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TEACHING COMPETENCE AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN READING TOWARDS AN ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between teaching competence and student performance in reading, focusing on instructional and professional competence of teachers, alongside word recognition and reading comprehension of students. A comprehensive enhancement program for teachers was proposed as a potential solution.

Results revealed that there existed no significant correlation between teaching competence and student performance in reading, challenging previously assumptions. There was a significant relationship between teachers' instructional competence and professional competence. Improvements in student reading performance were evident, yet the findings underscored the complexity of factors influencing student outcomes in reading beyond teacher competence alone.

The study's implications extend to educational policy and practice, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach to improve reading performance. While teacher competence remains a crucial component, other factors such as curriculum design, individual learning styles, and students' specific needs could also be considered.

Moreover, targeted intervention could address the broader context of reading instruction, integrating strategies to support both teachers and students. Professional development programs would incorporate evidence-based practices tailored to enhance teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes in reading.

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Finally, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective teaching practices and student achievement in reading, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive approaches to educational enhancement.

Keywords: *teaching competence, student performance, reading enhancement*

INTRODUCTION

The competence of teachers has always been crucial in the development of the reading performance of students. Teachers who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes can effectively teach students to read, comprehend, and appreciate various forms of text. Nowadays, there has been an increasing emphasis on the role of teachers in promoting students' reading ability.

Recent research has found that teacher collaboration and professional development play a significant role in enhancing the teaching ability of teachers and improving students' reading abilities (Rosenberg et al., 2020).

Improving Students' reading performance is crucial because it has a significant impact on their academic success, future career prospects, and overall quality of life. Reading is a foundational skill that underpins learning across all subjects, and students with strong reading abilities are more likely to excel academically and pursue higher education. According to a study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters," children who were not proficient readers by the end of third grade were four times more likely to drop out of high school, which can lead to long-term economic and social disadvantages.

Additionally, reading proficiency is linked to critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential in today's information-driven world. The Eunice Kennedy Shriver's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) highlights that reading problems

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can lead to negative attitudes toward learning and lower self-esteem, impacting a child's overall development. Therefore, addressing and improving reading performance is key to fostering a well-rounded, successful future for students.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) is the primary agency responsible for ensuring the competence of teachers. According to DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, teachers must undergo continuous professional development (CPD) to enhance their competence. This includes attending seminars, workshops, and training programs that focus on improving their knowledge and skills in various subject areas, including reading instruction.

Internationally, the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) provided a framework for defining and categorizing various levels of education. This included the level of education required for teachers to possess the necessary competencies to teach students how to read and comprehend various forms of texts.

Moreover, the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards – Teachers' Strengths and Needs Assessment (NCBTS-TSNA) tool provided a framework that outlined the competencies that teachers must possess. This included instructional competence and professional competence.

Subsequently, reading competencies for effective reading instruction and professional practice were shared by the International Literacy Association (ILA). Also, the resources and guidelines for literacy educators, including competencies for teaching reading were provided by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

On the other hand, reading is a fundamental skill that is essential for success in all areas of academic and professional life. Unfortunately, many students struggle with reading, and research suggests that poor reading ability is often linked to ineffective teaching practices. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the relationship between teaching competence of teachers and reading performance of students to identify effective teaching practices that can improve the literacy among students.

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Senior High School in Carmen, Agusan del Norte has been implementing the reading program EmpoweREAD. Somehow, students' ability to recognize words increases, but their reading comprehension remains to be a reading complexity.

In addition, the researcher observed the poor word recognition skills and reading comprehension skills of the Senior High School students during their Brigada Pagbasa results. As manifested in the school's Summary of Reading Audit Result for the S.Y. 2022-2023, in terms of word recognition 50% of the senior high school students belonged to "Independent" level, 32% was "Instructional" level, and 18% was "Frustration" level. In terms of reading comprehension, 20% was "Independent" level, 38% was "Instructional" level, and 42% belonged to "Frustration" level.

The comparative results of Phil-IRI reading assessments for the past three (3) school years showed the fluctuating results of the frustration level. From twenty-five percent (25%) frustration level for the S.Y. 2021-2022, it had a significant increase of forty-two percent (42%) frustration level in the S.Y. 2022-2023, then it had a significant decrease of six percent (6%) frustration level for the S.Y. 2023-2024.

Several factors have been identified as critical to improving the reading performance of senior high school students. Research has shown that a supportive home environment significantly influences students' reading abilities. Parents' involvement in their children's reading activities and the availability of reading materials at home have been positively correlated with better reading outcomes (Clark, 2019). Additionally, peer collaboration and the social context of learning have been found to play essential roles. Collaborative learning environments, where students engage in group discussions and peer reviews, have been associated with enhanced reading comprehension and critical thinking skills (Meyer, 2020).

Access to technology and digital resources has been highlighted as a significant contributor to reading improvement. The integration of e-books, educational apps, and online reading platforms has provided students with diverse and interactive reading experiences,

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leading to increased engagement and motivation (Kim & Anderson, 2021). Furthermore, socioeconomic status (SES) has been a crucial factor, with higher SES linked to greater access to educational resources, extracurricular activities, and a richer vocabulary environment, all of which contribute to better reading performance (Jerrim & Sims, 2020).

School infrastructure and resource availability have also been important. Schools with well-equipped libraries, access to diverse reading materials, and comfortable reading spaces have reported higher student reading performance. Such environments encourage students to read more frequently and for longer periods (Fisher & Frey, 2019). Lastly, reading intervention programs tailored to students' individual needs have proven effective. Programs that provide targeted support, such as one-on-one tutoring and remedial reading sessions, have shown significant improvements in students' reading skills (Wanzek et al., 2020).

