



LOCALLY FUNDED TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING READING: BASIS FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

CHRISTINE B. TINGSON

LSB TEACHER

Talokgangan Elementary School

tin092099@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify the experiences of locally funded teachers in teaching reading, as a basis for policy recommendations in the Schools District of Banate during the school year 2025-2026. The study used a phenomenological research design under a qualitative method. The participants in the study were the ten (10) locally funded teachers selected to teach reading to struggling learners and support the school's reading program. The data was obtained through interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. Thematic analysis was used to identify common themes and patterns in the responses. Based on the study's results, teachers' experiences in teaching reading were difficult, challenging, meaningful, and lacked sufficient time. However, the challenges they encountered included inadequate training, low parental involvement, and insufficient reading materials. The coping strategies were patience, flexibility, positive reinforcement, and enough reading materials. The study's results served as the basis for policy recommendations.

Keywords: *locally funded teachers, plicy recommendations, teaching reading*

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INTRODUCTION

Reading, once viewed as a skill that learners naturally acquired—whether by chance or when they felt prepared—has shifted into a structured responsibility of schools.

Today, Local School Board (LSB) teachers, hired by local government units in the Philippines, act as crucial, versatile educators in public schools, often managing reading remediation, especially for non-readers. They require training in specialized reading methods, such as the Marungko Approach, to improve their moderate procedural skills (Mackenzie & Santiago, 2021).

The continuous cycle of emerging and fading technologies fuels new forms of production and drives shifts across society and the economy. Accordingly, the use of interactive tools has become increasingly important and relevant in educational settings (Raja & Nagasubramani, 2020). In this regard, Butler (2021) contends that education systems need to be re-examined to prepare children to solve daily complex, dialectical, and interconnected challenges to transform their life world.

Reading serves as a fundamental pillar in a child’s growth, recognized as a lifelong competency that transcends boundaries of place and time. Teachers must develop a clear understanding of how interactive tools work and the pedagogical practices that support them as teaching and learning tools in reading activities (Sailer, 2021).

Further, to combat the growing number of students who are slow and non-readers, the use of interactive tools could be a powerful way to support inclusivity and diversity. Hence,

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this needs a teacher who is well-versed, skilled, and comfortable in using technology for best practice (Levy, 2023).

Meanwhile, LSB teachers address specific challenges faced by struggling and slow readers. They often use tools that combine visual, auditory (text-to-speech with synchronized highlighting), and interactive elements, helping cater to diverse learning styles and supporting the development of foundational literacy skills like phonics and phonemic awareness (Lara, 2021).

Literacy instruction remains a central priority, with government initiatives channeling resources to strengthen reading and writing. Consequently, local school board teachers are tasked with employing diverse, contextappropriate, and effective approaches to foster reading proficiency. Each student’s reading concerns must be thoroughly considered, along with the necessary strategies for implementing them (Ferolino, 2023).

As observed, struggling readers in the Schools Division of Iloilo are a significant concern, with high percentages of learners lacking basic reading comprehension, despite high overall literacy rates, due to poverty and insufficient numbers of teachers to teach reading.

In this regard, the researcher conducted this research to identify the experiences of locally funded teachers in teaching Reading, as a foundation for policy recommendations in the Schools District of Banate during the school year 2025-2026.

Reading is emphasized as the cornerstone of all academic learning by the Department of Education. A child must learn to read, write, and count to succeed in school and life. The Department of Education’s (DepEd)top priority is to enhance literacy.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology, design, study participants, data collection processes, research instrument, and data analysis used in this study. The goal of this study was to determine the experiences of locally supported teachers in teaching reading so that policy suggestions could be made in the Banate School District for the school year 2025-2026.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative research method, specifically a questionnaire. The qualitative research method was effective in gathering detailed information about certain groups' values, attitudes, behaviors, experiences, and social circumstances. An in-depth interview is a type of conversation with a person that seeks additional information beyond first or surface-level responses.

The researcher conducted a face-to-face interview. The goal was to elicit their perspectives and experiences through vivid responses to the questions.

The researcher handed the questionnaire to the selected individuals and enabled them to review the series of questions. The aim was to capture participants' main or necessary views on a specific issue in a social context through their responses to the questions (Wallace Foundation, 2022).

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Research Design

The study followed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenology can be defined as a philosophical method to conducting qualitative research. The purpose of phenomenology is to comprehend how people see the world, and how this perspective differs from widely held beliefs, by focusing on a person's subjective interpretations of her experiences. Phenomenology involves interviewing participants to acquire their impressions and is widely utilized in domains such as psychology, sociology, and social work.

