

Addressing Student Disengagement: Teachers' Challenges and Strategies in Reading Comprehension Instruction

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Abstract— This study investigated student disengagement in reading comprehension in Philippine elementary classrooms, examining its causes, the challenges teachers encounter, the intervention strategies they employ, the perceived effectiveness of these strategies, and the proposed support systems. It employed a mixed-methods design using an exploratory sequential approach, where qualitative data were collected first to inform the quantitative phase. The qualitative phase involved purposively selected public elementary school teachers who participated in semi-structured, in-depth interviews, while the quantitative phase included teachers selected through random sampling. Data collection tools consisted of a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide for the qualitative phase and a validated structured survey questionnaire with Likert-type scales for the quantitative phase. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, while quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that student disengagement was moderately to highly observed, with teachers identifying emotional, cognitive, and environmental factors as major causes. Comprehension difficulty, low motivation, and lack of relevance of reading materials were frequently reported. Large class size emerged as a significant challenge, along with limited time for individualized support and varied reading levels among learners. Intervention strategies were generally perceived as effective, particularly in improving participation, motivation, and comprehension. Proposed support systems were rated as highly needed, emphasizing smaller class sizes, remedial reading sessions, and diagnostic tools. The study recommends strengthening institutional support, improving access to resources and training, and implementing early and targeted reading interventions to enhance student engagement.

Keywords— student disengagement, reading comprehension, teacher strategies, intervention effectiveness, support systems.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers today face multifaceted roles beyond content delivery, acting as motivators, guides, and emotional supports in increasingly diverse and demanding classrooms. Students contend with numerous distractions, shifting behaviors, and technological pressures that challenge their focus, particularly in reading comprehension, a foundational skill critical to academic success. Globally, student disengagement is a pressing concern. In the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), over one in four students in OECD countries failed to meet minimum reading proficiency, struggling to extract main ideas or draw simple conclusions (OECD, 2019). Factors contributing to disengagement include low motivation, short attention spans, and constant exposure to digital content, yet research has seldom explored how teachers experience and respond to these challenges in resource-limited classrooms.

Engagement is multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects. Students' participation varies across tasks and contexts, with some learners withdrawing completely while others participate superficially (Watt, Carmichael, & Callingham, 2017). Disengagement can manifest as non-participation, multidimensional withdrawal, or feelings of alienation, each undermining learning outcomes. Early disengagement is a known predictor of dropout, often driven by academic struggles, social pressures, and lack of meaningful connection with teachers and peers (Feldman, Smith, & Waxman, 2017). Teachers' ability to sustain motivation is influenced by their own engagement and emotional resilience, yet repeated failure to re-engage learners can result in stress and burnout (Wilcox & Lawson, 2017; Kramer et al., 2020). Institutional factors, such as school climate, teacher turnover, and trust in education systems, further

complicate intervention efforts (Yeager et al., 2017; Holme et al., 2017).

Socioeconomic background also significantly affects engagement. PISA data show students from low-income families are three times more likely to fall below minimum reading proficiency (OECD, 2019). In the Philippines, reading comprehension remains a major concern: only 19.4% of students reached basic proficiency in 2018, far below the OECD average (OECD, 2019). Low interest, distractibility, and inequities between public and private schools exacerbate disengagement, while socio-emotional challenges—bullying, lack of safety, and insufficient support—further hinder motivation and attention (OECD, 2022). Despite national and international initiatives, such as DepEd’s “Bawat Bata Bumabasa” program, persistent gaps remain in fostering meaningful engagement and comprehension skills among Filipino learners (Ma’youf & Aburezeq, 2022).

Reading comprehension requires not only word recognition but fluency, vocabulary, understanding of text structures, and metacognitive strategies that enable analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (Zaim et al., 2021; Miklovičová & Valovič, 2019). Students who lack automaticity in decoding or familiarity with text structures often experience cognitive overload, which diminishes comprehension and motivation (Almutairi, 2018; Manlapaz et al., 2022; Deluao et al., 2022). Evidence-based strategies, including silent reading, explicit instruction in comprehension strategies, and relevance-driven tasks, have been shown to enhance engagement (Schimmel & Ness, 2019; Metruk, 2021; Asadipiran et al., 2022).

