Bridging the Gap: Strategies and Challenges in Supporting Struggling Readers in English

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Abstract— This qualitative phenomenological study explored the experiences, instructional strategies, and challenges of English teachers in supporting struggling readers in secondary schools in the Sta. Magdalena District, Sorsogon. Data were gathered from 17 English teachers through interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Findings revealed the use of varied strategies such as phonics-based instruction, scaffolding, guided and shared reading, peer tutoring, vocabulary development, contextualized texts, and technology-assisted interventions. Differentiated instruction and culturally relevant materials were found to be effective in engaging struggling readers. However, teachers encountered challenges including low reading comprehension and motivation, large class sizes, limited instructional time, insufficient resources, and inconsistent policy implementation, compounded by inadequate professional development. Despite these constraints, teacher collaboration and administrative support fostered instructional innovation. A six-pillar intervention framework was proposed, emphasizing differentiated instruction, explicit phonics and vocabulary instruction, contextualized texts, technology integration, family and community engagement, and institutional support. The study underscores the need for both instructional and systemic approaches to improve literacy outcomes in resource-limited secondary schools.

Keywords— differentiated instruction; English teachers; literacy development; reading intervention; struggling readers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is widely recognized as a fundamental skill that forms the cornerstone of learning, communication, and personal development. It goes beyond decoding words—it enables individuals to construct meaning, engage critically with ideas, and participate productively in society. Proficiency in reading is closely linked to academic achievement, employability, and lifelong learning, making it an indispensable competency in today's knowledge-driven world. Thus, developing strong reading skills early in life is vital for nurturing independent learners who can adapt to the evolving demands of education and work.

Despite its recognized importance, recent global data reveal a troubling picture of literacy development. UNESCO (2023) reported that over 773 million adults and young people worldwide remain illiterate, with nearly two-thirds being women, reflecting persistent gender and educational inequalities. In addition, the World Bank (2022) highlighted that in low- and middle-income countries, seven out of ten children by age ten cannot read and understand a simple text, a condition termed "learning poverty." This means that a significant portion of children are completing primary education without mastering basic reading comprehension skills.

These figures underscore a global literacy crisis that threatens educational equity and human development. Addressing this issue requires urgent and sustained action through evidence-based reading programs, strengthened teacher training, and inclusive literacy policies to ensure that every learner acquires the essential reading skills needed for lifelong learning and success.

International assessments confirm the global divide in reading outcomes. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 reported that on average across OECD countries, 74% of 15-year-old students achieved baseline reading proficiency, yet in countries like the Philippines, only 19% reached this benchmark (OECD, 2023).

In contrast, top-performing nations such as Singapore had 89% of learners reaching baseline proficiency, while Canada and Finland both exceeded 80%. Moreover, 14% of Canadian learners and 12% of Finnish learners attained advanced reading levels, compared to just 1% in the Philippines (OECD, 2023). This stark gap demonstrates how structural inequities and weak early literacy instruction disadvantage learners in low-resource contexts.

The situation in Asia revealed similar contrasts. The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2019 found that 27% of Grade 5 learners in the Philippines did not reach the minimum reading proficiency level, while in Vietnam only 2% fell short, and in Malaysia, 10% struggled at the same level (UNICEF, 2020). Furthermore, while 58% of Filipino Grade 5 learners were at the lowest two proficiency levels, Vietnam had 83% of learners at or above the minimum standard. These comparative figures highlight how far the Philippines lags behind neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.

Within the Philippines, national assessments paint a troubling picture. The Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), rolled out by the Department of Education in 2023, found that only 46.24% of early grade learners could identify sounds and decode words, while 21.73% experienced comprehension difficulties (Philippine Information Agency [PIA], 2023). This means that over half of learners in early primary school either cannot read fluently or cannot understand what they are reading. Even more concerning, in many divisions, the proportion of non-readers and beginning readers remains alarmingly high, indicating that foundational skills were not firmly established in the early years.

