchool Children in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRRSSH) Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp: (138-149) https://www.paperpublications.org/upload/book/Effect%20of%20Teachers%E2%80%99%20Competence%20in%20English-966.pdf

72. Kulmhofer-Bommer, A., Seifert, S., Paleczek, L., & Gasteiger-Klicpera, B. (2022). Bending and Bowing: How Teachers Adapt a Vocabulary-Based Reading Program to Their Students Needs. Journal of Education, 002205742211126. https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574221112627

73. Laurito, G.G. (2022). Teaching Reading Competence of Teachers And Performance of Pupils in English in Blended Learning. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES. https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/1-IJAMS-JUNE-ISSUE-71-82.pdf

74. Lavrakas, P. J. (2008). Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods. SAGE Publications, Inc. eBooks. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963947

75. Learning for Justice. (n.d.). Directed Reading - Thinking Activity (DR-TA). Learning for Justice. https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/close-and-critical-reading/directed-reading-thinking

76. Llego, M. A. (2022). DepEd Guidelines on Conducting a Project for Innovation in School.TeacherPH. https://www.teacherph.com/deped-project-for-innovation-in-school/

77. Magableh, I. S. I., & Abdullah, A. (2021). The impact of differentiated instruction on students' reading Comprehension attainment in Mixed-Ability Classrooms. *Interchange*, *52*(2), 255–272. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-021-09427-3

78. Materiały Neofilologiczne/Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature, 43(3), 73. https://doi.org/10.17951/lsmll.2019.43.3.73-87

79. Main Regional Results. (n.d.). https://www.seaplm.org/index.php?option=com_content&view==article&id=44&Itemd=440&lang=n

80. Mallillin et al. (2023). Instructional Skills And Competency Skills Theory In Modern Teaching. ResearchGate. DOI: 10.46827/ejes.v10i9.4981

81. Margaret Troyer, Teacher implementation of an adolescent reading intervention, Teaching and Teacher Education, Volume 65, 2017, Pages 21-33, ISSN 0742-051X, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.03.005.

82. Mahapoonyanont, Natcha, Educational Innovation Based on Assessment for Learning Concepts: A Guide to Drive Education 4.0 (June 4, 2020). Global J. Bus. Soc. Sci. Review 8 (2) 132–143 (2020), Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3623005

83. Martins, M.A., Capellini, S.A. Identification of struggling readers or at risk of reading Difficulties with one-minute fluency measures. Psicol. Refl. Crít. 34, 10 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41155-021-

00174-z

84. McGuire, B. (2023, June 15). The Science of Reading for Non-Reading Teachers. American College of Education. https://ace.edu/blog/the-science-of-reading-for-non-reading-teachers/

85. Mcleod, S., PhD. (2023). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development. Simply Psychology.https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html#:~:text=Vygotsky's%20sociocultural%20theory%20views%20human,more%20knowledgeable%20members%20of%20society.

86. Merto, M. A. (2019, November). Implementation of School-Based Reading Program In The Division Of Lucena City. International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications. Retrieved April 23, 2023, from https://www.ijarp.org/published-research-papers/nov2019/Implementation-Of-School-based-Reading-Program-In-The-Division-Of-Lucena-City.pdf

87. Mitra, D. (2018). Student voice in secondary schools: the possibility for more profound change. Journal of Educational Administration, 56(5), 473–487. https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-01-2018-0007

88. Moran, M. (2021). What are Focus Group Interviews and Why Should I Conduct Them? StatisticsSolutions.https://www.statisticssolutions.com/what-are-focus-group-interviews-and-why-should-i-conduct-them/#:~:text=Focus%20group%20interviews%20are%20interviews,between%20four%20and%20eight%20participants.

89. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2000) How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School: Expanded Edition. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/9853.