Teachers play a central role in addressing disengagement, adapting lessons to students’ needs, scaffolding reading tasks, modeling strategies, and providing encouragement to build self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Theoretical frameworks such as Classroom Engagement Theory (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998), Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997), Disengagement Theory (Kahn, 1990), and Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 1983) collectively explain how cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and motivational factors interact to shape engagement in reading. Applying these frameworks in practice, however, requires teacher training, resources,

and supportive institutional structures that are often lacking in public school contexts (Moats, 2020).

In sum, student disengagement in reading comprehension is a complex, multidimensional problem influenced by cognitive, emotional, behavioral, socio-economic, and institutional factors. While theoretical and research-based strategies exist to support engagement, there is a persistent gap in understanding how Filipino teachers navigate these challenges daily, particularly in resource-constrained classrooms. Focusing on teachers’ experiences and interventions is essential for identifying effective approaches, informing training programs, and developing policies that reflect classroom realities, ultimately improving reading outcomes and student participation.

This study aims to explore the challenges teachers face in addressing student disengagement during reading comprehension activities, the strategies they employ to re-engage learners, and their perceptions of what methods are most effective. It seeks to capture teachers’ firsthand experiences in managing classrooms where learners display varying levels of interest, motivation, and reading competence. Examining both the obstacles and successful approaches, the study intends to identify practical, teacher-driven solutions that can inform instructional practices, professional development, and policy interventions. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of creating supportive learning environments that foster cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in reading. Ultimately, the research aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom realities, offering insights that can enhance student participation, comprehension, and motivation. Through this focus, the study contributes to the broader effort to improve literacy outcomes in Philippine schools.

METHODS

The specifics of how this study was carried out are covered in this section. The individuals, tools and materials, design, and procedures used in the study are presented. The respondents were chosen via purposive and random sampling. Study participants included public elementary school teachers in Matnog Municipality District 2, Sorsogon, and the respondents were fifty (50) teachers selected from the total population of 138 using Slovin’s formula with a 5% margin of error. This sample size offers a reasonable margin of error and ensures representativeness while

remaining manageable for survey administration. Only teachers with at least two years of teaching experience, currently handling Grades 1 to 6 English or Reading-related subjects, and willing to participate were included to ensure homogeneity. Teachers who did not meet these criteria or declined participation were excluded.

Information from the respondents was gathered using two sets of study instruments: a semi-structured interview guide and a structured survey questionnaire. The instruments were developed based on the research objectives, focusing on the causes and forms of student disengagement, challenges faced by teachers, intervention strategies implemented, and the perceived effectiveness of these strategies. The instruments were subjected to content validation by three experts in reading instruction, educational psychology, and research methodology. Suggestions from the experts led to minor adjustments in wording, sequencing, and clarity. A pilot test with five teachers from a neighboring district further ensured ease of understanding, internal consistency, and reliability. The semi-structured interview consisted of twelve open-ended questions designed to elicit descriptive and rich responses, while the survey questionnaire contained fifteen items rated on five-point Likert-type scales, tailored to the study's objectives.

Data collection followed an exploratory sequential design, beginning with the qualitative phase. Fifteen purposively selected teachers participated in individual semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Interviews were conducted in quiet school settings with prior approval from school principals and were audio-recorded with consent. The qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which involved familiarization, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting. Thematic averages were computed by converting the frequency of each theme into a percentage and calculating the arithmetic mean to quantify qualitative patterns systematically. Insights from the qualitative phase guided the development of the survey questionnaire for the quantitative phase.