Correspondingly, understanding the relationship between teaching competence and reading performance is essential for improving the academic outcomes of students. By identifying how teaching competence affects students' performance in reading, the researcher could propose a specialized training for teachers towards enhancing their competence in teaching reading.

Finally, encouraging the development of experienced teachers may improve the reading performance of students and set them on a path to academic success. Indeed, the connection between reading ability of students and teaching competence of teachers is critical to achieving optimal student learning outcomes.

This study sought to examine the relationship between students' reading performance and the teachers' teaching competence in reading, and how to capacitate teachers to enhance reading instruction.

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Literature Review

To develop the content of this study, the researcher reviewed and examined the following sources, results of studies, and related concepts of teachers' teaching competence that include instructional competence and professional competence, and students' performance in reading that consisted of word recognition and reading comprehension.

In the Philippine educational context, teachers' content knowledge and pedagogy are essential factors for effective teaching and student learning outcomes. Several studies have highlighted the significance of teachers' competence and their ability to translate that knowledge into effective instructional practices in teaching reading.

The National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) has been recognized as a crucial framework for improving the quality of education by defining the competencies required for effective teaching. It has guided teacher professional development, influenced policy-making, and enhanced student learning outcomes. Several studies and reports have highlighted its significance.

The NCBTS was designed to provide a clear and coherent set of standards for teacher performance, which has been essential in elevating the teaching profession. It has served as a foundation for teacher education programs, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the demands of modern education (Quijano, 2019). By focusing on core competencies, the NCBTS has facilitated targeted professional development, leading to improved instructional practices and student achievement (Marcial & De Guzman, 2020).

"Quality learning is contingent upon quality teaching" (Department of Education DepEd Order No. 42, 2017, p. 1). Students' academic achievement is significantly and positively affected by curriculum and learning management. Teachers with higher level of curriculum and knowledge management seem to be able to improve student academic

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achievement. With this in mind, quality reading performance of students could be dependent to the teachers' quality in teaching reading.

In this light, it is safe to mention that evaluating teacher quality is significant to withstand the transformations brought about by different national and global frameworks such as the K to 12 Reform and the ASEAN integration, globalization, and the evolving character of the 21st century learners.

Assessing students' progress in reading allowed for feedback which improved learning. It is necessary to give frequent, interactive assessments of students' development and understanding to recognize their needs and adjust teaching appropriately (Alahmadi et al., 2019). Inevitably, assessment is then used to interpret the performances of students, develop learning, and modify teaching (Ghahderijani et al., 2021).

Teacher effectiveness is a process of measuring teaching quality based on quality indicators. High quality teachers are required to demonstrate frequent performance on quality indicators. Student ratings can be used as a supplement data source of measuring teacher quality (Akram, 2019).

However, it is important to note that the relationship between teaching competence and student performance can vary depending on various factors such as teaching methods, student demographics, and the context of the study.

Di Pietro and Cutillo (2018) examined the impact of teacher quality on student achievement in Italy and found limited evidence of a significant correlation between teaching competence and student performance in reading.

The study provided evidence that while teaching competence may have some impact on student reading performance, the relationship may not be as strong or consistent as in other subject areas as it may be influenced by other factors.

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Conceptual Framework

This study presumed that the relationship between teaching competence and student performance in reading was dynamic and reciprocal. Effective instructional practices, grounded in instructional and professional competence, were hypothesized to positively impact students' word recognition and reading comprehension abilities. Conversely, deficiencies in teaching competence may hinder students' reading proficiency. Therefore, the research aimed to explore these associations comprehensively, with the ultimate objective of developing an enhancement program tailored to augment teachers' competencies in fostering improved student performance in reading. By elucidating these interconnections, the study sought to contribute valuable insights to educational theory and practice, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of reading instruction and learning outcomes.
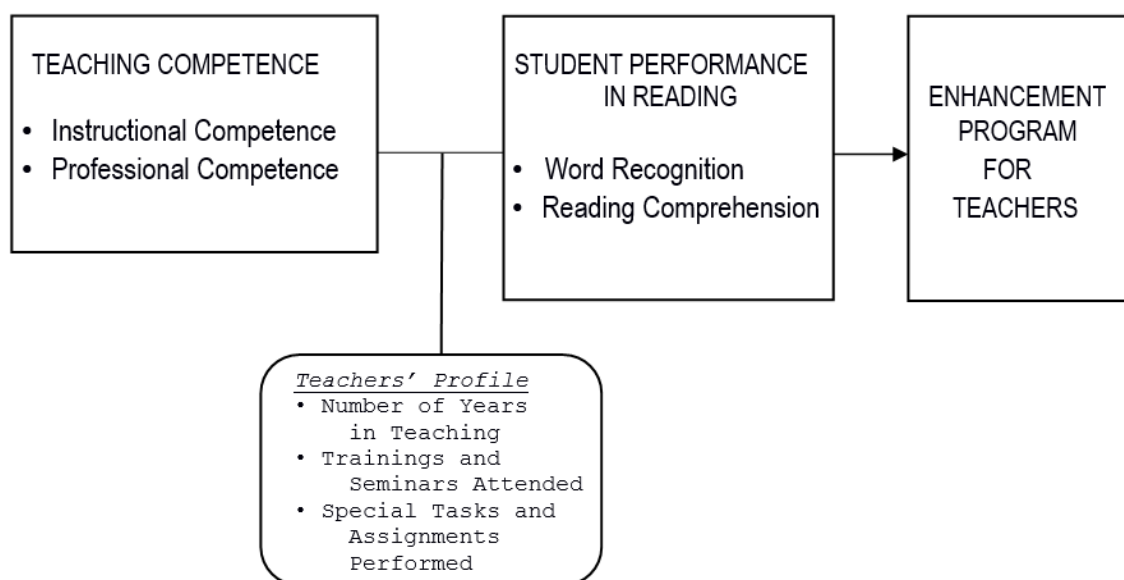

