

Reading Comprehension Strategies Employed by English Teachers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Melody Esmeña Encinares¹ and Anabell D. Manga²

^{1,2}Sorsogon State University, Philippines

Email: ¹melody.encinares@deped.gov.ph and ²bellemanga16@yahoo.com

Abstract— This descriptive study determined the reading comprehension strategies of English teachers during covid-19 pandemic of Gubat District Year 2020-2021. Apart from this, the participants of the study are composed of 10 high school English teachers. In addition, a Qualitative method of research was used in this study. The data were taken from interviews conducted among the teachers. Based on the analysis of the gathered data, the following findings were revealed, on the profile of the teachers, sex and specialization, and length in service. The different challenges met by the English teachers along teaching reading comprehension in the four levels of reading, literal level, inferential level, critical level and creative level. Moreover, different strategies in teaching reading comprehension were employed to address the challenge. Finally, the findings and the conclusions led to the following recommendations for the English teachers may be given English subject only so that they can focus or concentrate on teaching reading comprehension. Teachers may employ other strategies to develop higher order thinking skills among the learners. Moreover, it was also recommended that the proposed supplemental reading material be utilized to further enhance the reading performance of the students and that researchers may consider this study as basis to have further studies parallel to this study with different outputs.

Keywords— Comprehension; Strategies; Levels of Reading; Pandemic.

I. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has declared the novel coronavirus (sars-co-v-2) a global pandemic (Ducharme, 2020). The number of those showing symptoms of covid-19 increases daily around the world with the virus affecting hundreds of thousands. The coronavirus covid-19 outbreak disrupted life around the globe in 2020. As in any other sector, the covid-19 pandemic affected education in many ways. Government actions have followed a common goal of reducing the spread of coronavirus by introducing measures limiting social contact. Many countries suspended face-to-face teaching and exams as well as placing restrictions on immigration (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte proposed that suspension of classes can be made up to the end of the week, not for 14 days as recommended. After which, the situation will be assessed by the weekend of March 14-15, 2020 to see whether the suspension will be extended or will be lifted for the following week (DepEd Task Force Covid-19 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected education, and teacher education, in various ways. As a result of the closure of universities and schools, teachers and students had to rapidly adapt to remote teaching. Education systems must confront issues of inequity front and center. They must also prepare multi-modal responses, capitalizing on existing infrastructure utilizing a combination of different learning mediums to

ensure students are engaged and learning can ensure that students continue learning through a variety of avenues. As such, education systems need to consider alternative ways for students to continue learning when they are not in school, like in the current Covid-19 crisis (World Bank 2020).

Consequently, the shift from face-to-face class to modular distance learning demanded better reading and writing skills as there is less to no oral interaction between the teacher and the students. One of the most important aims in education is the students' reading comprehension to be developed. The goal of the curriculum emphasis on students' constructing knowledge, higher order thinking skills and information processing skills (Tavera and Casinillo, 2020).

As an English teacher in a remote school in the province of Sorsogon, the researcher is a firsthand witness of the non-readers, struggling readers, and readers with low comprehension levels. She handles high school students yet some students' reading performance are comparable to those in the elementary level. This condition is assumed to have worsened due to the restrictions brought by the COVID 19 pandemic. This is seen as alarming as reading is one of the most important skills to develop to acquire other study and thinking skills that students need.

The Department of Education proposed initiatives on addressing the problem such as the launching of Brigada Pagbasa, more can be done by the different groups and agencies. The task to facilitate learning does not only

rely on the school administrators and teachers, parents, the community, and researchers may also play a role on this.

To support students with the needed skills, and the challenge faced by the English teachers. It is necessary to assess the present situation of learning modalities by knowing the appropriate approaches and strategies in different modalities in teaching, especially in teaching reading comprehension.

The Department of Education can identify the problems and solutions of the teachers as well as the schools. For this reason, they can determine the specific trainings to be provided for the teachers.

They may propose a supplemental activity in reading to suffice the needs of the learners in coping with the lesson. Teachers need to continuously learn new strategies of classroom management for distance learning.