In the quantitative phase, the survey questionnaire was administered to fifty teachers who met the inclusion criteria. Responses were rated using five-point Likert scales specific to each objective. For measuring the causes and forms of student disengagement, a scale of

81%–100% indicated Highly Observed, 61%–80% Observed, 41%–60% Moderately Observed, 21%–40% Less Observed, and 0%–20% Not Observed. For challenges, 81%–100% indicated Highly Reported, 61%–80% Reported, 41%–60% Moderately Reported, 21%–40% Less Reported, and 0%–20% Not Reported. For intervention strategies, 81%–100% Highly Used, 61%–80% Used, 41%–60% Moderately Used, 21%–40% Less Used, and 0%–20% Not Used. For perceived effectiveness, 4.21–5.00 indicated Highly Effective, 3.41–4.20 Effective, 2.61–3.40 Moderately Effective, 1.81–2.60 Less Effective, and 1.00–1.80 Not Effective. For proposed support systems, 4.21–5.00 indicated Highly Needed, 3.41–4.20 Needed, 2.61–3.40 Moderately Needed, 1.81–2.60 Slightly Needed, and 1.00–1.80 Not Needed. These scales allowed the systematic quantification of teachers' perceptions while maintaining contextual relevance.

Five experts validated the instruments with a mean rating of 4.17, indicating very good quality. Descriptive statistics, including mean, frequency, and weighted mean, were used to determine the level of teachers' perceptions regarding causes of disengagement, challenges, intervention strategies, effectiveness, and support needs. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the significant relationships between the causes of disengagement, teachers' strategies, and engagement levels. Finally, regression analysis was employed to examine the mediating effect of teachers' strategies on the relationship between perceived causes of disengagement and student engagement. All procedures adhered to ethical standards, with informed consent obtained from all participants, anonymity maintained, and data securely stored for academic purposes only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data that were collected, analyzed, and interpreted in relation to the objectives of the study.

Common Causes and Forms of Student Disengagement During Reading Comprehension Activities

This section presents the Common Causes and Forms of Student Disengagement During Reading Comprehension Activities. It combines both quantitative and qualitative results to provide a comprehensive understanding of why students lose focus or interest in reading tasks.

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions of Disengagement as Non-Engagement or Non-Participation

Indicators	F	Percentage
Students are frequently distracted or inattentive.	44	88.00
Students show no interest in assigned texts.	41	82.00
Students refuse to participate in reading tasks.	39	78.00
Students do not respond when called upon.	37	74.00
Students remain silent throughout group discussions.	35	70.00
Students do not ask questions or seek clarification.	33	66.00
Students do not complete reading assignments.	32	64.00
Students avoid eye contact during reading sessions.	30	60.00
Students do not bring required reading materials.	28	56.00
Students physically withdraw (e.g., slouching, turning away).	27	54.00

Note: 0% – 20% Not Observed, 21% – 40% Less Observed, 41% – 60% Moderately Observed, 61% – 80% Observed, 81% – 100% Highly Observed

Based on the teachers' responses, student disengagement during reading comprehension activities is most commonly manifested as inattentiveness, lack of interest, and refusal to participate, with 88%, 82%, and 78% of teachers observing these behaviors, respectively. Additional forms include silence, not asking questions, incomplete assignments, avoiding eye contact, and physical withdrawal, indicating varying levels of non-

participation. Teachers also noted multidimensional disengagement, with behavioral off-task actions like doodling and chatting reported by 88%, emotional disengagement such as boredom or frustration by 84%, and cognitive disengagement, including lack of effort, negative attitudes, and giving up easily, observed by 80% to 74% of respondents.

Table 2. Teachers' Perceptions of Disengagement as a Multidimensional Construct

Indicators	Type	F	Percentage
Students exhibit off-task behaviors (e.g., doodling, chatting)	Behavioral	44	88.00
Students express boredom or frustration	Emotional	42	84.00
Students show a lack of effort in reading tasks	Cognitive	40	80.00
Students express negative attitudes toward reading	Emotional	39	78.00
Students give up easily when encountering difficult texts	Cognitive	37	74.00
Students do not use reading strategies (e.g., skimming, annotating)	Cognitive	35	70.00
Students resist collaborative reading activities	Behavioral	33	66.00
Students appear anxious or overwhelmed by reading tasks	Emotional	31	62.00
Students do not engage in follow-up activities (e.g., summarizing, discussing)	Behavioral	29	58.00
Students frequently ask to leave the classroom during reading	Behavioral	28	56.00

Note: 0% – 20% Not Observed, 21% – 40% Less Observed, 41% – 60% Moderately Observed, 61% – 80% Observed, 81% – 100% Highly Observed

The findings show that student disengagement in reading comprehension involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Behavioral disengagement was most commonly observed, with 44 teachers (88%) noting off-task behaviors such as doodling and chatting, and 33 teachers (66%) reporting resistance to collaborative reading activities. Emotional disengagement was evident, with 42 teachers (84%) observing boredom or frustration, 39 teachers (78%) reporting negative attitudes toward reading, and 31 teachers (62%) noticing anxiety or being overwhelmed.