90. National Center on Improving Literacy, (2023). *The Educator's Science of Reading Toolbox: Explicit vocabulary instruction to build equitable access for all learners*. National Center on Improving Literacy. https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/educators-science-reading-toolbox-explicit-vocabulary-instruction-build-equitable-access-all/index.html

91. Nardo, M. T. B. (2017). Modular Instruction Enhances Learner Autonomy. American Journal of Educational Research, 5(10), 1024–1034. https://doi.org/10.12691/education-5-10-3

92. Nerdish (2025). *Wondering "How Long Should I Read a Day?" Here is an answer.* Nerdish: Learn Something New Every Day. https://nerdish.io/blog/how-long-should-you-read/#:~:text=However%2C%20numerous%20studies%20have%20defined,Think%20about%20it.

93. Nessipbayeva, O. (2012). The Competencies Of The Modern Teacher. *Eric*. Https://Files.Eric.Ed.Gov/Fulltext/Ed567059.Pdf

94. Nguyen, T. L. P. (2022). Teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension. International Journal of Language Instruction, 1(1), 19-28. DOI: https://doi.org/10.54855/ijli.22113

95. November 22, 2019 DM 173, s. 2019 – Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiative) | Department of Education. (2019, November 22). https://www.deped.gov.ph/2019/11/22/november-22-2019-dm-173-s-2019-hamon-bawat-bata-bumabasa-3bs-initiative/

96. Nyatsikor, M. K., Sosu, E., Mtika, P., & Robson, D. (2020). Teacher characteristics and children's educational attainment in Ghana: Do some teacher characteristics matter more for children attending disadvantaged schools? Frontiers in Education, 5. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2020.00162

97. OECD. (2019). PISA 2018. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf

98. OECD. (2023). PISA 2022 Database, Volume I Table I.B1.2.2 and Table I.B1.5.5.ht tps://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202022%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations.pdf

99. Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015).Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. Administration and Policy in Mental Health, 42(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

100. Peters, M. C., Hebbecker, K., & Souvignier, E. (2021). Effects of Providing Teachers With Tools for Implementing Assessment-Based Differentiated Reading Instruction in Second Grade. Assessment for Effective Intervention, 47(3), 157–169. https://doi.org/10.1177/15345084211014926

101. Pelletier, D. (2025, January 14). *Iowa Reading Research Center - the University of Iowa*. https://irrc.education.uiowa.edu/blog/2025/01/how-teachers-parents-and-friends-can-support-student-reading-motivation

102. Pfost, M., Dörfler, T., & Artelt, C. (2012). Reading competence development of poor readers in

a German elementary school sample: an empirical examination of the Matthew effect model. Journal of Research in Reading, 35(4), 411–426. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2010.01478.x

103. PRC-CPDAS. (n.d.) Division Training of Trainers on Higher Order Thinking Skills Professional Learning Packages for Mathematics, Science, and English Teachers. (n.d.). Professional Regulatory Commission; https://cpdas.prc .gov.ph/public/nameOfProvider.aspx?id=khiCFIERjwoslcASX72TSA%3D%3D

104. Preston, V. (2009). Questionnaire Survey. In Elsevier eBooks (pp. 46–52). https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-008044910-4.00504-6.

105. PISA 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment. (2022, June). World Bank. Retrieved April 30, 2023, fromhttps://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/184251_593328815913/MainReport.docx#:~:text=Participating%20in%20the%20Programme%20for,last%20in%20science%20and%20mathematics.