The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI), the national tool for assessing reading proficiency from Grades 2 to 10, confirmed that deficits persist into secondary school. A study at Solano High School revealed that 98.7% of Grade 8 learners were classified as frustration-level readers, unable to cope with grade-level texts (Scimatic, 2022). Similar studies across provinces showed that even in Grade 10, a significant proportion of students still read at frustration or instructional levels, preventing them from achieving mastery across subject areas.

The Bicol Region (Region V) is consistently identified as one of the struggling regions. According to DepEd Region V memoranda (2024), only 30–50% of secondary school learners read at grade level, while the remainder are classified under instructional or frustration levels. The CRLA likewise identified the region as having one of the highest proportions of Grade 3 learners considered low emerging readers. These figures suggest that learners are entering secondary school without adequate foundational skills,

perpetuating low performance in English and other subjects.

At the provincial level, Sorsogon demonstrated parallel challenges. The CRLA found that 28.01% of learners in Bulusan, 26.15% in Sta. Magdalena, and 24.65% in Bulan remained classified as emergent readers (PIA, 2023). In Bulan III District, CRLA results from SY 2024–2025 showed that 60.46% of Grade 1–3 learners were at the "Full Refresher" level, the lowest literacy group requiring intensive intervention (DepEd Sorsogon SDO, 2024). These figures confirm that reading deficits are entrenched as early as Grades 1–3 and accumulate over time.

The local context of Sta. Magdalena provided a more detailed perspective. At Sta. Magdalena District, the PHIL-IRI English results for SY 2025–2026 revealed that only 35.5% of Grade 7 learners and 36.6% of Grade 8 learners achieved grade-level reading proficiency. In the same cohorts, more than 20% of Grade 7 learners and 9% of Grade 8 learners were at frustration levels. By Grade 9, 48.6% of learners reached grade level, showing some improvement, yet by Grade 10, while 68.5% of learners were reading at grade level, more than 11% remained in frustration categories (Sta. Magdalena District PHIL-IRI Report, 2025–2026). These statistics emphasize that reading difficulties are most acute in the transition years (Grades 7 and 8), though they persist across all of junior high school.

Behind these statistics were the lived experiences of teachers, which provide invaluable insight into the human dimension of the literacy crisis. Teachers in Sta. Magdalena consistently grapple with classrooms where learners display wide reading disparities. Some students can read fluently, while others struggle to decode basic words. This reality often forces teachers to spend disproportionate time reteaching foundational skills rather than delivering grade-level lessons. With large class sizes, limited resources, and rigid curricular demands, teachers often feel they are "teaching with one hand tied" (DepEd Region V Focus Group Discussions, 2023).

Teachers also face the emotional toll of working with struggling readers. Many describe feelings of frustration and helplessness when remedial programs produce slow progress, or when learners avoid reading aloud due to embarrassment. Research showed that teachers in high-

need literacy contexts are more prone to burnout, stress, and professional dissatisfaction (Dayagbil et al., 2021). Yet, they also display remarkable resilience—organizing peer tutoring, setting up reading corners, and sourcing materials through community book drives. In Sta. Magdalena, teachers have even integrated local stories and cultural narratives in English to make reading more relatable. However, these initiatives are often unsustained due to lack of systemic support.

From the standpoint of leadership, the researcher's role as Head Teacher in the English Department at Sta. Magdalena National High School has made it possible to observe these dynamics at both the classroom and institutional levels. The school caters to students from low-income, rural families, many of whom are first-generation learners. English is rarely spoken outside the classroom, and print materials remain scarce. Despite consistent remedial initiatives, a considerable percentage of learners remain below grade level in reading. This dual perspective—as both a practitioner and academic leader—gives the researcher a unique lens to study the problem and propose contextually relevant interventions.

Although numerous studies and reports have documented the literacy challenges of Filipino learners through international assessments such as PISA (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2023), regional benchmarks like SEA-PLM (UNICEF, 2020), and national measures including the CRLA (PIA, 2023) and PHIL-IRI (DepEd, 2024), much of the existing research has primarily focused on quantitative data that highlighted learners' deficiencies. These statistics were crucial for identifying the scope of the literacy crisis, yet they did not fully capture the day-to-day realities faced by teachers, particularly those working in rural and resource-limited secondary schools.