For these reasons, the researcher came up with the assumption that the teachers need to learn new strategies in teaching reading in pandemic situation.

These are useful in developing better skills that could help to improve their teaching strategy and the educational system. Specifically, the researcher came up with the research topic since there is a need to imply new strategies in teaching reading that could improve students reading comprehension.

This study aims to determine the reading comprehension strategies of English teachers in Gubat District during the COVID 19 pandemic for the school year 2020-2021. Specifically, this study aims to sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-participants in terms of?
 - a. Age
 - b. Sex
 - c. Specialization
 - d. Number of years in Teaching
 - e. Subject Taught
2. What are the challenges in teaching reading comprehension along?
 - a. Literal level
 - b. Inferential level
 - c. Critical level
 - d. Creative level
3. What are the strategies employed by English teachers in teaching reading comprehension in the identified challenges?
4. What supplemental reading material may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive method of research. A Qualitative method of research was used in this study. The data were taken from interviews conducted among the teachers. English teachers in Gubat District. The data were collected from the participants through interview. Purposive sampling was used to gather the data from the participants

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Profile of the teacher-participants

Age

Based on the data gathered, six (6) out of 10 of the participants are aged 31-40. Two (2) of them are 21-30 and two (2) are aged 41-50. Meanwhile, none of them are in age 50-60 and 60 and above. This means that majority of them are in the middle age. The age of the teachers can be connected to the number of years.

Sex

In terms of sex, eight (8) of the English teacher participants are female while two (2) are male. Based on the observation and experiences both genders are effective English teachers. The gender preferences of the teacher do not affect the teaching ability. Hence, both male and female give great impact in teaching in different areas of learning.

In teaching, sex of the teachers is not a basis from their teaching ability, in delivering their lessons. Either male or female can impart knowledge to the learners in teaching reading comprehension.

Specialization

The qualification of the teachers significantly affects the learning of the students. In terms of the specialization of the participants, all of them are English majors.

Their specialization has something to do with their capacity to handle the subject, thus their basic qualification must be considered.

This means that the specialization of the teachers can affect the performance of the students in reading.

Teachers who are not English major cannot teach the language properly especially in teaching reading. More so if the teachers are not well trained in teaching basic reading in class. (add)

Number of Years in Teaching

Experience is another criterion used often to measure teacher quality. In terms of the length in service six (6) of the participants have rendered 5 to 15 years in public school, three (3) have 0 to 5 years while one of them rendered 15 to 25 years in service.

Subject Taught

The qualification of the teachers significantly influenced the performance of the students. On the data gathered, most of the participants are qualified to teach English. However, the 10 participants handle other subjects like, Filipino, Mapeh and TLE which are not their major of concentration.

The 10 teacher-participants handled Filipino, MAPEH and T.L.E could affect their focus in teaching their major subject, because they will exert much time and effort in lesson planning and preparing lesson since it is not their area of specialization. One of the participants was teaching English and subject for almost twenty- years (20) and other subjects. Her experienced that if you teach your own major of specialization repeatedly for how many years, you will not be able to review the lesson every time you encounter the topic. The participants that teach other subjects like Filipino, MAPEH or T.L.E. have to review the lessons even if it was the subject handled from the previous years. In delivery the lesson to the learners, it was obvious that the teachers in that non-major subjects have no mastery of the lessons, they always rely on the books, they cannot teach without looking at the book. This is the fact in handling other subjects aside from the major of specialization.