Cognitive disengagement included lack of effort in reading tasks (40 teachers, 80%), giving up on difficult texts (37 teachers, 74%), and not using reading strategies like skimming or annotating (35 teachers, 70%). Less frequent behaviors included not engaging in follow-up activities (29 teachers, 58%) and frequently asking to leave the classroom (28 teachers, 56%). These results highlight that disengagement is a multidimensional issue, where behavioral, emotional, and cognitive factors collectively affect students' participation during reading comprehension activities.

Table 3. Teachers' Perceptions of Disengagement as Alienation

Indicators	F	Percentage
Students disengage when texts do not reflect their interests	41	82.00
Students say the texts are irrelevant to their lives	38	76.00
Students struggle to relate to characters or themes	37	74.00
Students express that reading is "not for them"	35	70.00
Students express that reading is a punishment or a chore	34	68.00
Students feel excluded due to unfamiliar vocabulary	32	64.00
Students avoid reading aloud due to language barriers	30	60.00
Students show discomfort with culturally unfamiliar content	29	58.00
Students do not see themselves represented in texts	27	54.00
Students feel isolated during reading group activities	26	52.00

Note: 0% – 20% Not Observed, 21% – 40% Less Observed, 41% – 60% Moderately Observed, 61% – 80% Observed, 81% – 100% Highly Observed

The results show that student alienation is a significant factor in reading disengagement, with 41 teachers (82%) reporting that learners disengage when texts do not reflect their interests. Closely related, 38 teachers (76%) observed that students found texts irrelevant to their lives, and 37 teachers (74%) noted difficulty relating to characters or themes. Other indicators included students feeling that reading was "not for them" (35 teachers, 70%) or a punishment or chore (34 teachers, 68%). Language and cultural barriers were also observed, with 32 teachers (64%) noting exclusion due to unfamiliar vocabulary, 30 teachers (60%) reporting avoidance of reading aloud, and 29 teachers (58%) observing discomfort with culturally unfamiliar content. Less frequently, 27 teachers (54%) indicated students did not see themselves represented in texts, and 26 teachers (52%) noted feelings of isolation during group reading activities.

The thematic analysis revealed multiple interconnected causes of student disengagement. For non-engagement or non-participation, fear of making mistakes, shyness, difficulty with reading and comprehension, lack of

motivation, and physical or emotional factors such as fatigue and hunger were key contributors. Multidimensional disengagement showed that inattention, cognitive challenges, need for social interaction, and physical or emotional issues hindered focus and participation during reading activities. Alienation was driven by emotional disconnection, low sense of belonging, external and environmental factors like family support and content relevance, and lack of recognition or motivation. Overall, teachers observed that disengagement arises from a combination of personal, social, cognitive, and contextual factors that reduce students' willingness and ability to actively participate in reading comprehension activities.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Addressing Student Disengagement in Reading Comprehension Activities

This section presents the Challenges Faced by Teachers in Addressing Student Disengagement in Reading Comprehension Activities. It integrates both quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a clearer picture of the difficulties teachers encounter in managing disengaged learners.

Table 4. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Addressing Student Disengagement

Indicators	F	Percentage	Verbal Interpretation
Large class sizes that hinder personalized instruction	40	80.0	Reported
Limited time to provide individualized reading support	38	76.0	Reported
Students' varying reading levels within the same class	36	72.0	Reported
Lack of access to diverse and engaging reading materials	34	68.0	Reported
Insufficient training in differentiated reading strategies	32	64.0	Reported
Difficulty identifying the root causes of disengagement	30	60.0	Moderately Reported
Language barriers among multilingual learners	28	56.0	Moderately Reported
Limited support from reading specialists or intervention teams	26	52.0	Moderately Reported

Inadequate tools to monitor and assess engagement effectively	24	48.0	Moderately Reported
Low parental involvement in students' reading development	22	44.0	Moderately Reported

Note: 0% – 20% Not Reported, 21% – 40% Less Reported, 41% – 60% Moderately Reported, 61% – 80% Reported, 81% – 100% Highly Reported

Teachers face several challenges in addressing student disengagement during reading comprehension activities, with structural and instructional constraints being the most pressing.