Figure 1. A Schematic Diagram of the study which illustrated the relationships of variables discussed in the conceptual framework

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METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive-correlational design to systematically describe the relationship between teaching competence and student performance in reading, without manipulating any variables. By employing a descriptive-correlational approach, the study sought to identify patterns, associations, and potential causal relationships between teaching competence levels among teachers and the reading performance of their students. This design allowed for the exploration of existing conditions and correlations within the educational setting of interest.

Statistical analyses, including correlation and t-test were conducted to explore the associations between teaching competence and student performance in reading. Correlation coefficient was used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables, while t-test helped find out the significant difference between Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test results which served as the students' performance in reading.

A. Research Environment, Population and Sample

The student population consisted of five hundred twenty-seven (527) learners enrolled in different grade levels, tracks, and strands during the school year 2023-2024. From this population, a sample of two hundred twenty-seven (227) students was selected to participate in the study, ensuring adequate representation.

Additionally, the teacher population consisted of sixteen (16) class advisers responsible for delivering reading instruction to the student participants. These teachers served as key informants in assessing teaching competence and contributed to the data collection process through their insights and experiences.

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Moreover, the school principal served as a crucial respondent, providing administrative perspectives on the relationship between teaching competence and student performance in reading.

The sample selection process involved stratified random sampling technique to ensure the representation of different grade levels, strands, and sections among the student participants.

Similarly, purposive sampling was utilized to select class advisers with varying levels of teaching experience and expertise in reading instruction.

B. Sampling Technique

In this research study, stratified random sampling for student-respondents and purposive sampling for the teacher-respondents and school-head respondent were utilized. The researcher began by considering the population's distinct strata based on the relevant characteristics such as grade level, strand, and section. This step ensured that each subgroup within the population was represented proportionally in the final sample.

C. Ethical Consideration

In observance of the prescribed ethics in conducting a research study, the researcher followed the appropriate presentation of intellectual property rights as she correctly cited the writers and authors with their reference materials and internet sources.

All respondents were given information on the study's nature and objectives, their participation rights, the advantages and disadvantages of participating, and their ability to leave the study at any time. Before collecting any data, they were asked to affix their signature on the written informed consent.

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D. Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to perform this study in Senior High School in Carmen, Agusan del Norte, an approved request letter signed by the School Head was sought by the researcher.

Following the literature review, a quantitative approach was adopted to collect data from multiple sources. A survey questionnaire was adapted and developed to assess teachers' competence in teaching reading and students' performance in reading. The survey questions were carefully crafted based on validated scales and previous research findings to ensure reliability and validity.

Purposive sampling was used for the teacher-respondents and school-head respondent. To ensure a representative sample, a stratified random sampling technique was employed for student-respondents. This involved categorizing students based on grade level, strand, and section. From each stratum, a random sample of students was selected to participate in the study.

In addition to the survey, the Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test were administered to students to objectively measure their reading performance. These tests were chosen based on their alignment with curriculum standards and their ability to provide reliable and comparable results across different grade levels.

To enhance data reliability, multiple data collection points were scheduled throughout the academic year. Furthermore, qualitative data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with the teachers. These qualitative method provided in-depth insights into the factors influencing teaching competence.

E. Statistical Treatment

The data collected were analyzed and interpreted quantitatively using the following statistical tools: Cronbach's Alpha, t-test, descriptive statistics, mean scores, frequency distributions, and correlation coefficient.

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F. Data Analysis Procedure

Initially, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to assess the survey questionnaire's internal consistency reliability and at the same time to ensure its validity.

Afterward, to get the teachers' profile in terms of number of years in teaching, trainings and seminars attended, special tasks/assignments performed, the researcher used frequency distributions and percentiles.

Then, the mean scores of both teaching competence and students' performance in reading were computed to provide central tendencies for the variables under investigation. Following the computation of mean scores, the standard deviation was calculated for both variables to measure the dispersion or spread of the data around the mean.

Next frequency distributions were generated for teaching competence and reading performance scores to illustrate the distribution of scores across different levels or categories.

To assess the significance of differences between Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test scores, a t-test was conducted. This statistical analysis allowed for the comparison of mean scores between two (2) groups. Significant differences in mean scores would indicate how the teaching competence affects the students' performance in reading.

Furthermore, a correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between teaching competence and students' performance in reading.

Likewise, on the scoring procedure, to get the teachers' teaching competence level, the researcher utilized the four-point Likert scale which was indicated in the survey questionnaire. A rating of four (4) for excellent, three (3) for satisfactory, two (2) for fair, and one (1) for poor. To be guided with the interpretation for each verbal description, please see the attached survey questionnaire in the appendices section.

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RESULTS AND ANALYSES

A. On Teachers' Profile

Table 1 presented the teachers' profile in terms of number of years in teaching, trainings and seminars attended, and special tasks/assignments performed.

