

Unveiling the Untold Stories: An Exploration of Non-Language Teachers Journey in Developing Reading Materials for Catch-Up Fridays



Sinamar A. Balio-an¹, Gretchen S. Cabildo², Dexter John C. Collo³, Gloria Ann C. Danganan⁴, Victoria Q. Madagiem⁵

¹Candon City High School, Darapidap, Candon City, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

²Casiligan Elementary School, Casiligan, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

³Parparia Elementary School, Parparia, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

^{4,5}Sarmingan Elementary School, Sarmingan, Narvacan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines

ABSTRACT: The study aims to understand the lived experiences of non-language teachers in the preparation of reading materials to be used during Catch-Up Fridays. The participants of the study were five (5) non-language secondary teachers with a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience. The research employed purposive sampling. The researchers employ the inclusion criteria in selecting them as follows: 1) 3 and more years in the service, 2) a DepEd employee specifically in Candon City Division, 3) non-language major and 4) must be willing to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a sampling method where the selection of participants is grounded on the judgment of the researchers based on the set of specific characteristics or qualities relevant to the research question. This study utilized phenomenological research.

Findings reveal that non-language teachers view the preparation of reading materials as Harmonies of Resilience: Transforming Adversity into Achievement with three sub-themes emerging, namely NIL challenges encountered, strategies used in the preparation of reading materials, and realizations of non-language teachers in the preparation of reading materials.

Even if non-language teachers were not expert on this field, they were able to overcome their weaknesses and turn their weakness into their strength with the help of their co-teachers and school heads.

KEYWORDS: Catch-Up Fridays, Candon City, DepEd, Non-Language Teachers, Reading

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the pursuit of innovative strategies to enhance learning outcomes remains a constant endeavor. The Department of Education (DepEd) has introduced a transformative initiative, Catch-up Fridays, as delineated in DepEd Memorandum No. 001, S. 2024. Catch-up Fridays, launched nationwide on January 12, 2024, are designed to address learning gaps, with a particular emphasis on bolstering reading proficiency.

The Department of Education (DepEd) remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering quality, relevant, inclusive, and responsive basic education. This commitment is further strengthened by the present administration's Eight-Point Socioeconomic Agenda and the MATATAG Education Agenda to produce competent, job-ready, active, and responsible citizens, equipped with essential competencies and skills for lifelong learning. The Department's current initiatives provide opportunities to enhance learners' academic performance, particularly the low proficiency levels in reading based on national and international large-scale assessments. These assessment results necessitate prompt attention to address learning gaps and strengthen the reading proficiency of every learner.

Similarly, to bolster the basic education priorities articulated in the MATATAG Agenda and accelerate the achievement of education targets as stipulated in DepEd Order (DO) No. 013, s. 2023 titled Adoption of the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP), there is a need to intensify Values, Health, and Peace Education. Values Education remains a priority in compliance with Republic Act (RA) No. 11476, Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education Act, which recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building. The urgency for Peace Education is a prompt response to the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results which reveal that bullying remains a pervasive problem in public schools and the need for

Unveiling the Untold Stories: An Exploration of Non-Language Teachers Journey in Developing Reading Materials for Catch-Up Fridays

Filipino learners as global citizens to acquire and strengthen peace competencies allowing them to become peace builders and advocates in their respective communities, while Health Education demands stronger advocacy to ensure the overall health and well-being of learner.

Correspondingly, the Division of Candon City disseminated the “Bawat Bata Bumabasa” (Every Child is a Reader), which required the reading teachers to conduct intensive reading instruction and interventions for frustrated and non-readers (DepEd, 2019). The reading assessment material being used is the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), which aims to address the goal of making every Filipino child a reader as mandated in DepEd order no. 14, Series 2018. There seems to be, however, no mandated standard and sustainable reading programs. Instead, the policymakers only provided guidelines and recommendations such as a list of effective reading intervention models, reading components, expected inputs and outputs, and assessment using the Phil-IRI post-test and national assessment programs for student learning (DepEd, 2018).

The ‘Catch-Up Fridays’ initiative responds to a concerning statistic revealed by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018, indicating that the Philippines ranked the lowest in Reading Comprehension among all surveyed countries, with a score of 340 points. Further, Catch-up Fridays is a learning mechanism intended to strengthen the foundational, social, and other relevant skills necessary to actualize the intent of the basic education curriculum. This initiative is integral in the National Reading and Mathematics Programs which are critical subprograms of the NLRP stipulated in DO 013, s. 2023.