106. Quaglia, R.J. and Corso, M.J. (2014) Student Voice The Instrument of Change. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks. - References - Scientific Research Publishing. (n.d.). https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=1876678

107. Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. Proceedings of the Nutrition Society, 63(4), 655–660. https://doi.org/10.1079/pns2004399

108. Rapoport, S., Rubinsten, O., & Katzir, T. (2016). Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding the Role of Executive Functions in Reading and Arithmetic. Frontiers in Psychology, 7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01567

109. Razavipour, K., Rezagah, K. Language assessment in the new English curriculum in Iran: managerial, institutional, and professional barriers. Lang Test Asia 8, 9 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-018-0061-8

110. Reeve, J. (2016). Autonomy-Supportive Teaching: What it is, how to do it. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 129–152). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-630-0_7

111. Reinke, L.T., Stephan, M., Ayan-Civak, R. et al. Teachers press for contextualization to Ground students' mathematical understanding of ratios. J Math Teacher Educ 26, 335–361 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10857-022-09531-w

112. Renaissance. (2023, January 31). *Daily reading practice and the magic of 15 minutes*. Renaissance. https://www.renaissance.com/2018/01/23/blog-magic-15-minutes-reading-practice-reading-growth/#:~:text=Reading%20gains%20fall%20well%20below,Family%20background

113. Rippel, M. (2022, July 4). *How much time should you spend on reading?* All About Learning Press. https://www.allaboutlearningpress.com/blog/reading-how-much-time/#:~:text=We%20recommend%20spending%20about%2020,helpful%20to%20set%20a%20timer.

114. Routledge (2024). Implementation Science: Theory and application. Routledge & CRC Press. https://www.routledge.com/Implementation-Science-Theory-and-Application/Nilsen/p/book/9781032330846

115. Rosenshine, B. (2012). Principles of instruction: Research-based strategies that all teachers should know. American Educator, 36(1), 12–19.https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/Rosenshine.pdf

116. Rumfola, (2017). "Positive Reinforcement Positively Helps Students in the Classroom." Education and Human Development Master's Theses. 786. http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/ehd_theses/786

117. Rupley, W. H., Blair, T. R., & Nichols, W. C. (2009). Effective Reading Instruction for Struggling Readers: The Role of Direct/Explicit Teaching. Reading & Writing Quarterly, 25(2–3), 125–138. https://doi.org/10.1080/10573560802683523

118. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness.* The Guilford Press. https://doi.org/10.1521/978.14625/28806.

119. Tingley, S. (2021, September 3). Don't wait until it is too late: How to intervene with struggling students early. Hey Teach! https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/dont-wait-until-its-too-late-how-intervene-struggling-students-early1809.html#:~:text=They're%20the%20kids%20who,way%20usually%20doesn't%20work.

120. Topping & Ehly (n.d.). Peer-assisted learning. Routledge & CRC Press. https://www.routledge.com/Peer-assisted-Learning/Topping-Ehly/p/book/9780805825022

121. Saban (2014). Personal and Professional Qualities of Effective English Teachers in the The Philippines. The English Teacher, 44(3), 120–131. https://melta.org.my/journals/TET/downloads/tet44_03_03.pdf

122. Sadsad. (2020, February 17). PDI report about non-readers. Facebook. Retrieved April

123. 29, 2024, from https://m.facebook.com/147754482389197/photos/a.1477952 8905178 3/817600242071281/?type=3

124. Schwartz, R. M., Schmitt, M. C., & Lose, M. K. (2012). *Effects of Teacher-Student ratio in response to intervention approaches.* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ969640&utm_source

125. Sears, R (2023). The Practicality and Effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction in Elementary Classrooms. https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/hq37vw415

126. Sparks, S. D. (2022, May 10). Concerns raised over reading Recovery's Long-Term effects. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/surprise-finding-suggests-reading-recovery-hurts-students-in-the-long-run/2022/04

127. Stevenson, N. A. (2015). Effects of planning and goal setting on reducing latency to task engagement for struggling readers in middle school. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, *25*(2), 206–222. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-015-9238-8

128. Safrianti, R. (2020). Reading Teaching Strategies Used by English Teachers at Senior High School 1 Ampek Angkek. Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200306.060

129. Safitri, M., Marhaban, S., & Erdiana, N. (2022). A review of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy in teaching reading comprehension. English Education Journal, 13(2), 288–302. https://doi.org/10.24815/eej.v13i2.25910