2. Challenges in Teaching Reading Comprehension along the four Levels of Reading, Literal, Inferential, Critical and Creative Level

The teachers encountered several challenges in teaching reading among junior high school students. These challenges were encountered before pandemic and were worsened by the distance learning brought by the COVID-19 pandemic

Table 2: Challenges Encountered by English Teachers in Teaching Reading

Reading Comprehension Level	Challenges Met
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Literal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students have low comprehension of instruction. • The students have difficulty in conveying the message. • The students have difficulty in outlining the significant events in the story. • The students have difficulty in answering the comprehension check.
Inferential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students have difficulty in summarizing thoughts or ideas. • The students have trouble in predicting outcomes. • The students have difficulty in identifying cause from effect and vice versa • The students struggle in looking for facts or details that are not stated. • The student’s generalizations are copied in the module.
Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students have poor in grasping reading selection. • The students have difficulty in forming sentences. • The students have lack of prior knowledge or background on the selection. • The students have difficulty in expressing their thoughts using English language. • The students have trouble in using basic details from the text to support argument.
Applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students were failure to relate important details in reading passages. • The students were skipping the tasks/activities in the modules. • The students cannot connect the issues in the text. • The students were lack of understanding in creating ending. • The students have inability to chronologically sequence the events.

Table 2 presents the challenges met by the teachers in teaching reading in the four levels of comprehension during COVID-19 pandemic. Gleaned from the table are the different challenges in the literal level, inferential level, critical level, and applied level.

It can be gleaned from the table that teachers face challenges in teaching reading this time of pandemic. In the literal level, students are poor in comprehension of instructions, have difficulty in conveying the message as well as in outlining the significant events in the story.

Moreover, they have difficulty in answering the comprehension check and in sequencing the events of the story.

Challenges in teaching reading comprehension in the literal level

The literal level is the basic level which entails understanding the information and facts directly stated in the text. Indeed, reading comprehension is important skill that must be developed in the students. To understand the texts and know what to do in the given activities or tasks, learners should comprehend first the instructions provided. In addition, conveying the message from the text would help learners answers the comprehension questions in their modules or learning activity sheets.

In this study, the researcher data and gathered and responses from the participants were recorded and analyzed.

In the first discussion the participants cite the personal experience in teaching reading along the four levels of reading during the pandemic.

However, from the data gathered, teachers said that students cannot really comprehend the instructions, some of them copy the answers from the answer key.

Teacher A mentioned. *“I was told that my students asked help from their parents to answer the questions”.at sa ibang modules or answer sheet makikita mo or notice that the parents are the one who answer the activity, kase yung sulat nila or siguro mga kapatid nila ang sumagot not the students.”(I was told that my students asked help from their parents to answer the questions and the other modules or answer sheet , you will notice that the parents and their siblings are answering the activity.)*

Teacher B also said that *“I was also chatted by my students that they cannot answer the plot of the story because they don’t understand the explanation in the*

modules about the parts of the plot.”Dahil hind sa kanila na discuss ang parts of the Plot,so they did not able to answer the activity in identifying parts of the Plot of the story.”(Teacher B also stated that, “I was also chatted by my students that they cannot answer the plot of the story because they don’t understand the explanation in the modules about the parts of the plot because it was not discuss especially the parts of the plot.)

Teacher D said, *“they cannot follow simple instructions like do not write anything in your module, provide an answer sheet for your answers, but still some of the students write their answers in their modules, pero still may mga sagot ang ibang modules at the others write unnecessary words that are not related to the lesson, ganun sila kahirap bigyan ng simple instructions.” (They cannot follow simple instructions like do not write anything in your module, provide an answer sheet for your answers, but still, some of the students write their answers in their modules but still they write unnecessary words in their modules it is difficult to give them a simple instruction”.*

This means that even in the basic level of reading, students failed. Specially, nowadays that there is no face-to-face instruction where teachers can explain the instructions to them. Therefore, it would be hard for the learners to accomplish the tasks in their modules such as outlining, restating the message, and pointing out the sequence of events and even following simple instructions.

This implies that the absence of the students in the classroom affects their reading comprehension. Teachers’ presence is a vital role for the students learning progress.

The challenges of teachers may face in teaching reading strategies to pupils may include pupils’ lack of foundation in reading (Lucas, 2011; Rany, 2013).

Challenges in teaching reading comprehension in the inferential level

In the inferential level, the challenges met are difficulty in summarizing thoughts or ideas, trouble in predicting outcomes and in identifying cause from effect and vice versa. The students are also struggling in looking for facts or details that are not stated in the text as well as generalizing.