Large class sizes (80.0%, Reported) and limited time for individualized support (76.0%, Reported) were identified as the primary barriers, restricting teachers' ability to provide personalized instruction and monitor participation. Other reported challenges, such as students' varying reading levels (72.0%) and lack of access to diverse reading materials (68.0%), also affect engagement, while issues like insufficient training in differentiated reading strategies (64.0%, Moderately Reported) and difficulty identifying disengagement causes (60.0%, Moderately Reported) highlight the role of professional preparation. Less frequent concerns included language barriers (56–52%, Moderately Reported), inadequate monitoring tools (48.0%, Moderately Reported), and low parental involvement (44.0%, Moderately Reported), indicating that these factors exist but are less dominant. Overall, the findings suggest that addressing structural, instructional, and professional challenges is essential for maintaining student engagement, while additional support from resources, training, and home involvement can further enhance reading participation.

The thematic analysis of challenges in keeping students engaged identified several interconnected factors. Teachers reported that short attention spans, slow reading pace, shyness, and difficulty maintaining focus made sustaining engagement difficult. Repetitive lessons, limited interactive materials, and lack of motivation further reduced participation, while individual differences in reading ability and learning needs complicated instruction. Large class sizes and scarce resources made it hard to provide personalized attention or access to materials, and outside influences such as fatigue, household responsibilities, and excessive screen time negatively affected students' readiness to learn. Overall, the findings suggest that engagement is shaped by a combination of cognitive, emotional, social, and environmental factors, requiring varied strategies and support to address diverse student needs.

Intervention Strategies Implemented by Teachers to Address Student Disengagement

This section presents the Intervention Strategies Implemented by Teachers to Address Student Disengagement. It includes both quantitative and qualitative findings that describe how teachers apply different methods to enhance students' reading participation and motivation.

Table 5. Intervention Strategies Used by Teachers to Address Student Disengagement

Intervention Strategy	F	Percentage	Verbal Interpretation
Applying interactive reading strategies (e.g., think-pair-share, guided reading)	45	90.00	Highly Used
Incorporating student interests into text selection	42	84.00	Highly Used
Offering positive reinforcement and feedback to motivate engagement	41	82.00	Highly Used
Use of differentiated instruction to meet diverse reading levels	39	78.00	Used
Conducting small-group or one-on-one reading sessions	38	76.00	Used
Connecting reading tasks to real-life contexts and experiences	36	72.00	Used
Using graphic organizers to support comprehension	34	68.00	Used
Encouraging peer-assisted learning and collaborative reading	33	66.00	Used
Providing student choice in reading materials	32	64.00	Used
Integrating technology (e.g., e-books, reading apps, multimedia)	29	58.00	Moderately Used

Note: 0% – 20% Not Used, 21% – 40% Less Used, 41% – 60% Moderately Used, 61% – 80% Used, 81% – 100% Highly Used

Teachers predominantly implemented strategies that actively engage students and sustain motivation during reading comprehension activities. Highly Used strategies included interactive reading techniques such as think-pair-share and guided reading (90.0%), incorporating student interests into text selection (84.0%), and offering positive reinforcement and feedback (82.0%), emphasizing the importance of participation, relevance, and encouragement. Strategies rated as Used, such as differentiated instruction (78.0%), small-group or one-on-one reading sessions (76.0%), and connecting tasks to real-life contexts (72.0%), reflect consistent efforts to address diverse reading levels and maintain engagement. Moderately Used strategies, including graphic organizers (68.0%), peer-assisted learning (66.0%), and student choice in reading materials (64.0%), were applied less frequently, possibly due to time, resource, or planning limitations. The least used intervention, technology integration (58.0%, Moderately Used), highlights constraints in access or familiarity with digital tools. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers prioritize interactive, interest-based, and motivational strategies while supportive and technology-enhanced approaches are applied less consistently, suggesting areas for further resource support and professional development.

