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**PRACTICES OF ENGLISH TEACHERS AND PEER-READERS ON  
SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY PROJECT: BASES FOR AN  
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

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**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative-phenomenological study was conducted to find out the practices of four (4) Junior High School English teachers and eight (8) peer-readers in the conduct of School-based Literacy Project as bases in the conduct of enhancement program. Emergent themes drawn from the practices of English teachers in terms of selection were: automatic selection of English teachers, teachers currently doing remedial reading classes, and teacher with struggling readers in the advisory class; while for peer-readers, they were: top in the class or with honors, Special Program student, and who passed the Qualifying Examination. The practices of English teachers in terms of training needs were: Learning Action Cell, informational videos, and project orientation; while those of peer-readers in terms of training needs were orientation and monitoring and demonstration workshop. The practices of English teachers in terms of project support were: supplies from the school, support from the LGU and support from other stakeholders; while those peer-readers, were provision of materials and certificates of recognition.

**Keywords:** *School-based Literacy Project, Practices, English Teachers, Peer-reader, Enhancement Program*

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## INTRODUCTION

Every child must be given the opportunity to learn in his full competence and it can only be achieved if a child is able to read and comprehend written texts presented to him. Hence, reading must be developed at the early age of children for them to improve their communication and language skills for a wide variety of human activities that will provide them a broader understanding of the word and the world.

However, it is alarming that according to the Philippine Business for Education (PBED, 2022), learning crisis worsened during the pandemic and that in 2022, the World Bank found that 91% of Filipino 10 year-old learners were found to be lacking basic reading skills (Worldbank 2022; in PBED, 2022) as also reflected in the 2022 Division of Iloilo Data on Reading and Numeracy Test.

With the current educational landscape, to promote and address quality education, intervention activities and other innovative approaches come into play to make sure that maximum daily learning will take place, hence, Literacy Project was conceived and implemented starting January 23, 2023 in the hope to collectively improve performance on literacy.

In the opening of classes, upon enrollment, English teachers of Igaras National High School administered a reading comprehension test to learners using the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessment.

The result of Phil-IRI identified struggling readers that was included in the conduct of the Literacy Project of the school which is a Remedial Reading Intervention. The Junior High School English teachers are in-charge of handling the said project. They are assisted by peer-readers who are trained special program learners to do reading exercises.

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The researcher believed that undertaking this study would lead to the improvement of the conduct of the School-based Literacy Project to help teachers, peer-readers, school heads, and others who are concerned.

Furthermore, intervention and enhancement program must be done to address delivery problems and to provide unified activities that would directly impact literacy related issues and concerns.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

### Research Method

In this study, the descriptive research method using in-depth interview was utilized to determine and interpret the practices of English Teachers and peer readers in the conduct of Literacy Project as bases in the conduct of Enhancement Program.

McCombes (2019) explained that descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. It can provide answers to what, where, when, and how questions. She further stated that a descriptive research method investigates one or more variables.

### Research Design

This study used the Qualitative Research Design using the Phenomenological Approach. The interviewer allowed the participants to answer freely the questions to obtain the information needed.

Exploring and comprehending the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social human situation can be done through qualitative research. Emerging questions and methods,

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data collection in the participant's environment, inductive data analysis that progresses from specifics to broad themes, and interpretation of the data's significance of data are all steps in the research process. According to Creswell (2009), the final written report includes a flexible writing structure.

## Participants in the Study

Selection of the participants was based on the strategy referred to as, "purposeful selection" according to Maxwell (2005). It is a selection strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that cannot be gotten from other choices. The participants in the study were the four (4) Junior High School English teachers who are in-charge to conduct the School-based Literacy Project, and the eight (8) peer-readers from Igaras National High School for Schoolyear 2023-2024.

## Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was an In-depth interview schedule. The interview guide had two (2) parts. For teachers, Part I included the name of each participant on an optional bases; age was written in numbers; sex was categorized as male or female; grade level taught was categorized as Grade VII-VIII, Grade IX-X, Grade XI-XII; teaching experience was written in number of years. For the peer-readers, Part I included the name of the participant on an optional basis; age was written in numbers; sex was categorized as male or female; grade level was written in number; Part II for both teachers and peer-readers included a three (3)-item interview schedule which allowed participants to answer freely. It contained items about the practices of English teachers and peer readers in conducting the School-based Literacy Project.

The researcher-made instrument was used in conducting face to face interviews. After the participants finished answering, their responses were gathered, tabulated, recorded, and interpreted using Thematic Analysis to generate themes.

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## Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of an interview guide refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure. Validity is trying to explain the truth of research findings Zohrabi (2013). The researcher-made interview guide was submitted to the adviser for review and revision. After the corrections were considered and acted upon, the prepared interview guide then was forwarded to a panel of experts for content-and-face validation. The guide was considered valid after it was checked by the panel of experts. Revisions were made after validation by the panel of experts and all their suggestions and corrections were incorporated. The final draft was submitted again to the panel for approval.