The inferential level deals with what the author means with what is said. The skill needed is simply reading between the lines and making inferences about the

things which are not directly stated in the text. These meanings and inferences are made in the main idea, supporting details, organization of ideas and the like. Inferential comprehension also involves interpreting figurative language, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, and judging the author's point of view.

In the data presented, teachers encountered different challenges in developing the skills of the students in the inferential level.

Teacher B said that *"Some students cannot summarize because they cannot comprehend".ang iba is answering in Filipino language because they cannot state the idea using English words yun ang problema ang pag construct ng sentence mas mahirap sa part nila kay panu nila masasagutan ang activity ng tama.*

"Sometimes they answer taglish, a portion in English and a portion in tagalog or Filipino words." Teacher C explained.

Teacher D also added that *"the students did not able to understand the elements of the story". Hindi kase naituro ng ang topic na ito since wala sila sa school eh! ("The students did not able to understand the elements of the story because the lesson did not teach to the students because they are not in the school".*

Teacher E, *"This topic is quieted difficult to deliver to the students how much more na wala sila they are just reading the concept in the modules, then hindi man lang magawang magtanong ng bata sa mga group chat naming and then pagbalik walang sagot ang activity. ("This topic is quieted difficult to deliver to the students in face-to-face classes, how about they are not attending the class, they are just reading the concept in the modules.*

Also, they do not even bother to ask questions in our group chat then they return no answer in their modules". Teacher C said.

This situation of learning in our education really affects the students reading comprehension even in a simple way. Students become neglected their obligation as a student. Freedom in their learning habit affects a lot in their reading comprehension. This implies that poor comprehension leads to inability of the learners to infer, predict, draw conclusion, and make generalization.

Tarakcioglu (2019) conducted a study in Turkish high school curriculum that revealed a huge number of problems during its practical applications. Students

showed low levels of proficiency in English, teacher incompetence, low motivation, lack of confidence, limited resources, lack of materials etc. This is also implied that disinterested of the students to learn the lesson will lead them not to answer the activity in the modules. In reading, the vocabulary development to the learners is very important, without enough vocabulary will led to the learners to poor in comprehension.

Another data of responses were given by the participants in struggling in teaching the comprehension level.

Teacher A said that *"the learners have difficulty in constructing simple sentence that is why they will not be able to answer the activity in comprehension level."* *They have struggle in forming sentences" even a simple sentence hindi maisulat ng tama, plus yung spelling ng words are also wrong carabao English ang sagot nila* teacher B added.

("The learners have difficulty in constructing simple sentence that is why they will not be able to answer the activity in comprehension level." They have struggle in forming sentences even a simple sentence cannot write correctly, then the spelling is incorrect.")

Students with poor vocabulary also have poor comprehension. It is very difficult to the learners to construct sentences if they do not know some basic words that can use in simple construction of a sentence.

This implies that students cannot form simple sentence because they are having poor vocabulary. Vocabulary development in teaching reading is very important.

This is related to the findings of Rany (2013) who claims that the limitations of pupils' vocabulary proficiency impede their reading ability as well as a challenge to teachers when teaching reading strategies to pupils.

Challenges in teaching reading comprehension in the critical level

On the other hand, in the critical or evaluative level, poor in grasping reading selection, difficulty in forming sentences, lack of prior knowledge or background on the selection, difficulty in expressing their thoughts using English language and trouble in using basic details from the text to support argument are the challenges met by the teachers in teaching reading using modular instruction.

The data presented from the participants of this research are based on their personal experienced in determining the critical reading comprehension of the learners.