Thematic analysis of teacher strategies for student engagement in reading revealed a variety of approaches that address cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of learning. Collaborative and peer support activities, such

as small group reading and role-playing, foster teamwork, confidence, and active participation. Allowing choice and promoting autonomy give students a sense of ownership over their learning, increasing motivation and personal connection to the material. Positive reinforcement through rewards, recognition, and mini-games sustains interest and builds self-esteem. Scaffolded and segmented reading approaches help students manage cognitive load and reflect meaningfully on texts, while interactive, game-based, and performance-oriented activities make reading enjoyable and dynamic. Individualized support, including parental involvement, ensures that learners with different abilities receive attention and encouragement. Finally, visual and artistic strategies, such as storyboarding and comic creation, reinforce comprehension and provide creative outlets, combining fun with meaningful learning. Overall, these strategies show that engagement is maximized when lessons integrate collaboration, choice, reinforcement, scaffolding, interactivity, personal support, performance, and creativity.

Perceived Effectiveness of Intervention Strategies

This section presents the Perceived Effectiveness of Intervention Strategies. It focuses on how teachers evaluate the impact of the strategies they implemented to address student disengagement in reading. The quantitative results show the extent to which these interventions improved students' participation, comprehension, and motivation.

Table 6. Perceived Effectiveness of Intervention Strategies

Intervention Outcome	WM	VI
Increased student participation in reading activities.	4.40	Highly Effective
Improved student comprehension and retention of texts.	4.32	Highly Effective
Greater student motivation and interest in reading.	4.36	Highly Effective
More consistent completion of reading assignments.	4.08	Effective
Enhanced collaboration and peer interaction during reading.	4.03	Effective
Reduction in off-task or disruptive behaviors.	4.06	Effective
Students demonstrate the use of reading strategies independently.	4.18	Effective
Students express positive attitudes toward reading.	4.30	Highly Effective
Reading performance improves in assessments and evaluations.	4.13	Effective
Students show increased confidence in reading aloud or discussing texts.	4.23	Highly Effective
General Weighted Mean	4.21	Highly Effective

Note: 1.00 – 1.80 Not Effective, 1.81 – 2.60 Less Effective, 2.61 – 3.40 Moderately Effective, 3.41 – 4.20 Effective, 4.21 – 5.00 Highly Effective

The perceived effectiveness of teachers' intervention strategies was generally rated as Highly Effective, with the highest outcomes observed in increased student

participation in reading activities (WM = 4.40), greater motivation and interest in reading (WM = 4.36), improved comprehension and retention of texts (WM =

4.32), students expressing positive attitudes toward reading (WM = 4.30), and increased confidence in reading aloud or discussing texts (WM = 4.23). These results indicate that strategies emphasizing interaction, autonomy, and motivation successfully enhanced learners' engagement, focus, and understanding of reading materials. Outcomes rated as Effective, including more consistent completion of assignments (WM = 4.08), reduction in off-task behaviors (WM = 4.06), enhanced collaboration and peer interaction (WM = 4.03), students' independent use of reading strategies (WM = 4.18), and improved performance in assessments (WM = 4.13), show that while engagement improved, maintaining sustained focus, peer cooperation, and consistent task completion remains challenging. Overall, the general weighted mean of 4.21 reflects that the interventions were largely successful in promoting cognitive, behavioral, and emotional engagement, while highlighting areas for further reinforcement to strengthen collaboration and consistency in reading tasks.

Thematic analysis of teachers' perceptions of strategy effectiveness revealed that reading interventions

positively influence students cognitively, behaviorally, and emotionally. Cognitive engagement improved through techniques like highlighting, underlining, story mapping, and connecting texts to real-life experiences, encouraging deeper thinking and comprehension. Behaviorally, students showed greater participation, cooperation, and responsibility, with previously passive learners becoming active contributors during reading activities. Emotional interest and enjoyment were enhanced through dramatization, puppetry, friendly competitions, and public recognition, making reading sessions fun and motivating. Teachers observed that these approaches fostered confidence, critical thinking, and resilience while sustaining attention. Overall, strategies that integrate cognitive stimulation, interactive participation, and emotional enjoyment effectively engage learners and transform reading into a meaningful and memorable experience.