Table 1. Teachers' Profile

No. of Years in Teaching	f	%
1-3 years	1	6.25
4-6 years	5	31.25
7 years and above	10	62.50
Total	**16**	**100.00**
No. of Seminars Attended		
1-3 times	5	31.25
4-6 times	3	18.75
7 times and above	8	50.00
Total	**16**	**100.00**
Types of Seminars Attended		
Divisional	4	25.00
Regional	10	62.50
National	2	12.50
Total	**16**	**100.00**
Special Tasks/Assignments		
1-3 tasks	12	75.00
4-6 tasks	2	12.50
7 tasks and above	2	12.50
Total	**16**	**100.00**

Legends: f-Frequency; %-Percentage

The data revealed that 6.25% of teacher-respondents had 1-3 years of teaching experience, while 31. 25% had 4-6 years, and the majority, comprising 62.50%, had 7 years or more of teaching experience. This distribution indicated a significant portion of the respondents had been teaching for a considerable duration, with the majority having more than six years of experience. Such findings suggested a relatively experienced cohort, likely implying a seasoned and potentially well-established group of educators. Additionally, the prevalence of individuals with seven or more years of teaching experience may signify a stable and experienced workforce within the school.

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The study supported the claims of König et al., (2020) that in particular, teacher expertise has worked out that expert teachers, compared with novice teachers, highly align their planning decisions to the needs of their students.

Furthermore, the table showed that 31.25% of teacher-respondents attended seminars 1-3 times, while 18.75% attended seminars 4-6 times, and 50.00% attended 7 times or more. This distribution indicated that a significant portion of respondents attended seminars frequently, with the majority attending seven times or more. This suggested a strong interest or commitment to attending such events.

Although teachers function to carry out other tasks, like attending training, seminars or workshops for personal and professional development. This, however, indirectly, affected the instructional duties in schools as cited by Zamora and Zamora (2022).

The analysis of the seminar attendance data revealed that 25.00% of participants attended divisional seminars, while 62.50% opted for regional seminars, and 12.50% attended national seminars. This distribution indicated a clear preference for regional seminars, followed by divisional seminars, with national seminars garnering the least attendance. Such trends, suggested that attendees may find regional seminars more accessible or relevant compared to divisional or national ones.

As what can be observed on the table, the data indicated that 75.00% of respondents performed between 1-3 tasks, while 12.50% of respondents completed between 4-6 tasks. Similarly, another 12.50% of respondents undertook 7 tasks or more. This distribution suggested that majority of the teachers were involved in a moderate number of tasks, with a smaller proportion engaged in either a higher or lower number of tasks. The concentration of responses within the 1-3 tasks range highlighted the prevalence of tasks falling within this category. The presence of outliers, represented by the smaller percentages in the 4-6 tasks and 7 tasks and above categories, suggested variability in task allocation or individual workload capacities. Overall, the data provided insights into the distribution and extent of task

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involvement among participants, indicating a predominantly moderate level of task engagement.

B. Teachers' Instructional Competence

Table 2 presented the teachers' teaching competence in terms of instructional competence.

Table 2. Teachers' Instructional Competence

Indicators	Students Mean	Students VD	Teachers Mean	Teachers VD	School Head Mean	School Head VD	Overall Mean
Designs and delivers reading instruction, including phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and literacy assessment.	3.35	E	3.44	E	3.00	S	3.26
Creates lesson plans tailored to students' reading levels and needs.	3.30	E	3.44	E	2.81	S	3.18
Models reading during instructional sessions.	3.11	E	3.31	E	3.06	S	3.16
Selects reading materials for different proficiency levels.	3.13	E	3.19	E	2.81	S	3.04
Gives instructions and explanations during teaching sessions.	3.49	E	3.69	E	3.06	S	3.41
Uses various reading strategies (e.g. predicting, questioning, summarizing) into teaching to support comprehension.	3.30	E	3.25	E	2.69	S	3.08
Engages students in interactive learning activities (e.g. discussions, group work, and hands-on exercises).	3.25	E	3.56	E	3.06	S	3.29
Integrates technology and multimedia resources to enhance reading instruction.	3.18	E	3.56	E	3.31	E	3.35
Assesses students' reading progress and adjusts instruction accordingly.	3.29	E	3.19	E	3.00	S	3.16
Provides differentiated instruction to meet diverse needs of learners in reading.	3.29	E	3.44	E	3.31	E	3.35
Aligns with lesson objectives the teaching methods, learning activities and instructional materials or resources appropriate to the learners.	3.30	E	3.56	E	2.94	S	3.27
Creates situations that encourage learners to use higher order thinking skills.	3.16	E	3.56	E	2.81	S	3.18
Engages and sustains learners' interest in the subject by making content meaningful and relevant to them.	3.29	E	3.44	E	2.94	S	3.22
Total Competence	**3.26**	**E**	**3.43**	**E**	**2.99**	**S**	**3.23**

Legends: VD – Verbal Description (4-Excellent [E]; 3-Satisfactory [S]; 2-Fair [F]; 1-Poor [P])
(Scale: 0.1-1.0 – Poor; 1.1-2.0 – Fair; 2.1-3.0 – Satisfactory; 3.1-4.0 – Excellent)

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In the indicator "designs and delivers reading instruction, including phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and literacy assessment", there was a positive perception of instructional competence in reading among students, teachers, and school head. It was worth noting that teachers and students perceived the competence level slightly higher than the school head.