Teacher E explained that *“The students answers are written both in English and Filipino, partial of the answers are in in Filipino and partially in English.”* *taglish ang nangyayari na isinasagot nila not a pure English words dahil mahirap knila iexplain using English words, so as a teacher we are already accepted that kind of answers the importance is the students answer the modules and they make an effort and they are the one who answer their modules,we also given points to their answers kaysa wala silang sagot.”* *(The students answered in both English and Filipino words, constructing pure English words are difficult for them. As a teacher we are already accepted their answers and we also gave points on their answers, the importance they are the one who answers their activity, and the leave blanks the activity.”)*

The critical level concerns with the text given to them as an activity. The critical analysis of the learners to the text is a reflection on how they analyzed the activity. The participants told, this level of comprehension requires the students to use some of their prior knowledge from their own experiences to evaluate.

The participants get across from the fact that the students are poor in critical analysis

“The students find this difficult because they lack the skill in critical thinking”, mentioned by Teacher E.

It was hard for them to analyze and critically evaluate the ideas in the selection, they have the answer in their mind but cannot express it using English words kase nga hindi nila alam panu magconstruct ng sentence na tama. Teacher B said. (“It was hard for them to analyze critically evaluate the ideas in the selection, they have their answers in their mind but cannot express in English words.”)

Then they do not understand the point of view in the story they can just identify the questions in literal level like the Wh questions. The critical level questions were not answered they cannot criticize.” teacher F clarified.

From the responses of the participants, this implies that students should read the whole text thoroughly to grasp what the reasons are of the author in the selection. They must evaluate ideas and values presented in the text. More so, they must use background knowledge and connect them with the authors ideas so that they can make judgement and support their arguments. For these, they must be exposed in reading materials which will help them to read critically. The students also need to enhance their vocabulary so that they can construct

simple sentence written in English words. They should also connect to their teachers if they are having some questions related to the lesson.

To concur with these findings, Lindner (2008) and Njie (2013) both believe the lack of exposure to reading strategies in class and the use of poor teaching methodologies by language teachers are some of the reasons why pupils have poor reading skills.

Challenges in teaching reading comprehension in the creative level

Finally, in the application or creative level, the challenges met are the following: failure to relate important details in reading passages, skipping the tasks/activities in the modules, cannot connect the issues in the text, lack of understanding in creating ending and unable to chronologically sequence the events.

The application level is where the learners move beyond basic comprehension to begin applying what they have learned or read. Here, they are expected to use the concepts or tools they have learned in new situations to show that they can use what they learned in increasingly complex ways.

The researcher indicated responses from the participants from their experiences in teaching the creative levels of reading in time of pandemic.

Teacher C explained that *“This is somewhat impossible for the students to do because the process somewhat difficult for the teacher given that there is no face-to-face interaction”.* *These skills are not easily developed by most of my students as they have not understood the story, they cannot do this. They will just leave the paper blank”.*

Walang sagot kase hindi nila alam ofcourse hindi nila naintindihan ang instructions in the modules at the same time the students did not able to comprehend the ideas pertains in the story so, how can the students answer the activity eh! Hindi nga maintindihan ang story, ganun.” according to Teacher B. *(“It just because they do not know the answers they leave blank the answers from the given questions.”)*

“And the students just copy the answers in the answer key” *there are students that are very lazy in reading ,they feel tired or may be find boring in reading the selection they copy the answers written in the answer key then tapos so kami as a teacher naiinis talaga kas they did not effort in reading the selection kase halata na sagot sa answer key dahil hindi man lang sinagutan ang ibang*

questions it remains blank yun ang importante na sagot coz, dun mameasure yung creative level nila, dun din kami ng babase sa grades kung marunong bat lag ang bata .”) added by Teacher C.(“The students just copy some answers in answer key,we feel irritated they do not bother to answer other questions like in the creative level which is very important.The answers from the creative level can assess their reading comprehension.”)

From the data presented, this means that students cannot accomplish the activities in the creative level such as relating the characters and events in the selection to one’s personal experience, create visual representations about the characters in the story and explaining the significant events in the text, create new endings and create skits and illustrations based on the story. These are the results of poor understanding on important ideas in reading passages. An implication that comprehension skill is vital in this level. The creative levels of reading can determine the reading comprehension level of the learners.