Meanwhile, non-language subjects form an integral part of the Philippine curriculum, each presenting unique challenges and opportunities for student learning. Integrating Catch-Up Fridays into these disciplines necessitates tailored approaches that consider subject-specific requirements, instructional methodologies, and student needs. By investigating non-language teachers' experiences with Catch-Up Fridays, this study seeks to shed light on the feasibility, challenges, and potential benefits of implementing this strategy across diverse subject areas.

Municipality of Candon City, with its five public secondary schools, presents a unique setting to examine the preparation and implementation of Catch-up Fridays. The research aims to assess the efficacy of this initiative in bridging reading proficiency gaps and improving the overall academic performance of students. Furthermore, it delves into the collaborative efforts among teachers and schools to engage in professional development activities, such as Learning Action Cells (LAC), to ensure the effective preparation. By shedding light on the challenges faced and effective practices employed, this study aims to contribute valuable information that can inform future policies and strategies for enhancing reading proficiency and overall educational outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employed phenomenology design. As cited by Gasparyan (2021) this method holds the view that human beings extract meaning from the world through personal experience. According to Jarvis (1987), investigating the experiences of individuals in Phenomenological Design is a highly complex phenomenon: an annotating and clarifying human experience can be a challenging task. Creswell and Poth (2018) expound the definition of phenomenology method as research method conducted to analyze, interpret and describe the meaning or essence of a common experience shared by individuals sharing similar characteristics and criteria. For this study, the phenomenon under investigation is the lived experiences of non-language teachers in the preparation of reading materials to be used during Catch-Up Fridays. The participants in the study were five (5) non-language secondary teachers with a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience. The research employed purposive sampling. The researchers employed the inclusion criteria in selecting them as follows: 1) 3 and more years in the service, 2) a DepEd employee specifically in Candon City Division, 3) non-language major and 4) must be willing to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a sampling method where the selection of participants is grounded on the judgment of the researchers based on the set of specific characteristics or qualities relevant to the research question (Nikolopoulou, 2023). The research instrument used in the study was an interview guide being developed by the researchers. Before the conduct of the study, a written request was given to the School Division Superintendent of Candon City Division and consent to the participants was handed in to the participants after the approval of the request. Upon the approval, interview was conducted to the participants through face-to-face interview and online calls. Thematic Analysis was utilized in the analysis of the data. Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (‘themes’) within qualitative data. (Victoria Clarke & Virginia Braun, 2017). Responses were then transcribed by the researchers. Researchers reread carefully and thoroughly to extract significant statements from the transcription then coded, categorized, and thematized.

Unveiling the Untold Stories: An Exploration of Non-Language Teachers Journey in Developing Reading Materials for Catch-Up Fridays

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme: Harmonies of Resilience: Transforming Adversity into Achievement

The results of this qualitative research provide an exploration of the theme "Harmonies of Resilience: Transforming Adversity into Achievement." This study aims to dig deeper as to how non-language teachers view the preparation of reading materials for catch-up Fridays. Data were collected and subjected to analysis to come up with sub-themes. These sub-themes view different perspectives of the main theme. Each sub-themes covered the frustrations and trials encountered but also shows the emergence of triumph behind the adversities faced. Further explanation of the sub-theme will be given in the following sections and will illustrate unique experiences and perceptions of the non-language teachers.

Sub-theme 1: NIL Challenges Encountered

In all aspects of Education challenges are inevitable especially in its first phase of implementation and that doesn't exclude the implementation of Catch-Up Fridays. The Department of Education has experienced challenges, specifically in implementing the reading program Ocampo (2018). The study revealed that challenges were faced by non-language teachers in the preparation the reading materials used for the Catch-Up Fridays.

All the participants in this study revealed that the most challenging part in the preparation of reading materials to be used during Catch-Up Fridays is that there were no reading resources given by the central office, as seen in the comments:

"There were no reading resources given to us". [Awan ma'am iti naited nga reading resources nga naited manlang kanyatayo.]-P1

"As a non-language teacher one of the challenges encountered on the actual preparation was the resource allocation."- P2

"Ofcourse, it's really very hard, as a non-language teacher, I don't know where to get materials that will be utilized for my students." [Ofcourse napakahirap, as a non-language teacher, diko alam kung saan kukunin ung mga materials na gagamitinko para sa aking mga studyante.]-P3

"First, and I would say that all teachers will agree with me that there are no resources given by the central office to be utilized" [First, and I would say that all teachers will agree with me na walang resources na ibinigay ng central office na gagamitin sa program]- P4

According to Adelowo & Babatunde (2015), the inputs are one of the components of education by which human and material resources should be prepared. These instructional materials play an essential role in arousing the learners' interests and motivations, helping them understand the lessons, and enhancing their performance, (Besa & Parcon, 2021)