As being discussed by Shulman (2018), the role of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in connecting subject matter knowledge and effective teaching strategies in reading could be considered. There is significance in promoting effective instructional practices in reading as what Ball et al. (2018) had emphasized.

The data for the indicator "creates lesson plans tailored to students' reading levels and needs" suggested that teachers generally excel in tailoring lesson plans to students' reading levels and needs, as perceived by both students and teachers themselves, although there may be areas identified by the school head where further enhancement could be beneficial as Jordan et al. (2018) cited that knowledge alone is not sufficient for effective reading instruction; yet knowledgeable teachers are necessary to help students become proficient readers.

The indicator "models reading during instructional sessions" involved examining students, teachers, and school head's perceptions.

The analysis of the indicator based on the different perceptions indicated a generally positive view of this aspect of instructional competence, with mean scores falling within the satisfactory and excellent ranges across all groups.

The indicator "selects reading materials for different proficiency levels" highlighted that while there was a generally positive perception of teachers' ability to select reading materials for different proficiency levels, there may be opportunities for further enhancement, particularly in aligning the perceptions of school head with those of students and teachers.

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It is well said that teachers are important components of the educational system. They dispense information using different methods and strategies, become caring adults to their students and serve as motivators that drive the learners to become creators of knowledge (Bagapuro & Delos Santos, 2021). In consequence, they still need to select reading materials appropriate for varying reading levels.

In whole, the indicator of giving instructions and explanations during teaching sessions underscored the importance of considering multiple perspectives when evaluating instructional competence. While teachers may feel proficient in giving instructions and explanations, it is essential to address any gaps identified by students and school head to ensure continuous improvement in teaching effectiveness.

Admittedly, differentiated instruction continues to be a critical component of effective reading instruction, as teachers must differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners (Kavale et al., 2019). In essence, teacher self-efficacy in teaching has been found to be positively related to student reading achievement (Harms et al., 2022). Thus, the giving of instructions and explanations during teaching sessions should be considered.

The indicator "engages students in interactive learning activities" demonstrated effectiveness in promoting engagement and interaction within the classroom, as reflected by the positive perceptions of both teachers and students.

Schools can use effective, research-based practices to create settings in which students' healthy growth and development are central to the design of classrooms and the school as a whole (Darling-Hammond et al., 2018).

Also, the study analyzed the indicator of instructional competence concerning the integration of technology and multimedia resources to enhance reading instruction.

From the data collected, it was found that there was a positive perception among students, teachers, and school head regarding the integration of technology and multimedia

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resources to enhance reading instruction. However, there may be opportunities for further improvement to ensure that the instructional approach aligns with the needs and preferences of all stakeholders involved.

The analysis of the indicator assessing students' reading progress and adjusting instructions accordingly suggested that there was a generally positive perception among students, teachers, and school head regarding the effectiveness of assessing students' reading progress and adjusting instructions accordingly. However, there may be opportunities for further enhancement and consistency in its implementation in the school.

The indicator of providing differentiated instruction to meet diverse needs of learners in reading was perceived positively by the respondents. The excellent mean scores from all parties suggested that efforts to enhance instructional competence in this area have been effective.

The study assessed the indicator of instructional competence, specifically focusing on aligning lesson objectives with teaching methods, learning activities, and instructional materials appropriate to the learners. The data revealed varying perceptions among different stakeholders.

The study analyzed the indicator of instructional competence related to creating situations that encourage learners to use higher order thinking skills. The data revealed variations in perceptions among different perspectives. The findings suggested that while teachers feel confident in their ability to foster higher-order thinking skills in students, there may be differences in perception between teachers and school head.

The data for the indicator of instructional competence, which focused on engaging and sustaining learners' interest by making content meaningful and relevant to them indicated that students perceived this aspect with a mean score of 3.29, indicating an excellent level of engagement. Teachers also perceived their effectiveness in this area positively, with a mean score of 3.44, similarly indicating an excellent level. However, the perception from school head

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was slightly lower, with a mean score of 2.94, still within the satisfactory range but slightly less favorable compared to students and teachers.

C. Teachers' Professional Competence

Table 3 presented the teachers' teaching competence in terms of professional competence.

Table 3. Teachers' Professional Competence

Indicators	Students		Teachers		School Head		Overall Mean
	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	Mean	VD	
Engages in professional development activities related to reading instruction.	3.38	E	3.31	E	2.88	S	3.19
Collaborates with colleagues to develop and implement reading curriculum and instructional plans.	3.16	E	3.44	E	2.69	S	3.10
Communicates with parents/guardians about students' reading progress and strategies for improvement.	3.17	E	3.13	E	3.38	E	3.23
Stays informed about current research and best practices in reading instruction.	3.26	E	2.94	S	2.69	S	2.96
Addresses the individual needs of diverse learners in reading instruction.	3.24	E	3.13	E	2.69	S	3.02
Seeks feedback from students on his/her reading instruction methods.	3.23	E	3.06	S	2.81	S	3.03
Manages classroom behavior and maintains a positive learning environment for reading.	3.40	E	3.69	E	3.38	E	3.49
Handles conflicts or disagreements with students, parents, or colleagues professionally.	3.23	E	3.50	E	3.56	E	3.43
Prioritizes ongoing professional development to enhance teaching skills in reading.	3.30	E	3.38	E	2.69	S	3.12
Adheres to ethical standards and codes of conduct in the profession.	3.22	E	3.63	E	3.25	E	3.37
Reflects on teaching practices and seek feedback for improvement.	3.27	E	3.44	E	2.88	S	3.20
Allocates time for professional development through participation in educational seminars.	3.21	E	3.38	E	3.19	E	3.26
Reads educational materials regularly.	3.25	E	3.19	E	2.94	S	3.13
Total Competence	**3.26**	**E**	**3.32**	**E**	**3.00**	**S**	**3.19**

Legends: VD – Verbal Description (4-Excellent [E]; 3-Satisfactory [S]; 2-Fair [F]; 1-Poor [P])
(Scale: 0.1-1.0 – Poor; 1.1-2.0 – Fair; 2.1-3.0 – Satisfactory; 3.1-4.0 – Excellent)

The study provided insightful analysis regarding the indicator of professional competence "engaging in professional development activities related to reading instruction".