## Data-Gathering Procedures

After the interview guide was found valid, the researcher asked permission from the school head and the participants through a letter addressed to them. Upon the consent of the participants, the interview was undertaken. An orientation was conducted by the researcher to acquaint the participants about the purpose of the study. Then they were asked to answer the questions. After the participants finished answering, the responses were gathered, tabulated, and analyzed with the use of Thematic Analysis.

## Data Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed using a thematic approach. Emergent themes were identified and discussed comprehensively.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something

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about an issue. This is much more than simply summarizing the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the following insights were realized:

Reading is essential as it opens more opportunities for people to understand the world around them. To address the alarming record of lowest proficiency among the identified struggling readers of Igaras National High School, a School-Based Literacy Project could be the best remediation in addressing problems as regards the learners' poor reading comprehension and closing the gaps in learners who struggle in reading.

English teachers, with the help of peer-readers who conduct this program, play a very important role in the development of reading skills of identified struggling learners. However, using varied reading practices must be considered for the learners to reach the reading level appropriate to their age and for them to perform better academically since the ability to read and comprehend is the foundation for one to be able to understand all other subjects in school. Structuring projects from planning to implementation and until assessment should be considered to effectively ensure the success of this literacy project. Some practices need to be eliminated, others to be sustained, and still others to be improved.

Utilizing the proposed enhancement program can create more strategies to improve students' literacy based on the principle of lifelong learning and DepEd's commitment to the development of teachers' potential to attain the success of the curriculum.

Setting goals for continuous improvement by providing year-long training to teachers and close monitoring of the school heads, education program supervisor, and other education experts. In this atmosphere, other personnel can express themselves freely, ensuring that the environment encourages the school not only to set their goals, but also to achieve them.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations may be considered:

Reading literacy must be properly addressed in Igaras National High School by strengthening its current School-based Literacy Project. Utilizing the proposed enhancement program and religiously implementing it will help in improving and sustaining reading performance of struggling learners.

The Department of Education can open the idea to higher educational institutions in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to offer educational courses that focus on reading or literacy education. The Department should appoint experts as well as specialists in reading to develop strategies to help solve the illiteracy problem of the country. District Reading Coordinators should be appointed to facilitate the implementation of reading programs at various levels, from schools to districts and regional offices. These efforts demonstrate DepEd's commitment to promoting literacy and ensuring that struggling readers can be given attention.

It is also the Department's responsibility to fully support the continuing professional development of teachers and to mandate every teacher as a reading teacher. It should also create policies to indicate that all possible means of assistance and encouragement shall be extended to enable children to read. This could be the basis for encouraging other schools to have their own reading projects which should be research-based, data driven or evidence-based. The Department should likewise address the needs of struggling readers who need continued reading remediation so as to meet their needs for reading fluency anchored in accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.

The Schools should be encouraged to implement intervention programs to sustain the needs of learners. Provision of daily reading habit by institutionalizing the conduct of remedial reading instruction in the classroom regularly, functional reading corner in all classrooms, use of innovative reading and comprehension strategies, a inclusion of remedial instruction in the class

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume V, Issue III

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program of teachers and importantly, division-wide compliance of National Reading Month celebration.

District supervisors and school heads should recommend and adopt the best practices about the School-based Literacy Project and discuss related concerns if they meet expected outcome. Support and encourage every teacher to be observant of the practices of their learners in addressing issues concerning poor literacy; and supervise teachers in the planning and evaluating of effective tools for effective school-wide literacy project.

All teachers are encouraged to attend seminar-workshops relative to reading in order to keep themselves abreast with the current trends in teaching reading and to properly conduct the project. As an instrument to uphold the program and bridge the gap in literacy particularly in reading by providing additional support materials to learners.

Teachers should ensure that reading assessments cater to the needs and demands of learners, specifically struggling readers who need continuous reading remediation in order for them to become fluent readers anchored on accuracy, automaticity, and prosody. They are also highly encouraged to conduct action researches relative to the reading program. The outcome of which is the development of additional interventions. Massive reading innovations should be implemented wholeheartedly to uphold quality reading education that sustains the diverse needs and demands of learners specially the struggling readers.

It is important for the teachers to pursue initiatives in teaching reading. They should never give up in guiding and inspiring children to achieve literacy by being patient and understanding individual differences and reading difficulties by giving extra time and support to slow readers. Using positive reinforcement to help motivate learners read aloud can help improve their reading fluency and comprehension.

Students should be encouraged to embrace reading during their formative years for them to improve their reading performance level. An individual can be lifted from the pits of ignorance

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by embracing the dynamics of reading. It is thus important that learners be encouraged to make reading as a hobby.



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