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## TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CATCH-UP FRIDAYS: GROUNDWORK FOR A SUSTAINABLE READING PROGRAM

**SHIELA MAE A. TITULAR  
PSB TEACHER**

Bancal Elementary School  
titularshielamae29@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

This descriptive-qualitative study determined the challenges encountered by teachers in the implementation of Catch-up Fridays as groundwork for a sustainable reading program in the Schools District of Alimodian I during the school year 2023-2024. The research method utilized in this study was a qualitative method using in-depth interviews and the research design was phenomenology. It was revealed that teachers viewed Catch Up Fridays as a way to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills, an additional burden for teachers, and an opportunity to be flexible and creative. It was found through in-depth interviews that the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing Catch-up Fridays included learners' absences, lack of learning materials, additional workload for teachers, and lack of training. To hurdle challenges in the implementation of catch-up Fridays, the interview revealed that teachers provide engaged activities, show a positive outlook, make contextualized learning strategies.

**Keywords:** *Teachers, Challenges, Implementation, Catch-Up Fridays, Groundwork, Sustainable Reading Program*

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## INTRODUCTION

Catch-Up Fridays is a dynamic learning initiative designed to significantly enhance social, fundamental, and essential skills that are crucial for meeting the objectives of the basic education curriculum. This initiative is a pivotal part of the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP), which aims to address learning gaps caused by various disruptions, thereby supporting the fundamental education goals outlined in the MATATAG Agenda. At the heart of Catch-Up Fridays is the "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) program, which will be rolled out through an engaging orientation and interactive activities specifically tailored for field officials. This program emphasizes the importance of reading and aims to create a culture of literacy among students. Additionally, Catch-Up Fridays will serve as a collaborative platform for field implementers to provide valuable feedback on the guidelines, ensuring that the initiative is tailored to meet the unique needs

The Department of Education (DepEd) is dedicated to implementing Catch-Up Fridays in all elementary and secondary schools, as well as community learning centers (CLCs) across the nation. This commitment will foster a supportive learning environment, encouraging active participation and engagement from students, teachers, and the wider community. With this initiative, we are setting the stage for a more robust and effective educational experience for all learners.

One of the most crucial aspects of any language is reading. People have historically struggled with reading, including problems with vocabulary development, pronunciation, and understanding of the text (DepEd Memo No.001, S. 2024).

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Schools can implement Catch-Up Fridays in several ways. The time allotted for each subject area will be used to improve students' understanding and proficiency in reading, values, health, and peace education on Cath-Up Fridays. Students can also communicate their ideas via writing in a variety of formats, including diaries, tales, personal essays, and other creative works that are reflective of their own educational experiences. Reading proficiency is not just about understanding words. It entails actively reading the material, understanding its meaning, and combining knowledge to create fresh viewpoints and ideas.

The comprehensive analysis revealed that incorporating Catch-Up Friday sessions, which allowed students to review and catch up on their reading, in addition to the use of personalized reading materials tailored to their individual needs, had a substantial and measurable impact on improving students' reading proficiency levels. These results highlight how important it is to offer tailored treatments and educational materials in order to improve students' overall reading competency. More so, teachers need to engage in collaborative expertise sessions towards reading. In addition, teachers require various professional development opportunities to collaborate on creating materials and sharing effective strategies for implementing Catch-up Fridays. These activities help them address the challenges encountered and ensure successful implementation. Exploring the hurdles of implementing Catch-Up Fridays and broadening horizons. The results suggested that Catch-Up Friday sessions were beneficial for improving reading skills and creating an engaging learning atmosphere that supported students' academic advancement. The book emphasizes

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that reading is not just a hobby but also a vital life skill that actively contributes to the development of the nation. The idea that reading is a means of gaining information is the basis for the focus on the value of reading.

Thus, the study's purpose was to address the challenges encountered during Catch-Up Fridays, particularly in Elementary schools of Alimodian District I. It aimed to close learning gaps and enhance students' reading skills by utilizing the urgent deployment of Catch-up Fridays. Students may benefit from this research by developing into capable, involved, and accountable citizens who possess the abilities needed to succeed in the contemporary world.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the research design, research methodology, study participants, data gathering methods, research instrument, and data analysis used. Finding the challenges of establishing catch-up Fridays as the cornerstone of a long-term reading program in the Schools District of Alimodian I during the 2023–2024 academic year was the aim of this study.