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The distinction of perceptions suggested a need for further investigation into the school head's perspective.

The study offered insights into the existing studies of Tagele and Bedilu (2018) who found that it is essential to improve teachers' assessment literacy through professional development training and programs.

The indicator "collaborated with colleagues to develop and implement reading curriculum and instructional plans" from the study demonstrated varying perceptions among students, teachers, and school head.

While the indicator demonstrated an overall excellent level of competence across all stakeholders, there were noteworthy differences in perception among the participants. Addressing these differences could involve enhancing communication channels, clarifying expectations, and fostering a more cohesive approach to collaborative curriculum development and implementation within the school.

Teacher effectiveness is a process of measuring teaching quality based on quality indicators. High quality teachers are required to demonstrate frequent performance on quality indicators (Akram, 2019). To attain such effectiveness, educators need to collaborate with colleagues to develop and implement reading curriculum and instructional plans.

The indicator "communicates with parents/guardians about students' reading progress and strategies for improvement exhibited satisfactory levels based on the collected data.

The analysis indicated that the indicator was perceived excellent by students, teachers, and school head, implying its positive impact on professional competence in the context of enhancing reading skills.

The indicator "stays informed about current research and best practices in reading instruction" was evaluated based on various perspectives.

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While the two perspectives suggested a satisfactory level of competence in staying informed about current research and best practices in reading instruction, there appeared to be a slight difference between students' perceptions, teachers' self-perceptions, and the perception of the school head. This could indicate areas for improvement or further professional development initiatives to bridge any perceived gaps and ensure teachers remain adequately informed and competent in this crucial aspect of their profession.

The study analyzed the indicator of addressing the individual needs of diverse learners in reading instruction. The data collected included perceptions from students, teachers, and school head.

The study suggested that both students and teachers perceived excellent levels of competence in addressing the individual needs of diverse learners in reading instruction, though there may be room for enhancement, especially according to the perception of school head. This highlighted the importance of ongoing professional development programs to further improve teaching competence in this area.

Hence, to address the individual needs of diverse learners in reading instruction, teachers who are responsible in training of the learners need to be well-equipped to fulfill this responsibility (Bansal & Tanwar, 2021).

The analysis of the indicator "seeking feedback from students on their reading instruction methods" suggested that seeking feedback from students on reading instruction methods was perceived positively by both students and teachers, albeit with a slightly less enthusiastic response from school head. This underscored the importance of continued support and professional development in this area to ensure alignment and effectiveness across all levels of the educational hierarchy.

On the indicator "manages classroom behavior and maintains a positive learning environment for reading", the difference between students' and teachers' perceptions highlighted the importance of effective communication and collaboration between educators

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and students to ensure that classroom dynamics meet the needs of all stakeholders. While teachers may feel confident in their ability to provide a positive learning environment, it is essential to consider students' perspectives and make adjustments as necessary to enhance their educational experience. Additionally, the alignment of school head's perception with students' suggested a need for ongoing support and professional development initiatives to further enhance teaching competence in this critical aspect.

The study explored the indicator of handling conflicts or disagreements with students, parents, or colleagues professionally. The findings suggested that while students perceive the competence as excellent, teachers and school head perceived it more positively, highlighting potential variations in perception among stakeholders. Further investigation could examine into the specific strategies and interventions that contribute to higher perceived competence levels among teachers and school leader, potentially informing enhancement programs for educators.

The optimal realization of the teachers' functions and roles is mainly reflected through its excellence in teaching, dealing with students, fellow professional relationships, and professional skills (Kusumaningrum et al., 2019).

The indicator prioritizing ongoing professional development to enhance teaching skills in reading significantly impacted various stakeholders' perceptions. The data revealed the importance of prioritizing ongoing professional development to improve teaching competence in reading.

When language teachers are not involved as active decision makers regarding their own professional development practices, the outcomes may not be as desirable as policymakers plan (Ustuk & Comoglu, 2019).

The study provided an analysis of the indicator of professional competence regarding adherence to ethical standards and codes of conduct in the teaching profession.

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It suggested that teachers, as perceived by both students and school head, generally adhere to ethical standards and codes of conduct in their profession. However, there may still be areas for improvement to ensure continuous enhancement of ethical practices within the teaching community.

The indicator "reflects on teaching practices and seeks feedback for improvement" was assessed through various perspectives.

While both students and teachers perceived a positive reflection on teaching practices and seeking feedback for improvement, the slight distinction in the school head's perception warrants further investigation into potential areas of misalignment or improvement within the school's feedback and support mechanisms for professional development.

The indicator regarding the allocation of time for professional development through participation in educational seminars perceived positively across different respondents within the educational context, which may contribute to enhancing teaching competence and ultimately improving student performance in reading.