The results can be attributed to the lack of interest in reading, the lack of reading materials, peer influence and the like. This time of pandemic, teachers are not present to guide the students to develop reading comprehension. Another reason is that they are mostly engaged in gadget that affect their study habits. They spend most of their time in using gadgets for online gaming and social media applications they neglected the importance of reading.

According to Nation and Snowling (2004), poor comprehensions have poor semantic skills that include receptive and expressive vocabulary. Comprehension has been the perennial problem of the students which has also been the problems of the teachers. Many of them share that their students can read but they cannot understand what they are reading.

3. Strategies employed along the identified challenges

To teach reading comprehension, the teacher must, of course, be knowledgeable of all the components of reading comprehension. Specifically, teachers should receive training in explaining the strategies to students, modeling thinking processes, encouraging students to be curious about what they are reading, keeping students interested and creating interactive reading instruction. (www.thoughtco.com). When teaching reading comprehension, as teacher, it is important to remember that the child has a specific learning style that works best for him/her; strategies should therefore be child-specific. By applying strategies and learning style and

his/her interest, he/she will be much more engaged in the lesson.

Table 3: Strategies employed in teaching reading during COVID-19 interrupted face to face instruction

Reading Comprehension Level	Strategies Employed
Literal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplifying Instructions • Monitoring students through GC • Modifying questions • Reviewing and consistent follow-up • Using character web and diagrams
Inferential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting home visitation and tutorial • Using follow-up questions • Adjusting students’ activities according to their level • Giving hints/clues to help learners read between the lines • Giving examples
Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using simple terms • Providing options to identify the best judgment • Activating prior knowledge • Using Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) • Providing guide questions
Applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing examples using a local setting • Contextualization • Self-assessment strategy • Cooperative learning strategy • Using differentiated activities

Table 3 shows the strategies used by the teachers in teaching reading in times of pandemic. The table presents the varied strategies for each reading level.

An interview was conducted to gather the data on the strategies used by the teachers in teaching reading during COVID-19 pandemic.

From the responses, it was found out that teachers have similar strategies employed to find solutions to the challenges met by the teachers in reading. These strategies can help the teachers in developing students’ comprehension skills. In the literal level, the strategies

employed are the following: simplifying instructions, monitoring students through Group Chat, modifying questions, reviewing and consistent follow-up and using character web and diagrams. These strategies mentioned by the teachers are very useful and effective to facilitate learning especially that there's no face-to-face interaction between the students and the teachers. Reaching out the students through texts and messenger may encourage them to learn despite their struggles in answering their modules. Giving feedback as well as follow-up questions to test their understanding and what they have learners are also helpful.

The responses from the participants are presented according to the used strategies in regards of the challenged they encounter in teaching the four levels of reading. From the literal level the participants has given the strategies they had implemented to address the challenge. Different strategies were implemented.

The participants answer me that " *We need to simplify the instructions kase even a simple instruction cannot follow, then ang activity become shorten so that they will be able to answer the activity.*") by teacher A

Teacher B also said that other students try to send private message to us, they ask some instructions that are not clear to them so they communicate with us naasagot nila ang mga activity kase sila mismo nreach out sa teacher, yung iba wala." (Other students communicate to the teacher to clarify some instructions ,then they give answers to the activity."

Then ang the same activity and lesson for another week is given para may mastery of the lesson ang mga bata, some chatted that it was the same lesson but iba ang activity akala kas nila same yung activity dun kay medyu na confuse sila sa lesson may na chachat na bata na aware talaga, like maam tapos na po tayo dito yung iba wala." Teacher D stated.)" (Same lesson and activity were given for another week for their mastery of the lesson, some the students that aware of the lesson ask through group chat that we have already done with the activity but some do not."

This also means that giving review to the learners will help the retention of the lesson. This implies that reaching out the students through texts and messenger may encourage them to learn despite their struggles in answering their modules. Giving feedback as well as follow-up questions to test their understanding and what they have learners are also helpful.