According to Smith (2020), phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. The basic structure of an experience is its intentionality, or its orientation toward something, as it is an experience with or about an object. An experience is oriented toward an item based on its content or meaning (which symbolizes the object), as well as the proper enabling conditions.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of this research were the ten (10) selected locally funded teachers from the different schools in the Schools District of Banate assigned to teach reading.

The researcher ensured that the study's participants were teachers who taught remedial reading programs during the 2025-2026 school year.

Participants must provide informed consent and are protected from harm throughout the research process. They were chosen based on exact criteria to represent a population, with their demographic, behavioral, or clinical characteristics documented through sampling

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techniques. Considering these inclusion criteria, participants were good subjects for this study.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study (Akman, 2023).

Sampling Design

A sampling design is a strategic plan for selecting a representative sample from a population to conduct research while maintaining cost and accuracy.

The study used a purposive sampling design.

A purposive sample is a nonprobability sample chosen based on demographic characteristics and the study's purpose. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is used in the study (Creswell, as cited by Jordan, 2023).

The researcher acquired insight into their subjects' lives and described their perceptions and decisions.

Research Instrument

The study used a questionnaire created by the researcher as its research instrument. A group of specialists confirmed the researcher's interview guide. The researcher took into account all feedback and ideas about the tool's validation.

The questionnaire consisted of questions focused on the study's purpose. The survey was used for data collection and documentation, with participants' consent.

The in-depth interview was recorded using a voice and video recorder. It was also utilized for data collecting and documentation, with participants' approval.

Thematic analysis was used to summarize the study's findings.

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Validity of the Research Instrument

Prior to determining the validity of the researcher's interview schedule, the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a panel of jurors were asked to validate each question for review and modification, taking into account their expertise in research, testing, and assessment, as well as English.

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and utility of a researcher's inferences. In content-related evidence of validity, the content and format were consistent with the definitions of the variables and the sample of subjects measured, and were also helpful in validating the questionnaire items (Braun & Clark, 2021).

The principle of validity applies not just to interpretive and action inferences derived from the test scores as ordinarily conceived, but also to inferences based on any means of observing or documenting consistent behaviors or attributes (Brains, 2021).

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher got permits from the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, the Office of the District Supervisors, the School Heads, and the individual participants to perform the study. To conduct the interview, the researcher personally visited to the participants' schools/communities/places of convenient access.

The researcher surveyed the individuals, but first persuaded them to sign a disclaimer or permission form.

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During the interview, the researcher delivered the questionnaire to the participants and discussed each item to ensure that all necessary data were captured. After conducting a series of surveys, the researcher integrated all of the data gathered.

Data Analyses

The collected data was recorded, collated, and evaluated utilizing a thematic framework.

The qualitative analysis technique was utilized to discover themes in the experiences of locally funded teachers teaching reading, which served as the foundation for policy suggestions in the Banate School District.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Delahunt (2021), a thematic analysis aims to identify themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This involves summarizing, evaluating, and interpreting the collected data to make sense of it.

On the other hand, Braun and Clarke (2023) have identified the six phases of thematic analysis: (1) Familiarization; (2) Generating initial codes; (3) Searching for themes; (4) Reviewing themes; (5) Defining & Naming Themes; and (6) Writing the report.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study's goal was to examine the experiences of locally funded teachers in teaching reading, with a view to informing policy recommendations within the school year 2025-2026.

This study included ten (10) locally subsidized instructors who taught reading in the Banate School District. This study used a descriptive research design with in-depth interviews. The interviewer was allowed to sit at a substantial distance and ponder on a series of questions concerning a certain topic. The goal is to elicit the major or necessary perspectives of participants on a given subject in a social environment through their responses to questions.

Phenomenology was employed in the study as a qualitative research method. This study's research instrument was a researcher-developed interview schedule that was primarily concerned with the study's purpose.

Data collection and documentation were carried out using voice and video recorders with the participants' permission. Such tools were employed for analysis, including field notes collected during the interview.

Before assessing whether the researcher's interview schedule was valid, the adviser and a panel of jurors reviewed and modified each item. To conduct the study, the researcher got all approvals from the adviser, the Dean of the Graduate School, school heads, and, most importantly, the individual participants. The researcher personally went to the school/community/location that was convenient for the participants to conduct the face-to-face interview.

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Following the interviews, the researcher compiled the acquired data. The collected data was evaluated using a thematic method.