For the indicator "reads educational materials regularly", while students and teachers recognized the importance of reading educational materials regularly, there is room for improvement in the perception of school head. Addressing these differences in perception could lead to the development and implementation of more effective enhancement programs for teachers, ultimately benefiting student performance in reading.

D. Students' Reading Performance

Table 4 presented the students' reading performance level as being shown in their pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 4. Students' Reading Performance

Phil-IRI Indicators	PRE TEST						POST TEST					
	Frustration		Instructional		Independent		Frustration		Instructional		Independent	
	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Word Recognition	10	4.41%	82	36.12%	135	59.47%	2	0.89%	47	20.70%	178	78.41%
Reading Comprehension	120	52.86%	73	32.16%	34	14.98%	28	12.33%	110	48.46%	89	39.21%

Legends: **Word Recognition** (Independent 97%-100%; Instructional 90%-96%; Frustration 89% and below)

Reading Comprehension (Independent 80-100%; Instructional 59-79%; Frustration 58% and below)

It was observed that in the pre-test for overall reading level, the data revealed that 53.75% of students were at the frustration level; 35.68% were at the instructional level; and 10.57% were at the independent level. In the post-test, significant improvements were observed. The frustration level decreased to 12.33%; the instructional level remained stable at 53.75%, and the independent level increased to 33.92%. These results indicate a notable shift towards higher reading proficiency levels among learners.

In connection to the pre-test and post-test, the scores were obtained from the two hundred twenty-seven (227) learners of SHS in Carmen. The scores were then related or paired using the t-test for dependent samples. The results found out significant values ($t= -16.85$, $n=227$, $p<0.05$) which indicated that the pre-test and post-test reading level was significantly different. The significance value was smaller than any plausible alpha. The mean of the post-test overall reading level showed a greater value of 2.22 than that of the pre-test overall reading level mean of 1.56. This somehow implied a positive increase of the reading performance of the respondents.

The analysis also revealed notable trends in student responses across different question levels during the pre-test. Notably, all students successfully answered the literal level questions, showcasing a strong grasp of basic comprehension. However, a discernible drop-

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off occurred in the interpretive question section, with 72% of students providing correct responses. This suggested a moderate level of proficiency in analyzing and inferring meaning from texts. Furthermore, in the applied question segment, only 54% of students were able to demonstrate application of their comprehension skills to real-world scenarios. This indicated a potential area for improvement in translating reading comprehension into practical contexts. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing teaching competence, particularly in guiding students towards higher-order thinking skills and application of knowledge beyond the text.

In the meantime, challenges were revealed along the Phil-IRI implementation which drew setbacks on literacy improvement, writing and reading proficiency of the learners. Indeed, developing the reading ability of learners with reading difficulties has never been an easy feat for the reading teachers (Abril et al., 2022).

E. Significant Relationship between Teachers' Teaching Competence and Students' Reading Performance

Table 5 presented the students' reading performance level as being shown in their pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 5. Teaching Competence and Reading Performance

Student Performance	Teacher Competence	
Word Recognition	**Professional Competence**	**Instructional Competence**
r-value	0.0281	−0.0256
p-value	.673	.708
Conclusion	Not Significant	Not Significant
Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho
Reading Comprehension	**Professional Competence**	**Instructional Competence**
r-value	−0.0486	−0.0091
p-value	.471	.893
Conclusion	Not Significant	Not Significant
Decision	Accept Ho	Accept Ho

Relationship is significant if p≤0.05

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The results indicated that the student performance in word recognition did not significantly correlate with the teachers' professional competence (r=0.0281, p=0.673, not significant, accept Ho1) or teachers' instructional competence (r=-0.0256, p=0.708, not significant, accept Ho1).

Also, the analysis revealed no significant correlation between student performance in reading comprehension to the teachers' professional competence (r=-0.0486, p=0.471, not significant, accept Ho1), nor to the teachers' instructional competence (r=-0.0091, p=0.893, not significant, accept Ho1). These findings suggested that there is no strong linear relationship between students' reading performance and teachers' teaching competence, both in terms of instructional and professional competence. Further investigation may be needed to explore other factors influencing students' reading comprehension.

It is important to note that the relationship between teaching competence and student performance can vary depending on various factors such as teaching methods, student demographics, and the context of the study. Hence, the findings of this research supported to the following findings: There is a limited evidence of a significant correlation between teaching competence and student performance in reading (Di Pietro & Cutillo, 2018).

Overall, the results and findings led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis made by the researcher. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between teachers' teaching competence and the students' performance in reading.

F. Significant Relationship between Teachers' Instructional Competence and Professional Competence

Table 6 presented the correlation between teachers' instructional competence and professional competence.

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Table 6. Instructional Competence and Professional Competence

Professional Competence	Instructional Competence
r-value	0.6747
p-value	.00001
Conclusion	Significant
Decision	Reject Ho

Relationship is significant if p ≤0.05

The results indicated that the teachers' professional competence had a significant relationship to their instructional competence (r=0.6747, p=0.00001, not significant, reject Ho2).

This strong correlation indicated that higher levels of professional competence among teachers were associated with higher levels of instructional competence.

The findings underscored the importance of professional development for teachers as a means to enhance their instructional skills.

G. Training Design – Enhancement Program for Teachers

Training Design: Enhancing Competence in Teaching Reading

Training Description: This is a comprehensive training initiative for teachers, designed to elevate students' word recognition and reading comprehension skills. Tailored specifically for the implementation of the Department of Education's (DepEd) Catch-up Friday which aims to provide educators with effective strategies and tools to support students in their reading journey.