Most Philippine literacy research is concentrated on early grade learners (Grades 1–3), where interventions such as Every Child a Reader Program (ECARP) and Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa are targeted. Far fewer studies investigate the secondary level, where the long-term effects of early reading difficulties manifest most severely. Moreover, the voices of English teachers, who are at the frontlines of addressing reading problems, remain underrepresented in scholarly discussions. Their strategies, challenges, and lived experiences are rarely foregrounded, even though they provide crucial insight into why literacy interventions succeed or fail in specific contexts.

This gap is especially pronounced in rural areas such as Sta. Magdalena, Sorsogon, where socio-economic limitations, linguistic diversity, and scarce resources converge to exacerbate reading challenges. While data from CRLA and PHIL-IRI highlight the statistical extent of the problem—such as only 35.5% of Grade 7 learners and 36.6% of Grade 8 learners reaching grade-level proficiency in Sta. Magdalena (Sta. Magdalena District PHIL-IRI Report, 2025–2026)—these figures do not explain the pedagogical struggles, coping mechanisms, and institutional barriers that teachers face.

Thus, there is a compelling need for research that not only examines literacy through assessment results but also explores the experiences and perspectives of teachers who work directly with struggling readers. By focusing on teachers in Sta. Magdalena, this study seeks to address this gap and provide context-specific insights that can inform both local and national literacy interventions.

As the literacy crisis in the Philippines becomes a national concern and a local challenge, this dissertation aims to meaningfully contribute to the ongoing discussion about educational equity and reform. Making sure that no student is left behind in reading is not just an academic goal, it is a moral imperative.

Problem Statement

Primarily, this dissertation aimed to explore the lived experiences, instructional practices, and systemic challenges encountered by English teachers in their efforts to support struggling readers. The following research questions guide the study:

1. What are the experiences of teachers in employing instructional strategies to support struggling readers, and how effective are these approaches?
2. What are the most common challenges faced by educators in addressing reading difficulties among students, and how do they navigate these obstacles?
3. How do classroom environments and school policies influence the success of interventions for struggling readers?
4. What roles do teachers' training and professional development play in enhancing reading instruction for struggling learners?

5. What reading intervention program could be provided to lessen students' reading difficulties and improve the factors that contribute to their reading engagement and progress?

Research Objectives
This research has the following objectives:

1. Identify the instructional strategies used by teachers in supporting struggling readers in junior and senior high school.
2. Explore the barriers and contextual factors that affect the implementation of effective reading instruction.
3. Examine the influence of school environment, resources, and leadership support on reading engagement.
4. Analyze the impact of teacher training and professional development on their ability to deliver reading interventions.
5. Propose a practical and evidence-based reading intervention framework suitable for Sta. Magdalena District secondary education.

II. METHODOLOGY
This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of secondary English teachers in addressing reading difficulties among struggling readers. The phenomenological approach was appropriate as it focused on understanding how teachers perceive, interpret, and respond to literacy challenges within their specific classroom and school contexts, particularly in resource-limited rural settings.

The participants consisted of seventeen (17) English teachers from two public secondary schools in Sta. Magdalena District, Sorsogon: Sta. Magdalena National High School (n = 10) and Talaonga National High School (n = 7). Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: currently teaching English in Grades 7–12, with at least one year of teaching experience, and active involvement in reading instruction or intervention programs. The sample size was consistent with recommendations for phenomenological studies and sufficient to achieve data saturation.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, two focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis of instructional materials such as lesson plans, reading modules, learner reading records, and assessment tools. Interviews lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. FGDs were conducted to validate individual responses and capture shared experiences and collaborative practices. Document analysis served to triangulate self-reported data and provide contextual evidence of classroom practices. Ethical clearance and informed consent were secured prior to data collection.

Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures, involving verbatim transcription, iterative coding (open, in vivo, and axial coding), and theme development. Constant comparison was applied to ensure coherence across data sources. To enhance trustworthiness, the study employed triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Emerging themes were interpreted in relation to established reading theories and existing literature, ensuring analytic rigor and contextual relevance.