### Research Method

Descriptive-qualitative research was the research method used in this study.

As stated by Wallen and Fraenkel (2007), the descriptive approach is utilized to provide the most thorough and in-depth description of a certain circumstance.

During the interview, the interviewer and the interviewee were seated across from each other at a comfortable distance, allowing for a relaxed yet focused atmosphere. They carefully considered a series of thoughtfully crafted questions that centered around a specific

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topic of interest. The purpose of this dialogue was to delve into the participants' core beliefs and insights regarding the subject, fostering a rich exchange of ideas within a social context. Each question was designed to encourage deep reflection, prompting the interviewee to share their personal experiences and perspectives, ultimately revealing a more profound understanding of their thoughts on the matter.

### Research Design

The study employed a phenomenological research design. This qualitative research approach emphasizes understanding how individuals subjectively interpret their experiences. By examining these personal interpretations, researchers can gain insight into how different people perceive the world, as well as how these viewpoints may differ from Phenomenology, as defined by Smith (2013), which examines the structures of consciousness based on direct experiences. The essential aspect of any experience is its intentionality, which refers to its direction towards an object, indicating what it is about.

### Participants of the Study

The study involved a carefully selected group of 15 educators from the Alimodian I School District for the 2023-2024 academic year. This diverse cohort included five dedicated teachers from local primary schools, each bringing unique teaching methods and classroom experiences. Additionally, five teachers were chosen from complete elementary schools, known for their comprehensive curriculum and student engagement strategies. Finally, five educators from the central school, distinguished by their leadership and collaborative teaching

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practices, completed the participant group. Together, these teachers represented a rich tapestry of educational backgrounds and approaches.

## Sampling Design

A purposive sampling design was used in the study. Purposive sampling, as described by Nikolopoulou (2023), involves a set of non-probability sampling techniques where participants are chosen based on specific characteristics required for the sample.

In other words, units are selected “on purpose” in purposive sampling.

Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher’s judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study’s objectives.

Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research as well as in mixed methods research. It is especially beneficial when seeking information-rich cases or optimizing limited resources. However, it carries a high risk of research biases, such as observer bias.

## Research Instrument

The researcher designed a comprehensive interview schedule that functioned as the primary research instrument for the study. This schedule comprised three carefully crafted questions aimed at exploring the study's specific goals and objectives in depth. With the explicit consent of the participants, the researcher utilized both voice recorders and video cameras to capture data during the interviews, ensuring thorough documentation of the discussions for subsequent analysis. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of

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participants' responses while maintaining a respectful and transparent process throughout the data collection phase.

### **Validity of the Research Instrument**

A group of jurors who were chosen based on their qualifications in research, testing and assessment and English were asked to validate each question for review and revision before the researcher, adviser, and dean of the graduate school determined that the interview schedule was valid.

The appropriateness, significance, accuracy, and utility of the conclusions a researcher draws are all considered aspects of validity. The format and substance of content-related evidence of validity must be in line with the definition of variables and the sample of subjects to be assessed. It also aids in the validation of the questionnaire's questions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007).

The standardized form outlined by Good and Scates, as referenced in Appendix A, was employed to thoroughly incorporate the feedback provided by the validators. This feedback included a range of comments, necessary modifications, and constructive recommendations aimed at enhancing the structure and clarity of the interview schedule. Each suggestion was carefully considered to ensure that the final version effectively meets the objectives of the assessment and addresses the validators' insights.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

The researcher secured all the necessary approvals to proceed with the study from various authoritative figures, including the academic advisor, the Dean of the Graduate School,

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the Superintendent of the Schools Division, the district supervisors, and the heads of the participating schools. This comprehensive approval process ensured that the study met institutional and ethical standards.

To facilitate the interviews, the researcher personally visited different locations, prioritizing convenience for the participants. These locations included local schools and community neighborhoods, allowing for a comfortable environment where participants could openly share their thoughts and experiences.