Proposed Support Systems

This section presents the quantitative results on teachers' perceived importance of proposed support systems aimed at addressing student disengagement in reading.

Table 7. Teachers' Perceived Importance of Proposed Support Systems

Support System	WM	VI
Smaller class sizes to allow for more individualized instruction.	4.58	Highly Needed
Time allocation for remedial or enrichment reading sessions.	4.55	Highly Needed
Use of diagnostic tools to identify disengaged readers early.	4.52	Highly Needed
Access to a wider range of culturally relevant and engaging reading materials.	4.50	Highly Needed
Regular professional development on reading engagement strategies.	4.47	Highly Needed
School-wide reading initiatives to promote a culture of reading.	4.40	Highly Needed
Availability of reading specialists or instructional coaches.	4.33	Highly Needed
Collaboration with parents to support reading at home.	4.25	Highly Needed
Integration of technology to personalize reading experiences.	4.12	Needed
Peer mentoring or buddy reading programs.	4.08	Needed
General Weighted Mean	4.38	Highly Needed

Note: 1.00 – 1.80 Not Needed, 1.81 – 2.60 Slightly Needed, 2.61 – 3.40 Moderately Needed, 3.41 – 4.20 Needed, 4.21 – 5.00 Highly Needed

The general weighted mean of 4.38, interpreted as Highly Needed, reveals that teachers strongly value the establishment of comprehensive support systems to address reading disengagement among students. This result indicates a shared recognition among educators that both institutional and instructional assistance are vital in improving reading motivation and comprehension. The high average rating underscores the demand for system-level improvements such as smaller class sizes, more focused instructional time, and early

identification of reading difficulties. It also reflects teachers' belief that effective engagement requires consistent access to appropriate materials, training, and support mechanisms within schools. Overall, these findings emphasize that addressing disengagement cannot rely solely on classroom strategies but must involve well-structured institutional frameworks that support teachers and learners alike.

The top-rated support systems were smaller class sizes (WM = 4.58), time allocation for remedial or enrichment reading sessions (WM = 4.55), and the use of diagnostic tools to identify disengaged readers early (WM = 4.52). These results demonstrate that teachers highly value approaches that allow individualized instruction and early intervention. Smaller classes help teachers provide more focused feedback, while dedicated time for remedial or enrichment sessions ensures that struggling readers receive adequate support. Likewise, diagnostic tools allow teachers to identify and respond to disengagement promptly, preventing reading difficulties from worsening. These findings are consistent with Moats (2020), who stressed that early identification and targeted instruction are essential for literacy growth, and with Honorato-Errázuriz and Ramírez-Montoya (2021), who found that structured monitoring and small-group approaches enhance comprehension and vocabulary development.

The lowest-rated but still relevant support systems were integration of technology to personalize reading experiences (WM = 4.12), peer mentoring or buddy reading programs (WM = 4.08), and collaboration with parents to support reading at home (WM = 4.25). Although these were rated Needed rather than Highly Needed, teachers still recognized their importance in promoting reading engagement. The slightly lower scores may be due to limitations in resources, digital infrastructure, or consistent parental involvement. Some teachers might also perceive that these strategies require additional preparation and coordination beyond their immediate classroom responsibilities.

Proposed Support Systems to Support Student Engagement in Reading

To effectively address student disengagement in reading, teachers identified several institutional and instructional support systems as highly needed.