III. RESULTS
This section presents the findings of the study on the strategies and challenges in supporting struggling readers in secondary English classrooms in the Sta. Magdalena District. Data from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were organized thematically and reported descriptively, following the study's research questions.

The participants consisted of early-career, mid-career, and veteran English teachers handling Grades 7 to 12. Most teachers were assigned to lower secondary levels (Grades 7–8), where foundational literacy gaps were most evident. Teachers reported involvement in national reading initiatives such as the National Learning Camp (NLC) and Phil-IRI, as well as school-based and locally developed reading programs. Some also utilized digital and resource-based interventions, although access remained limited.

Theme 1: Adaptive and Context-Responsive Instructional Strategies
Teachers demonstrated flexibility in responding to learners' reading needs by employing phonics-based instruction, guided reading, scaffolding, differentiation, peer tutoring, and the use of visual and contextual aids. Instruction was frequently adjusted based on learners' reading levels, classroom realities, and available

resources. Teachers emphasized the importance of explicit instruction, repetition, and modeling, particularly for learners with persistent decoding and comprehension difficulties.

Theme 2: Emphasis on Remedial and Small-Group Reading Interventions

Participants highlighted the use of remedial classes, pull-out sessions, and small-group instruction as critical in addressing severe reading gaps. These interventions were often conducted during vacant periods, after class hours, or as part of school-initiated reading programs. Teachers reported that learners benefited from a less intimidating environment where individualized attention was possible, although sustainability remained a concern due to time constraints.

Theme 3: Incremental Gains in Learner Confidence and Reading Engagement

Teachers observed gradual improvements in learners' reading confidence, participation, and willingness to attempt reading tasks. Even minimal progress, such as improved word recognition or oral reading fluency, was considered significant. Increased engagement was often linked to positive reinforcement, peer support, and the use of familiar or culturally relevant texts.

Theme 4: Learner-Related Barriers to Reading Progress

Participants identified several learner-related challenges, including low motivation, limited vocabulary, poor comprehension skills, weak foundational literacy, and inconsistent attendance. Emotional factors such as fear of embarrassment, low self-esteem, and prior negative reading experiences further hindered progress. Teachers noted that these factors often required emotional support alongside academic intervention.

Theme 5: Instructional and Structural Constraints in the Classroom

Teachers reported structural challenges such as large class sizes, limited instructional time, insufficient reading materials, and lack of access to digital tools. These constraints limited opportunities for individualized instruction and consistent monitoring of learner progress. Participants emphasized that reading instruction at the secondary level often competed with curriculum demands and assessment requirements.

Theme 6: Gaps in Professional Development and Specialized Training

Most participants indicated that professional development opportunities related to reading instruction were limited, generalized, or focused primarily on early-grade literacy. Teachers expressed a strong need for targeted training in phonics remediation, reading assessment, differentiation strategies, and intervention design for secondary learners. The absence of sustained mentoring and follow-up training was viewed as a major limitation.

Theme 7: Supportive but Limited Role of School Leadership

School administrators were generally perceived as supportive through approval of reading programs, monitoring of implementation, and encouragement of collaboration. However, teachers noted that administrative support was constrained by limited funding, competing school priorities, and systemic requirements. As a result, reading initiatives often relied heavily on teacher initiative rather than institutionalized support.

Theme 8: Inconsistent Parental and Community Involvement

Parental involvement in supporting reading at home was described as inconsistent and often minimal. Teachers cited factors such as parents' limited time, low literacy levels, and lack of awareness of reading strategies. Community engagement in literacy programs was also limited, reducing opportunities for reinforcement beyond the school environment.

Theme 9: Documentation, Monitoring, and Sustainability Challenges

Document analysis revealed that while lesson plans reflected alignment with reading objectives, systematic documentation of intervention outcomes was inconsistent. Teachers reported difficulty in maintaining detailed records due to workload and time constraints. This affected the monitoring, evaluation, and long-term sustainability of reading interventions.