Before initiating the interviews, the researcher took the essential step of ensuring informed consent. Each participant was presented with a detailed consent form or waiver that explained the study's purpose, methodology, and their rights as participants. This form served to clarify that involvement in the study was voluntary and that their privacy would be respected throughout the research process.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the interviewee's insights, both voice and video recorders were utilized during the in-depth interviews. This approach allowed for an accurate and detailed capture of the interviewee's responses, including their tone, expressions, and body language. Following the completion of a series of interviews, the researcher meticulously analyzed and synthesized the data collected, integrating key themes and insights to formulate a cohesive summary of the findings.

## Data Analyses

Thematic analysis was employed to examine the collected data.

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The practice of finding themes or patterns in qualitative data is known as thematic analysis. Finding themes—such as significant or intriguing patterns in the data—and using them to address the study or make a statement about a problem is the goal of a thematic analysis, according to Maguire and Delahunt (2017). This involves compiling, evaluating, and interpreting the collected data in order to make sense of it.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to provide the foundation for a long-term reading program in the Schools District of Alimodian I, this study was carried out to ascertain the difficulties instructors had when implementing Catch-up Fridays during the 2023–2024 academic year.

This study used phenomenology as its research design and a qualitative approach that involved in-depth interviews.

The five chosen individuals were the study's participants teachers in primary, five elementary, and five central school teachers during the school year 2023-2024, in the Schools District of Alimodian I. A researcher-made interview schedule was used as an instrument to gather data.

These participants were selected using purposive sampling. The researcher considered all comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool. After the questionnaire had been found valid, permits were prepared to allow the researcher to start conducting the in-depth interview.

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Permits from the adviser, Dean of the Graduate School, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, School Head, and individual participants were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/community/place convenient on the part of the participants to conduct the interview.

The researcher consolidated all collected data after a series of interviews. The information was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted using a thematic approach.

This research sought to determine the obstacles instructors in the Schools District of Alimodian I had when attempting to implement Catch-up Fridays as a long-term reading program during the 2023–2024 academic year. Purposive sampling was used to choose 15 instructors for a qualitative study that involved in-depth interviews. The advisor, Graduate School Dean, Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, School Head, and individual participants were among the people who granted authorization to the researcher. A series of interviews were used to gather the data, and a thematic analysis was used for analysis.

According to the findings of the in-depth interviews with the participants, instructors saw Catch Up Fridays as a means of enhancing students' reading and numeracy abilities, an extra workload for them, and a chance to exercise flexibility and creativity.

It was also found out through in-depth interview that the challenges encountered by teachers in the implementation of Catch-up Fridays were learners' absences, lack of learning materials, additional workload for teachers, and lack of training.

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Moreover, teachers hurdled the challenges in the implementation of Catch-up Fridays by providing engaging activities, showing a positive outlook, making contextualized learning materials, and collaborating with stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

Teachers who are directly involved in the implementation of the Catch-Up Friday showed be provided with highly motivated training for them to embrace positively the new program and be provided with their needs in relation to its implementation.

Teachers, school heads, and parents should work together for the Catch-up Friday activities, and they should do religiously their contribution and involvement in the program.

Those who are involved in the program should be recognized, appreciated, and awarded to sustainably implement the program according to its purpose and expectations of the higher office.

A copy of a proposed sustainable program on reading should be shared to the Schools Division Office and provided to the District office, and to the office of the school heads for their information and guidance, and if necessary be implemented in their respective schools.

A similar study is also encouraged to be conducted in the future, considering other variables not used nor mentioned in the study. If possible, quantitative research to determine

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the level of implementation of the program and acceptance of the program by the stakeholders should be conducted.

Catch-Up Friday generates diverse feedback from teachers. While they acknowledge the importance of focusing on essential skills, they also voice strong concerns about the increased pressures this initiative imposes on them. At the same time, they recognize the significant potential for creative teaching opportunities that can arise from this approach.

The challenges faced by teachers greatly impede the effectiveness of Catch-up Friday. Tackling these issues is essential for the program's success and to support both teachers and learners in the educational process.

Teachers have employed various coping strategies to address the challenges of Catch-Up Fridays. They are not only tackling immediate issues but also enhancing the overall learning environment for their students.

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