Duration: 5 Days (8 hours per day)

Target Participants: SHS Teachers

Number of Participants: 23 SHS Teachers

Total Budget: (To be agreed)

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TRAINING SCHEDULE

Day 1	Introduction and Foundations
8:00 – 9:00 AM • Introduction to the training program. • Overview of objectives and outcomes. 9:00 – 10:30 AM • Presentation on the importance of reading competence. • Discussion on current challenges and opportunities in reading instruction. 10:30 – 10:45 AM 10:45 – 12:00 PM • Overview of key theories in reading education. • Introduction to modeling reading in the classroom. 12:00 – 1:00 PM 1:00 – 3:00 PM • Interactive workshop on read-aloud strategies, think-aloud protocols, and guided reading. • Role-playing and demonstration. 3:00 – 3:15 PM 3:15 – 5:00 PM • Group discussion and reflection on modeling techniques. • Planning how to incorporate modeling into daily instruction.	-Registration and Welcoming of Participants -Current State of Reading Instruction -Break -Theoretical Foundations of Reading -Lunch Break - Practical Strategies for Modeling Reading -Break -Reflective Practice

Day 2	Encouraging Higher Order Thinking Skills
8:00 – 10:00 AM • Introduction to HOTS and their significance in reading. • Examples of HOTS in reading activities. 10:00 – 10:15 AM 10:15 – 12:00 PM • Workshop on creating activities that foster HOTS. • Group work on designing reading comprehension questions that encourage analysis and synthesis. 12:00 – 1:00 PM 1:00 – 3:00 PM • Case studies and examples of successful HOTS integration. • Developing lesson plans incorporating HOTS. 3:00 – 3:15 PM 3:15 – 5:00 PM • Presentation of group work. • Peer feedback and collaborative improvement of lesson plans.	- Understanding Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) -Break -Designing HOTS Activities -Lunch Break -Implementing HOTS in the Classroom -Break -Sharing and Feedback

Day 3	Staying Informed about Current Research and Best Practices
8:00 – 10:00 AM • Presentation on recent studies and findings in reading instruction. • Discussion on implications for classroom practice. 10:00 – 10:15 AM 10:15 – 12:00 PM • Exploration of effective reading programs and strategies. • Examples of successful reading initiatives in schools. 12:00 – 1:00 PM 1:00 – 3:00 PM • Workshop on how to integrate research findings into teaching practice. • Developing a plan for continuous professional development. 3:00 – 3:15 PM 3:15 – 5:00 PM • Strategies for collaborating with colleagues to stay updated. • Creating a plan for ongoing professional growth and development.	- Overview of Current Research -Break -Best Practices in Reading Instruction -Lunch Break - Utilizing Research in Teaching Practice -Break -Building a Professional Learning Community

Day 4	Integration and Application
8:00 – 10:00 AM • Review of previous sessions. • Strategies for integrating modeling and HOTS in daily lessons. 10:00 – 10:15 AM 10:15 – 12:00 PM • Workshop on creating comprehensive lesson plans that include modeling, HOTS, and current research. • Group work on developing detailed lesson plans. 12:00 – 1:00 PM 1:00 – 3:00 PM • Teachers present their lesson plans. • Peer review and feedback. 3:00 – 3:15 PM 3:15 – 5:00 PM • Revision of lesson plans based on feedback. • Preparing for classroom implementation.	-Integrating Modeling and HOTS -Break -Lesson Planning and Implementation -Lunch Break - Microteaching Sessions -Break -Refinement and Improvement

Day 5	Implementation and Evaluation
8:00 - 10:00 AM • Tips for successful implementation of new strategies. • Discussion on potential challenges and solutions.	-Classroom Implementation Strategies
10:00 - 10:15 AM	-Break
10:15 - 12:00 PM • Methods for assessing the impact of new strategies on student performance. • Creating assessment tools for reading skills and HOTS.	- Evaluating Student Performance
12:00 - 1:00 PM	-Lunch Break
1:00 - 3:00 PM • Developing a personal action plan for each teacher. • Setting goals and timelines for implementation.	-Action Plan Development
3:00 - 3:15 PM	-Break
3:15 - 4:00 PM • Teachers present their action plans. • Collaborative discussion and support.	-Sharing of Action Plans
4:00 - 5:00 PM • Reflection on the training/giving of impressions. • Distribution of certificates.	-Closing Program

CONCLUSION

The study highlighted the depth of teaching experience and professional engagement among educators, which contributes significantly to a stable and knowledgeable teaching force. While improvements in student reading performance were observed, particularly at the literal comprehension level, these gains did not show a significant correlation with teachers' instructional or professional competence. Nonetheless, the findings emphasize the need for continued investment in targeted professional development to further strengthen teaching practices and support student learning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that DepEd and CHED administrators design and implement enhancement programs that recognize the diverse experience levels of teachers by providing mentoring opportunities, targeted support, and regionally relevant seminars. These programs

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could also evaluate the effectiveness of past seminars to ensure alignment with current instructional needs and educational trends. Continuous professional development focused on reading instruction and literacy would be prioritized to improve both teacher competence and student reading outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to engage in training that promotes effective reading strategies and higher-order thinking skills to enhance classroom instruction. Lastly, future researchers are advised to explore additional variables influencing reading performance, such as learning styles and socio-economic factors, using broader and more diverse methodologies.

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