Theme 10: Teacher Commitment, Innovation, and Professional Resilience

Despite numerous challenges, teachers demonstrated strong commitment, creativity, and resilience in supporting struggling readers. Many developed self-made materials, adjusted teaching approaches, and

extended effort beyond regular duties. Participants expressed a sense of professional responsibility and advocacy for learners, underscoring the central role of teachers in bridging reading gaps in rural secondary schools.

Overall, the expanded thematic findings illustrate that while secondary English teachers employ varied and responsive strategies to support struggling readers, their efforts are shaped and constrained by learner-related factors, institutional limitations, and broader systemic conditions. These themes provide a comprehensive basis for the discussion of implications, intervention development, and policy recommendations.

IV. DISCUSSION

This chapter presented an expanded discussion of the findings in relation to the study's research questions, problem statement, reviewed literature, and relevant theoretical frameworks. Organized around key themes—instructional strategies, challenges, classroom and policy influences, professional development, and the proposed intervention framework—the discussion examined how English teachers in Sta. Magdalena District navigated the realities of supporting struggling readers. The chapter also outlined theoretical and practical implications, acknowledged limitations, and identified directions for future research.

Instructional Strategies Employed by Teachers

The findings revealed that English teachers in Sta. Magdalena District employed a range of strategies to support struggling readers, including phonics-based instruction, remedial reading sessions, scaffolding, guided and shared reading, peer tutoring, vocabulary drills, and the use of visual and technology-enhanced materials. Teachers consistently emphasized differentiated instruction, adjusting tasks and pacing according to learners' reading levels.

Teachers recognized that reading difficulties required varied responses: some learners needed phonics reinforcement, while others struggled more with comprehension and vocabulary. Lessons were often modified through flexible grouping, one-on-one support, and small-group instruction. Contextualization was central, as teachers linked texts to learners' everyday experiences, such as farming, fishing, and community life, to enhance engagement and comprehension.

These practices align with studies highlighting the effectiveness of differentiated and contextualized approaches (Dinoro et al., 2023; Pocaan et al., 2023; Robison et al., 2022). The strategies also reflect Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Zone of Proximal Development, constructivist perspectives (Piaget, Bruner), and evidence supporting multisensory learning approaches (Camino et al., 2025). In resource-limited settings like Sta. Magdalena, these findings underscore teachers' ingenuity and commitment to literacy development.

Challenges Encountered by Teachers

Teachers faced multiple challenges at the learner, classroom, and institutional levels. Learner-related issues included poor comprehension, limited vocabulary, low motivation, and fear of embarrassment during oral reading. Classroom constraints involved large class sizes, heavy teaching loads, and limited time for remediation. Institutionally, teachers cited shortages of leveled reading materials, limited library facilities, and inconsistent program support.

These findings are consistent with prior research documenting similar constraints in under-resourced schools (Dinoro et al., 2023; Pretorius & Spaull, 2016; Bautista, 2025). The challenges reflect the Simple View of Reading, as learners struggled with both decoding and comprehension, and the Matthew Effect, where early deficits compounded over time. Emotional disengagement among struggling readers also aligns with Francisco's (2021) findings on avoidance behaviors.

Influence of Classroom Environments and School Policies

Classroom environments and school policies significantly shaped literacy interventions. Supportive environments characterized by teacher collaboration and administrative encouragement enabled sustained practices, even amid limited resources. However, rigid schedules, inadequate facilities, and weak policy support constrained intervention continuity.

Recent initiatives such as DepEd's "Tara, Basa!" Tutoring Program demonstrates how aligned leadership and community partnerships can strengthen literacy support. The findings also resonate with Fraser's framework on learning environments, emphasizing that while relational and emotional support can partially

offset material shortages, sustainable literacy improvement requires consistent policy infrastructure and resource allocation.

Role of Professional Development and Teacher Training

Professional development opportunities were described as limited, generic, and unsustained. Teachers expressed a strong need for continuous, context-specific training in phonics, remedial instruction, differentiation, and digital tools. This aligns with Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2017) emphasis on sustained, practice-embedded PD and with recent DepEd initiatives institutionalizing literacy-focused training.