Another challenge faced by non-language teachers was that they must prepare reading materials at home because they don't have insufficient time to prepare reading materials in school considering their loads. As stated by P1, "The time, considering our loads. We have lots of reports, preparation of exams, learning materials and ASAP reports, it's really very hard to find time preparing for it. [tay time, considering tay loads tayo. Tay nagadu iti ubraen tayo nga reports preparation it exams, learning materials ken other ASAP reports nagrigat nga isingit. P3 added, "...our loading also and it is an additional preparation that instead of creating important..." [Ung loading din kasi additional preparation]. P4 highlighted that "the time to prepare, if we are to consider the preparations that we have for our subects alone it is really not enough to prepare good reading materials" [is iyong time to prepare if we are to consider iyong preparation po naming para sa aming mga subjects alone kukulangin talaga ng time para magprepare ng mas magandang materials].

Lack of experience and expertise in the preparation of reading materials was also mentioned as one of the challenges in the preparation of reading materials by non-language teachers. They were hesitant knowing that they are not experts in the preparation of reading materials. Applegate & Applegate (2004) mentioned the Peter Effect stating that one cannot be expected to give what one does not possess. In line with this, P3 mentioned that, "It's very hard if what and how to prepare for it. Langage teachers should be the only ones preparing for the reading materias." [Ang hirap, kung ano ang gagawin at kung paano gagawin. Dapat ang mga ito ay ginagawa ng mga language teachers especially so sabi na we are non-language teachers]. P4 stated that, "...it is a challenge that I don't have that wide background as to how to prepare reading materials" [it is a challenge na wala akong ganung ka-wide na kaalaman in preparing reading materials].

Sub-theme 2: Strategies used in the preparation of reading materials

Teachers must learn and adapt to developments so that learning can run optimally (Tantra, 2021). In the pursuit of adapting to developments in the teaching and learning processes strategies should be used. In the context of this study, strategies were used by the non-language teachers to cope up with the challenge and responsibility assigned to them in the preparation of reading materials to deliver optimum learning to the students. In relation to this, teachers must also be able to

Unveiling the Untold Stories: An Exploration of Non-Language Teachers Journey in Developing Reading Materials for Catch-Up Fridays

use technology positively for learning so that learning becomes interesting (Fakhrudin et al., 2019; Summak et al., 2010). P3 and P4 highlighted how technology helped them to somehow prepare reading materials needed. P3 stated that, "searching the net to get some reading materials that will suit to the level of my students" [at the same time searching the net para makakuha ng available reading materials that will suit to the level of my students]. While P4 mentioned, "I also search the web to download resources.

Aside from browsing the net, non-language teachers participated with an open arms coaching and mentoring in their respective schools and seeking guidance and expertise to the language teachers. P1 stated, "good thing, ma'am Dale and you were there whom I sought help" [good thing ket adda ni ma'am Dale ken dakayo nga nagdamagak]. P2 shared, "A coaching and mentoring was held for us non-language teachers to know what the basic things are to do in creating reading materials." P4 expressed how she willingly participated in the school coaching and mentoring session stating, "in our school a mentoring was held to guide us non-language teachers on what to do" [Sa school naming nagkaroon ng konting mentoring para maguide kaming non-language on what to do]. According to Pablo and Wemerson (2017), coaching and mentoring can inspire and empower employees develop commitment, increase productivity, increase talent, and promote success. In the end the success of learning is one of the main goals that the teacher must achieve.

Sub-theme 3: Realizations of non-language teachers in the preparation of Reading materials

After weeks of experiencing how to prepare reading materials by non-language teachers, they came to realize that everything is being learned provided one can willingly embrace challenges with positivity. As mentioned by P1, "that I can do more if I am going and willing to accept challenges". While P3 mentioned that "I became more resourceful as a teacher and became more connected to other teachers because we grow as we discuss things out". [mas napayabong pa iyong pagiging resourcefulness ko as a teacher. At mas nagging connected sa ibang teachers kasi we grow as we discuss]. In addition, "P4 shared that, "it made me realize that even if I am a non-language teacher is I made it even if it was hard but as gets easier as I consistently do it" [it made me realized na kahit pala non-language ako is kaya ko din pala, kahit mahirap but soon nagging mas madali na din].