The following are the findings of the study:

Based on the study's results, the experiences of locally funded teachers in teaching reading were difficult, challenging, and meaningful, but they lacked sufficient time.

Difficulty in Handling Struggling Learners

Handling struggling learners requires a patient, tailored approach focused on building trust, breaking down tasks, and using a multi-sensory, consistent approach. Teachers may provide immediate feedback to learners to reduce anxiety (Levy, 2023).

According to Participant 1, "Many learners know how to read but struggle to comprehend what they read. It is difficult to handle them because some can read but do not understand what they read."

Participant 2 added that, "Sometimes it is difficult to handle them because children do not know how to read the words correctly."

Meanwhile, Participant 9 also added that her experience in teaching reading is very difficult because some of my learners do not know how to recognize letters.

This suggests that handling struggling learners is difficult due to diverse needs and potential behavioral issues, and that behavioral expectations and consequences for challenging learners in reading are outlined.

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Variations of reading teachers' nature as: an enabler, a facilitator, a humanist, a behaviorist, and an expert, as regards to their teaching practices, were proven significant to students' reading effectiveness (Davis, 2023).

Challenging and Meaningful

In the Department of Education, locally funded teachers were used as reading teachers, contributing their expertise and valuable outputs to provide meaningful learning experiences for teachers (Cruz & Espina, 2022).

According to Participant 3, "Teaching can be a demanding profession; at times, learners are not interested in learning. However, it is challenging."

Participant 4 added that when she became a grade 2 adviser, she found it challenging and meaningful, especially in teaching non-readers.

However, Participant 5 also added that, "As a locally funded teacher, it is very meaningful to be assigned to teach slow readers. Along with it is a big challenge to make a big difference in the learners' literacy journey."

Moreover, Participant 8 commented that, "In teaching reading, I have had the opportunity to work with diverse learners, including those with learning disabilities and English language learners. I was challenged to teach reading because of them."

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Moreover, participant 10 added that, "My experience in teaching reading is meaningful but challenging also. I used specific details and examples from the text to explain what it implies."

This suggests that locally funded teachers connect to a higher purpose, helping others and contributing to the improvement of learners' reading skills, with a personal impact and relevance.

Meaningful is often found in overcoming the pain and hardship of a difficult, worthwhile goal. Sometimes it requires creative problem-solving, integrating workout plans and challenges that showcase innovative engagement strategies (Sicat, 2024).

Not Enough Time

Bernardo (2021) believed that some teachers may prefer the flexibility of a time-based reading program, while others might need to work overtime. Locally funded teachers often have different requirements and support needs, resulting in insufficient time for teaching reading.

According to Participant 6, "Teaching reading in a public school situated in a barangay area has been a meaningful and eye-opener experience for me, though I do not have enough time to teach reading because of overload work, I continue to teach them. Also, some of my learners failed to attend the reading program because they came from low-income families and were not exposed to books or even to pre-school education."

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Participant 7 added that, "One of my most meaningful experiences in teaching reading is the schedule of the time for remedial reading. Managing this requires patience and creativity to ensure the full implementation of the school's reading program."

These assertions imply that limited time in educating struggling readers is a constraint on the subject schedule since there is inadequate time to perform all duties within the time period. Limited time can occur for a variety of reasons, including changes in scope, unreasonable deadlines, and resource scarcity.

According to Berger (2020), the vast majority of teachers say there is not enough time in the workday to accomplish all that's expected of them. Approximately 84% said they do not have enough time during their regular working hours to complete activities such as grading, lesson planning, paperwork, and email responses. Most people think that having too much work is the main reason they don't have enough time to get everything done.

Challenges of Locally Funded Teachers in Teaching Reading

The challenges encountered by locally funded teachers in teaching reading reflect their resilience in confronting systemic barriers, indicating and facilitating the needs of non-teaching personnel for personal and professional development (Finlay, 2021).

Based on the study's results, the trials met by locally funded teachers in teaching reading included inadequate training, low parental involvement, and insufficient reading materials.

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Inadequate Training

A teachers' group has called on the Department of Education to ensure that the school's reading program not only benefits learners but also provides more training and seminars, adequate support, and clear implementation guidelines for teachers tasked with carrying out the full implementation of the reading program without delay (Nowell, Noris, & White, 2022).

According to Participant 1, "Learners had irregular spelling patterns. They need to be guided by teachers. However, some of us, since we are locally funded teachers, need training and attend reading seminars."