It has been common knowledge in the retention community that the most significant predictor of a student's likelihood to graduate is academic success. Ensuring that students make satisfactory academic progress toward degree completion should be the primary focus of any retention effort. All the desired goal, retention is not about persistence at all; it is about progress (Bowen,Chingos, and McPherson 2009).

In terms of developing the skills on inferential level, conducting home visitation and tutorial, using follow-up questions, adjusting students' activities according to their level, giving hints/clues to help learners read between the lines and giving examples are some of the strategies employed by the teachers.

"*We conducted home visitation but once lang yun ata, but yong mga non-readers binabalikan to see the progress. We target the students that are low in reading comprehension, poor in reading and some are instructional or even the non-readers students identified during the conduct of the PhIL-IRI*" said by teacher C." (we conducted home visitation once,we target the students with low comprehension, reading, instructional and on-readers identified in the conduct of PHIL-IRI".

"*We feel overwhelmed for the facial expressions of the students that we visited, Nakita naming na they are very happy to see us, we conducted reading activity sad to say napagod sila magbasa they read like in grade 1 pupils hirap na hirap to utter difficult words or even simple words hard to pronounce.*" Teacher D said. ("We feel overwhelmed for the facial expressions of the learners upon seeing us,we conducted reading activity and sad to say they are very tired in reading simple and difficult words, reading like in grade 1.") (We feel overwhelmed for the facial expressions of the students that we visited.We saw how happy they are to see us.We conducted reading activity and sad to say they feel tired in reading and their level is in grade 1 when it comes in reading.They feel hardship in uttering difficult or even simple words."

Teacher D expressed." As a teacher andun yung regrets na if the students are in the school, we be able to call the attention of the learners that are low in reading and having a poor comprehension, coz we just identified their levels of reading when we conducted the PHIL-IRI, that is why we decided to conduct home visitation and short tutorial to the target students."(we felt regreted that we t failed to call the attention of the students who are low in reading and poor in comprehension because the students are not in the school.')

As a teacher minsan nakakahibi kase parang kasalanan naming bakit ganun sila, yung feeling na frustrated in our profession, dahil we did not able to. As a teacher we feel frustrated, that if the students could come to school, we can call the attention of the learners that are low in reading and have a poor in comprehension.” (“As a teacher it feels like it is our fault why they answer that way, we felt frustrated in our profession because we did not able to impart knowledge because of this pandemic.”)

To read between the lines means interpreting meaning beyond what someone says or does on the surface. It involves a metaphor of learning through reading. To infer or understand the real or hidden meaning behind the superficial appearance of something which is an important skill in the inferential level of reading. This is an implication that in determining the inferential level of students in learning affects by the absence of the learners in the classroom.

Probst (1986) also added that reading should not be submission to the text or an effort to suppress the personal and idiosyncratic a search for a purified reading, uncontaminated by the individuality. Transactional theory insists that the reader’s individuality must be respected and considered, that readers initially understand a work only based on the prior experience.

For the critical level, using simple terms and providing options to identify the best judgment are the strategies mentioned by the teachers. In addition, teachers activate prior knowledge and use Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) to develop reading skills among the learners. Lastly, they provide guide questions so that learners would be able to understand the text read.

Critical reading involves presenting a reasoned argument that evaluates and analyses what you have read. It goes further than just being satisfied with what a text says, it also involves reflecting on what the text describes, and analyzing what the text means, in the context of your studies. Thus, this help to develop critical thinking skill which involves being rational and aware of your own feelings on the subject and being able to reorganize your thoughts, prior knowledge and understanding to accommodate new ideas or viewpoints.

The researcher presented the data collected from the participants on how they implemented strategies along teaching reading in critical level.

Teacher A said, *“We simplify the instructions and we used Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) instead of modules, LAS shorten the activity, one lesson and atleast 1 activity so that the students answer the activity.”*

“Yung modules kase dati is very long sometimes they do not finish to the activity kase grabi ang activity nya. Added by teacher B. (“The modules we used before are very long, the students do not answer all the activities in the modules”.)