130. Sebastian Thürer, Wim Nieuwenboom, Marianne Schüpbach, Nanine Lilla, Immigrant students' acculturation profile and reading competence development in secondary school and beyond, International Journal of Educational Research, Volume 118, 2023, 102139, ISSN 0883-0355, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2023.102139. (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0883035523000046)

131. Serdyukov, P. (2017). "Innovation in education: What works, what doesn't, and what to do About it?" Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 4-33. https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-10-2016-0007

132. Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade: IES Practice Guide. NCEE 2010-4038.* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED512029

133. Silver, H., Perini, M., & Boutz, A. (2023, November 15). Integrating Literacy across the curriculum: An easy way to START. ASCD. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/integrating-literacy-across-the-curriculum-an-easy-way-to-start

134. Spidell, & Latty. (2018). First Words Fast: An Innovative, Compact, and Powerful Early Reading Curriculum. United States Department of Education. Retrieved April 29, 2024, from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1290830.pdf

135. Starke, K. (2020). Developing a Love of Reading in Students. Edutopia. https://www.edutopia.org/article/developing-love-reading-students

136. Stephanou, G., & Oikonomou, A. (2018). Teacher Emotions in Primary and Secondary Education: Effects of Self-Efficacy and Collective-Efficacy, and Problem-Solving Appraisal as a moderating mechanism. *Psychology*, *09*(04), 820–875. https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2018.94053

137. Stevenson, N.A., VanLone, J. & Barber, B.R. A Commentary on the Misalignment of Teacher Education and the Need for Classroom Behavior Management Skills. Educ. Treat. Child. 43, 393–404 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s43494-020-00031-1

138. Summers, R. (2024, May 24). *The most effective intervention strategies for primary and secondary schools and how to make them work in your school*. Third Space Learning. https://thirdspacelearning.com/blog/intervention-strategies-in-schools/University of Idaho *(n.d.). Instructional Approaches: Chapter 2: Instructional Models,*

139. *Strategies, Methods, and Skills*. https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/cte492/Modules/M3/Methods-Strategies.htm#:~:text=Instructional%20skills%20are%20the%20most,appropriate%20learning%20experiences%20for%20students

140. USAID. (2020, October 7). Supporting Teachers in Providing Effective Reading and Language Instruction. Education Links. Retrieved May 11, 2023, from https://www.edu-links.org/learning/supporting-teachers-providing-effective-reading-and-language-instruction.

141. Wilhelmina van Dijk, Christopher Schatschneider, Stephanie Al Otaiba & Sara A. Hart (2023) Student

Behavior Ratings and Response to Tier 1 Reading Intervention: Which Students Do Not Benefit?, Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, DOI: 10.1080/19345747.2023.2194894

142. Wolter, I., Braun, E., & Hannover, B. (2015). Reading is for girls!? The negative impact of preschool teachers' traditional gender role attitudes on boys' reading related motivation and skills. Frontiers in Psychology, 6. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01267

143. Vasay, M. J. G. (2016). Level of Reading Comprehension of the Education Students. https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=13762

144. Voyager Sopris Learning. (n.d.). Reading intervention programs - who, what, & why? https://www.voyagersopris.com/reading-intervention

145. Sun (2021) Literature in secondary EFL class: case studies of four experienced teachers' reading programmes in China, The Language Learning Journal, 51:2, 145-160, DOI: 10.1080/09571736.2021.1958905

146. Zhu, X., Cheong, C. M., Li, G., & Wu, J. (2020). Primary School Teachers' Conceptions of Reading Comprehension Processes and Its Formulation. Frontiers in Psychology, 11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00615

147. Zoellner, J. M., & Porter, K. J. (2017). Translational research. In *Elsevier eBooks* (pp. 125–143). https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-802928-2.00006-0

148. Zumbrunn, S., Tadlock, J., & Roberts, E. D. (2011). Encouraging Self-Regulated Learning in the Classroom: A Review of the Literature. Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.3358.6084