The findings affirm Guskey's model of professional development, highlighting that rural teachers face inequities in access to sustained training. In Sta. Magdalena, limited PD compelled teachers to rely heavily on personal initiative rather than systematic, evidence-based guidance.

Proposed Reading Intervention Framework

Teachers proposed a localized intervention framework anchored on six components: differentiated instruction, explicit phonics and vocabulary teaching, contextualized texts, technology integration, family and community engagement, and institutional policy support. This framework aligns with research supporting leveled remediation, peer tutoring, multisensory approaches, and technology-enhanced instruction (Pocaan et al., 2023; Robison et al., 2022; Camino et al., 2025).

The framework integrates key theories, including Vygotsky's scaffolding, constructivism, engagement theory, and dual coding theory. Grounded in local realities, it offers a practical roadmap for addressing literacy gaps in Sta. Magdalena and similar rural contexts.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes theoretically by demonstrating the continued relevance of foundational literacy theories in rural, multilingual, and resource-constrained contexts. The findings support the Simple View of Reading, recent meta-analytic validations in second-language settings, and the Matthew Effect, confirming that early deficits in decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension compound over time.

The results also highlight the applicability of sociocultural, constructivist, and multisensory frameworks while emphasizing the need to extend these theories through models that account for metalinguistic skills, technology, and systemic supports. Thus, literacy theory remains robust but must be adapted to contextual realities.

Practical Implications

For teachers, the findings emphasize adaptive, learner-centered strategies such as differentiation, scaffolding, phonics instruction, and contextualized materials. For school leaders, the results highlight the importance of institutionalizing literacy programs, providing resources, and supporting collaborative practices. At the policy level, sustained funding, monitoring, and alignment of national programs with local contexts are essential.

Families and communities play a critical role in reinforcing literacy beyond school, while teacher education institutions should strengthen pre-service and in-service preparation in remedial reading and assessment. Alignment across these stakeholders is crucial for sustainable literacy improvement.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by its focus on two secondary schools in one rural district, restricting generalizability. Its qualitative design did not include quantitative measures of learner progress, and it centered primarily on teachers' perspectives, excluding direct input from learners and parents. The study was also time-bound and did not include systematic audits of resources or policy implementation, limiting structural analysis.

Future Research Directions

Future studies should include learners' and parents' perspectives, employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs, and examine the long-term impact of interventions.

Resource and policy analyses, technology-focused studies, and evaluations of rural professional development models are also recommended.

Comparative studies across rural and urban contexts would further clarify which literacy practices are context-specific or broadly applicable.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Findings:

1. Teachers in Sta. Magdalena District employed varied strategies such as phonics-based instruction, remedial reading sessions, scaffolding, peer tutoring, vocabulary enrichment, contextualized texts, and technology-aided learning. Differentiated instruction was particularly effective in engaging struggling readers, as it addressed diverse learning needs and connected lessons to students' real-life experiences.

2. Teachers faced multi-layered challenges including learners' poor comprehension skills, limited vocabulary, low motivation, large class sizes, overloaded teaching schedules, and lack of reading resources. Institutional issues such as inconsistent program implementation and weak policy support further constrained their efforts.

3. Supportive classroom environments, peer collaboration, and administrative encouragement fostered innovative practices, while rigid schedules, inadequate facilities, and inconsistent policies limited long-term progress. Teacher collaboration emerged as a critical enabler despite resource constraints.

4. Teachers reported that professional development was infrequent, generic, and lacked continuity. They identified a need for specialized, ongoing training in phonics, differentiated instruction, remedial strategies, and digital literacy tools aligned with their classroom realities.

5. Teachers envisioned a six-pillar framework consisting of differentiated instruction, explicit phonics and vocabulary instruction, contextualized texts, technology integration, family and community engagement, and institutional policy support. This integrated approach reflected both global best practices and local realities.

Conclusions:

1. Teachers' adaptive and contextualized strategies prove essential in bridging reading gaps among struggling readers in resource-limited classrooms.

2. Addressing literacy challenges requires not only instructional innovation but also systemic solutions to resource shortages, large class sizes, and policy gaps.