Teacher C explained. *(“Then we provide definitions on the difficult words found in the story, kaya mas maganda kami na gumagawa ng LAS kase we know what activities that suited the learning ability of our students lalo na sa reading activity kase bga usually literature ang lesson sa English.”)(We provide definitions on the difficult words found in the story, it is better for us to create our own LAS so that we be able to give an activity that suited their reading activity since literature is the main lesson in English”.)*

Simplifying of the instructions and activities to the learners will help them give the correct answer.

This implies that strategies to develop critical reading and critical thinking are significant in evolving the foundations of true learning and personal development among the learners. It is important therefore, that they should not only learn to read critically but also efficiently.

Becker (1999), asking students to respond creatively to a literary text in one activity and then respond efferently in a subsequent activities raised questions about whether/how such activities nurture or nullify, foster or impede the aesthetic evocation

Finally, on the applied or creative level, the strategies employed are as follows: providing examples using a local setting, contextualization, self-assessment strategy, cooperative learning strategy and the use of differentiated activities. These strategies can help the learners to develop skills in reading comprehension even though there are varied challenges along the implementation of modular instruction.

The data presented by the researcher is according to the responses given by the participants in identifying the strategies used in teaching the applied level.

According to Teacher D *“Some students are aware of some local issues in our locality, like for examples problems in Gubat, let us say for the services in water districts and problems in bullying in school. They are*

aware in these issues in emphatic level but in creative level are not. so, there are students in emphasizing other people with the issues that people are experiencing. They are aware that bullying is a problem and the problems in some establishments in Gubat, they are aware of that, but then we still have to work on making the students emphasize with the problems and issues that are people are going through.”

According to teacher E. “We also provide simple instructions or directions.” We also tell them to ask their neighbor classmates if they do not understand the instructions, especially yong wlang mag selpon na bata, kase there are students naman na matatalino talaga they can answer the activity without the guidance of the teacher. So, we suggest that they can ask their classmates but do not copy their answers.” (We also provide simple instructions or directions.” We also tell them to ask their neighbor classmates if they do not understand the instructions, especially the students that do not have cellphones, because there are students that are intelligent that can answer their modules without the guidance of their parents and teachers, so we suggest that they can ask their classmates but do not copy their answers.)”

“The use of Venn Diagram is very effective as an activity; the students can answer also this activity maybe the answers are not completely provided but still the able to put an answer.” Teacher D.

Teachers should find ways and apply strategies that can promote deeper understanding and do reading comprehension tasks such as generalizing, comparisons, making judgments recommendations and suggestions and making decisions and creative alternative endings.

The results implied that students must be taught to make links between the text and his or her own experience and knowledge to develop an answer. Learning the basic skills in reading comprehension also promotes higher order thinking skills and students will appreciate the selection being read. With these, they can accomplish the tasks provided in the different level.

The result is reinforced by Basaraba (2013) who says that reading comprehension is a complex process that requires different building block skill. One model of reading comprehension proposes that understanding what we read is really the result of three level of skills: literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, and evaluative comprehension.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn.

I. Majority of the respondents are English major, handling English subject and have rendered 5 to 15 years in service.

II. There are different challenges met by the teachers in teaching reading in the four levels of comprehension during the COVID-19 pandemic.

III. There are varied strategies employed in teaching reading during COVID-19 interrupted face to face instruction.

IV. An I CARE as a supplemental reading material can be adopted to improve the comprehension level of the students.

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made.

I. The English teachers may be given English subject only so that they can focus or concentrate on teaching reading comprehension.

II. Teachers may employ other strategies to improve higher order thinking skills among the learners.

III. Teachers may be trained on reading strategies especially those which can be applied this time of pandemic where there’s no face-to-face instructions.

IV. The existing strategies may be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness in addressing the challenges in reading.

V. The proposed I CARE supplemental reading material is recommended to further enhance the reading performance of the students.

VI. Future researchers may consider this study as basis to have further studies parallel to this study with different outputs.

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