As revealed in this study, their experience of preparing reading materials considering that they are non-language teachers developed the sense of strength within them.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, the researchers forwarded the following conclusions:

1. The preparation of reading materials for Catch-up Fridays revealed significant challenges for non-language teachers that includes: no reading materials given by the central office prior to the implementation of the program, insufficient time in the preparation of reading materials considering their loads in teaching, and lack of expertise and experience in the preparation of reading materials.
2. Non-language teachers used different strategies to prepare a quality reading materials suited to their students.
3. Non-language teachers proved that they can also prepare reading materials for Catch-Up Fridays even if they are not expert in this field.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this research provides valuable insights into non-language teachers' experiences in the preparation of reading materials for Catch-Up Fridays, there are few limitations. Only five participants were involved in the research, which may limit its generalizability to other non-language teachers. The study focused only on the Schools Division of Candon City. Additionally, the depth of understanding regarding the experiences faced by non-language teachers in the preparation of reading materials for Catch-Up Fridays was limited since the primary data collection used in interview method only. Time constraints during the study period may have limited the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis. Moreover, the study's focus on a specific geographical location and educational context may limit the applicability of findings to different educational settings with varying organizational structures.

REFERENCES

- 1) Abumandour, E. S. T. (2021). Public libraries' role in supporting e-learning and spreading lifelong education: a case study, *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*, 14(2), 178-217. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-06-2019-0063>
- 2) Adapon, M. T., & Mangila, B. B. (2020). Helping struggling readers to read: the impact of the care for the non-readers (CRN) program on Filipino pupils' reading proficiency. *ETERNAL (English, Teaching, Learning, and Research Journal)*, 6(2), 195-218. Retrieved from <https://journal3.uinalauddin.ac.id/index.php/Eternal/article/download/13809/10253>

Unveiling the Untold Stories: An Exploration of Non-Language Teachers Journey in Developing Reading Materials for Catch-Up Fridays

- 3) Adelowo AG, Babatunde A (2015). Instructional resources as determinants of English language performance of secondary school high-achieving students in Ibadan, Oyo State. *Journal of Education and Practice*,6:195-200.
- 4) Ameyaw, S. K., & Anto, S. K. (2018). Read or perish: Reading habits among students and its effect on academic performance: A case study of Eastbank Senior High School Accra. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-24. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/189478567.pdf>
- 5) Balan, S., Katenga, J. E., & Simon, A. (2019, December). Reading habits and their influence on academic achievement among students at Asia Pacific International University. In *Abstract Proceedings International Scholars Conference* (Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 1490-1516).
- 6) Baldevarona, S. B. (2020). Behind the Reading Program: A Phenomenological Study on Teachers' Challenges and Strategic Reading Interventions to Help Struggling Readers (Doctoral dissertation, Foundation University).
- 7) Bashir, A. S., & Hook, P. E. (2009). Fluency: A key link between word identification and comprehension.
- 8) Besa, L. M., & Parcoon, R. E. (2021). On Instructional Materials: The Pre-Service Teachers Preferences in Time of Pandemic.
- 9) Cabalo, J. P., & Cabalo, M. M. (2019). Factors affecting pupils' reading proficiency in multi-grade classes among rural elementary schools. *International Journal of Science and Management Studies*, 2(2), 108-124. Retrieved from <http://www.ijmsjournal.org/2019/volume-2%20issue-2/ijms-v2i2p114.pdf>
- 10) Claessen, M., Dzidic, P., Boyes, M., Badcock, N., Nayton, M., & Leitao, S. (2020). Educators' perceptions of the impact of reading difficulties for young people. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 25(1), 51-64.
- 11) Cole, S. A. (2017). The impact of parental involvement on academic performance. (PhD Dissertation, Northcentral University), Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED577825>
- 12) Daniel, J., Capin, P., & Steinle, P. (2021). A synthesis of the sustainability of remedial reading intervention effects for struggling adolescent readers. *Journal of learning disabilities*, 54(3), 170-186.
- 13) Department of Education. (2018). Policy guidelines on the administration of the revised Philippine informal reading inventory (Phil-IRI). Retrieved from <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2018/03/26/do-14-s-2018-policy-guidelines-on-the-administration-of-the-revised-philippine-informal-reading-inventory>
- 14) Department of Education. (2018). The Philippine informal reading inventory manual. Retrieved from http://www.depedbataan.com/resources/130/philiri_full_package_v1.pdf
- 15) Department of Education. (2019). DM 173, 3B: Bawat bata bumabasa. Retrieved from <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2019/11/22/november-22-2019-dm-173-s-2019-hamonbawat-bata-bumabasa-3bs-initiative/>
- 16) DepEd (2015). Policy guidelines on classroom assessment for the K to 12 Basic education program. Retrieved from http://www.deped.gov.ph/sites/default/files/order/2015/DO_s2015_08.pdf.
- 17) Deped MEMORANDUM No. 173. s. 2019. Retrieved from C:\Users\jlcabiles\Documents\cpartmtut of Q.tif (deped.gov.ph)
- 18) DepEd Order No. 45. (2002). Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP)
- 19) Emily Binks-Cantrell, Erin K. Washburn, R. Malatesha Joshi & Martha Hougen (2012): Peter Effect in the Preparation of Reading Teachers, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 16:6, 526-536
- 20) Galgao, F. C. (2016). Factors affecting reading performance: A study of advanced EFL students in Thailand. *Catalyst*, 13(1), 42-51.
- 21) Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2017). Literacy engagement and motivation: Rationale, research, teaching, and assessment. *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts*, 57-84.
- 22) Inding, A. L. (2020). Improving reading comprehension skills of grade iv pupils using effective comprehension strategy instruction. *International Social Science Review*, 2, 138-183.
- 23) Jolejole-Caube, C., Dumlao, A. B., & Abocejo, F. T. (2019). Anxiety Towards Mathematics and Mathematics Performance of Grade 7 Learners. *European Journal of Education Studies*. 6(1), 334-360. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2694050>
- 24) Ligudon, J., & Ildefonso, L. (2022). Reading Strategies Employed by Senior High School English Teachers in The Philippines. *Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(2), 93-106. <https://doi.org/10.55197/qjssh.v3i2.134>
- 25) Miller, J., & Schwanenflugel, P. J. (2008). A longitudinal study of the development of reading prosody as a dimension of oral reading fluency in early elementary school children. *Reading research quarterly*, 43(4), 336-354.
- 26) Molfese, V. J., Beswick, J., Molnar, A., & Jacobi-Vessels, J. (2006). Alphabetic skills in preschool: A preliminary study of letter naming and letter writing. *Developmental Neuropsychology*, 29(1), 5-19.