3. Collaborative and supportive school environments enhance literacy interventions, but fragmented policies hinder their sustainability.

4. Sustained, context-sensitive professional development is critical for empowering teachers to effectively address the complex needs of struggling readers.

5. A holistic, localized intervention framework offers a sustainable roadmap for improving literacy outcomes in Sta. Magdalena.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen teacher support systems by providing contextualized reading materials, leveled texts, and localized digital tools that reflect learners' socio-cultural backgrounds.

2. Institutionalize structured remedial reading programs through the Department of Education and local school leaders, ensuring sustained monitoring, adequate resource provision, and policies responsive to rural school contexts.

3. Prioritize literacy in school improvement plans by allocating resources for reading corners, fostering teacher collaboration, and maintaining policy continuity.

4. Design localized, continuous professional development programs in Sta. Magdalena District, tailored to rural contexts and incorporating coaching, mentoring, and classroom-based research.

5. Pilot and refine the proposed intervention framework via collaborative teacher action research, integrating family and community partnerships to promote shared accountability in literacy development.

Potential research titles for future researchers:

1. Effectiveness of Contextualized and Multisensory Reading Interventions for Struggling Readers in Rural Secondary Schools

2. The Role of Peer Tutoring and Technology-Enhanced Strategies in Improving Reading Fluency and Comprehension

3. Professional Development and Teacher Capacity-Building for Literacy Instruction in Low-Resource Contexts

4. Instructional Leadership and Policy Support in the Implementation of Reading Programs in Rural Public Schools

5. Parental and Community Involvement as Catalysts for Strengthening Reading Interventions

6. Innovative Digital Tools and Gamified Applications as Emerging Supports for Struggling Readers

Significance of the Present Study

The present study is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how English teachers in Sta. Magdalena District navigate the challenges of supporting struggling readers in resource-constrained contexts. It contributes to the body of knowledge by grounding global and national literacy theories within the realities of rural Philippine classrooms, demonstrating how adaptive, contextualized, and community-based strategies can sustain reading development despite systemic limitations.

For teachers, the study offers practical insights into effective and locally relevant instructional practices. For school leaders and policymakers, it highlights areas where institutional and systemic reforms are urgently needed, such as professional development, resource provision, and program sustainability. Most importantly, the study gives voice to the lived experiences of rural educators, thereby informing literacy initiatives that are culturally responsive, equitable, and sensitive to the unique needs of learners in Sta. Magdalena.

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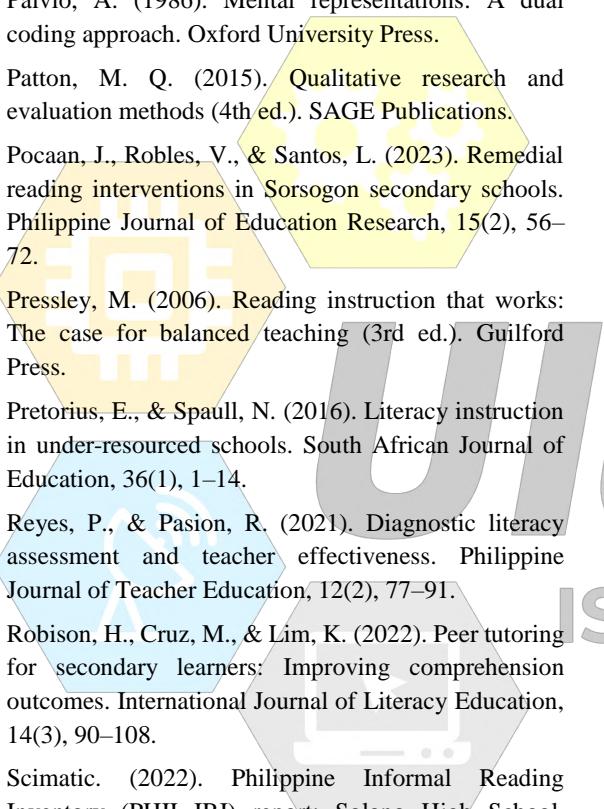
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