Table 8. Proposed Support Systems and Implementation Mechanics

Support System	Specific Steps / Mechanics	Expected Outcome
1. Smaller class sizes to allow for more individualized instruction	Teachers can coordinate with the school principal and division office to review current class distributions and propose splitting large classes. Vacant classrooms can be utilized, and schedules adjusted to ensure that additional sessions are feasible.	Students receive more personalized attention, allowing teachers to provide targeted support. Engagement in reading improves as learners feel more supported and confident.
2. Time allocation for remedial or enrichment reading sessions	Teachers can schedule additional reading sessions during free periods or after regular classes. Struggling or advanced students can be identified for focused instruction in these sessions.	Struggling readers receive the support they need, while advanced learners gain enrichment opportunities. This reduces learning gaps and enhances comprehension and motivation.
3. Use of diagnostic tools to identify disengaged readers early	Teachers can administer baseline reading assessments and maintain reading journals to track student progress. Results can be reviewed regularly in teacher meetings to identify students needing additional support.	Early identification allows timely interventions, preventing disengagement from becoming persistent. Teachers can plan strategies specific to each student's needs.
4. Access to a wider range of culturally relevant and engaging reading materials	Teachers can select books and reading materials that reflect students' cultural backgrounds and interests. They can seek donations, apply for grants, or rotate classroom library materials regularly.	Students are more likely to connect with reading materials, increasing motivation, interest, and participation in reading activities.
5. Regular professional development on reading engagement strategies	Teachers can attend workshops, webinars, or training sessions focused on interactive reading, scaffolding techniques, and student motivation. Insights can be shared in school meetings to improve classroom practices.	Teachers gain practical skills to make reading activities more engaging, leading to more effective instruction and improved student learning outcomes.
6. School-wide reading initiatives to	Schools can organize events such as reading weeks, storytelling contests, and book fairs.	These initiatives create a positive reading environment, increasing peer

promote a culture of reading	Students can be encouraged to share book reviews or reflections to build a culture of reading.	motivation and enthusiasm while promoting reading as a valued activity throughout the school.
7. Availability of reading specialists or instructional coaches	Schools can assign reading specialists to support teachers and provide coaching sessions. Specialists can observe classes, suggest strategies, and work with students needing additional support.	Teachers receive guidance on effective interventions, and students benefit from expert support, leading to improved engagement and comprehension.
8. Collaboration with parents to support reading at home	Teachers can organize meetings with parents to discuss reading strategies and provide suggestions for daily reading routines at home. They can also provide reading materials for home practice.	Students receive reinforcement outside the classroom, and parents become active partners in supporting literacy, resulting in stronger reading habits and engagement.
9. Integration of technology to personalize reading experiences	Teachers can introduce educational reading apps or digital platforms that allow individualized reading practice. Students can work in small digital groups, and available computer lab time can be scheduled for guided reading sessions.	Students experience interactive and personalized learning, which increases engagement and allows teachers to monitor progress efficiently.
10. Peer mentoring or buddy reading programs	Teachers can pair stronger readers with struggling peers and clearly define roles for support and discussion. They can monitor the pairs weekly to ensure productive collaboration.	Students benefit from collaborative learning, with struggling readers gaining confidence and guidance while stronger readers reinforce their comprehension and leadership skills.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that student disengagement in reading comprehension arises mainly from emotional, cognitive, and environmental factors, including anxiety, difficulties in understanding texts, and a lack of relevance in learning materials. It also concluded that teachers face significant challenges in addressing disengagement due to large class sizes, limited instructional resources, and external factors that affect students' focus and participation. Despite these barriers, the study found that teachers employ creative, interactive, and student-centered strategies that effectively enhance engagement, comprehension, and motivation. The study further concluded that these strategies are perceived as highly effective in promoting students' cognitive, behavioral, and emotional involvement during reading activities. Finally, it concluded that sustainable reading engagement requires institutional and structural support, such as smaller classes, remedial sessions, diagnostic tools, and professional development for teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

Schools are encouraged to reduce class sizes and set specific time for reading sessions so teachers can give more attention and guidance to each student.

The Department of Education offers more training programs that help teachers improve their reading instruction methods and learn how to use assessment tools effectively.

Teachers are advised to use fun and interactive strategies such as games, storytelling, and group activities to make reading lessons more interesting and enjoyable for students.

Schools strengthen partnerships with parents and the community to support children's reading habits and motivation even outside the classroom.

It is recommended that schools provide more varied and relevant reading materials, as well as better access to technology and training for digital learning tools.

Schools consider early screening and support for students with learning challenges like dyslexia or attention problems so that interventions can be given as soon as possible.

Future research may be explored how family involvement and curriculum changes, such as culturally relevant texts or structured reading programs, influence student reading engagement and comprehension.

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