Unveiling the Untold Stories: An Exploration of Non-Language Teachers Journey in Developing Reading Materials for Catch-Up Fridays

- 27) Morelos, R. L. (2021). Development and validation of learning resource materials in upgrading comprehension skills of senior high school students. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 2(2), 153-161. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.02.10>
- 28) Muter, V., Hulme, C., Snowling, M. J., & Stevenson, J. (2004). Phonemes, rimes, vocabulary, and grammatical skills as foundations of early reading development: evidence from a longitudinal study. *Developmental psychology*, 40(5), 665.
- 29) Nikolopoulou, K. (2023b, June 22). What is purposive sampling? | Definition & Examples. Scribbr. Retrieved April 13, 2024, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/purposive-sampling/>
- 30) Pablo Henrique Delmondes & Wemerson Braulino Borges Afonso (2017). Importance Of coaching and mentoring tools for training business leaders
- 31) Protopapas, A., Mouzaki, A., Sideridis, G. D., Kotsolakou, A., & Simos, P. G. (2013). The role of vocabulary in the context of the simple view of reading. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 29(2), 168-202.
- 32) Ricketts, J., Nation, K., & Bishop, D. V. (2007). Vocabulary is important for some, but not all reading skills. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 11(3), 235-257.
- 33) Rivera, A. G., & Aggabao, R. G. (2020) Reading Difficulties of Grade 5 Pupils in English. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*, Volume 3 Issue 6. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.6.12>
- 34) Saraspe, L. D., & Abocejo, F. T. (2020). Effectiveness of descriptive praise on the English composition skill of bridging students. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*. 5(4), 18-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejel.v5i4.3140>
- 35) Sartika, F. D., Afifah, N., & Anggraini, Y. (2020). The correlation between students' reading habit and their reading comprehension. *Jurnal Basis*, 7(1), 207-216. <https://doi.org/10.33884/basisupb.v7i1.1856>
- 36) SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report, Children's learning in 6 Southeast Asian countries. Bangkok, Thailand: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF & Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) – SEA-PLM Secretariat
- 37) Sénéchal, M., LeFevre, J. A., Smith-Chant, B. L., & Colton, K. V. (2001). On refining theoretical models of emergent literacy the role of empirical evidence. *Journal of school psychology*, 39(5), 439-460.
- 38) Shiotsu, T. (2009). Reading ability and components of word recognition speed: The case of L1-Japanese EFL learners. *Second language reading research and instruction: Crossing the boundaries*, 15-39.
- 39) Shuell, T. J. (2021). Learning theory, instructional theory, and adaptation. In *Aptitude, learning, and instruction* (pp. 277-302). Routledge.
- 40) The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory Manual. (2018) .Retrieved from www.deped.gov.ph
- 41) Victoria Carke & Virginia Braun (2017). Thematic Analysis, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12:3, 297-298, DOI:10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.