Participant 4 said that some of the learners lack phonics awareness, which makes it difficult for them to blend sounds and read simple words. "I recommend that the school authorities allow us to attend seminars in the division office in order to be equipped with the new teaching strategies for reading," added participant four.

Furthermore, Participant 6 also said that, "One of my challenges encountered was a lack of training. We are just assigned to teach reading as if we are dreaming. Some of my learners can already read, while others are still struggling, especially with identifying letter sounds."

In addition, Participant 8 said, "One of the primary challenges I have encountered is addressing the wide range of reading levels of learners. I do not have enough training on how to manage them. I use differentiated instruction to ensure my learners understand what they are reading as a chore."

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Participant 9 also added, "The challenge I encountered is a lack of training in teaching reading to my slow learners. Many of them do not know how to read."

These narratives suggest that many locally funded teachers teaching reading under the new MATATAG curriculum face significant gaps in their professional development, particularly in seminars and training, technology integration, and specialized pedagogy in reading.

Navarro & Garcia (2023) believed that implementing the MATATAG curriculum in K-10 education in the Philippines was lengthy and never easy. There is an increasing demand to improve existing educational programs by providing teachers with necessary skills and teaching-learning knowledge in order to deliver quality education to all.

Low Parental Involvement

Parental involvement refers to the active engagement of parents in supporting their children's education and holistic growth. Parents' involvement can take many forms, including attending school events, helping with homework, reading, and maintaining open communication with teachers (Cain, 2024).

According to Participant 2, "The challenge I have encountered in reading is how to accommodate diverse learners. Sometimes parents need to help their children in school and follow up at home. Some are doing it, some are not."

Participant 7 added that this affects learners' reading performance because some parents' involvement in all school programs and activities was low. "I need to remind them

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always so that they are aware of the reading progress of their children in school," expressed the participant.

These answers suggest that a lack of parental involvement can meaningfully affect a child's academic performance, emotional well-being, and social skills, leading to long-term negative consequences.

Parents with low levels of educational attainment may feel unqualified to assist their children with reading and schoolwork, leading to a lack of parental involvement and confidence in engaging with the educational system (Cerna, 2022).

Insufficient Reading Materials

Learning resources are essentially interactive tools that help teachers and students learn more effectively. Learning resources in the modern era are more than just obsolete study materials; their efficacy is determined by modifications in the teaching method and novel learning materials. Everyone has unique learning demands and styles. Similarly, every teacher uses different teaching and learning resources, which indicates the effectiveness of the teaching process (Savery, 2025).

According to Participant 3, "One of the challenges I encountered in teaching reading was insufficient reading materials."

Participant 5 added, "The challenges I encountered during this time included a large class size and insufficient learning materials for teaching reading."

Moreover, Participant 10 said, "The challenges I encountered in teaching reading included a lack of reading materials, such as books."

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Learning resources are often perceived as materials that provide broad coverage of subject matter but lack depth. However, they extend beyond this function, serving as essential tools that empower locally funded teachers to deliver instruction effectively and support learners who struggle.

Teaching materials and learning resources are primarily intended to support teaching and learning in various circumstances. The basic goal of learning and teaching materials is to provide an effective learning experience that encourages interaction between students and teachers throughout the learning or teaching process. To lay the groundwork for lifelong learning, an effective learning resource must be used effectively during the teaching process. They have their own books, enjoy reading more, and read more frequently (Clark & Pulton, 2021).

Coping Strategies of Locally Funded Teachers in Teaching Reading

Despite challenges, locally funded teachers in teaching reading adapted by creating simple yet engaging activities, collaborating with co-teachers, and using online resources to supplement materials. However, emotional coping included seeking motivation from colleagues and celebrating small wins with their learners (Cabansag, 2021).

Based on the study's results, the coping strategies employed by locally funded teachers in teaching reading included patience and flexibility, positive reinforcement, and sufficient reading materials.

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Patience and Flexibility

Matthew (2026) describes flexibility as an attribute marked by openness and adaptability. It reflects the capacity to adjust to changing circumstances, modify plans, and embrace new perspectives without rigidity.

According to Participant 1, "I cope with such challenges by staying patient, flexible, and committed to continuous improvement. I also adjust strategies and better support learners."

Participant 5 said, "I cope with these challenges of teaching reading by being patient and adopting a combination of instructional flexibility, resource creativity, and active self-management."

Participant 7 believed that to overcome challenges in teaching reading, one needs to be patient with their learners.

However, Participant 9 added, "After class, I gave time to teach reading. I informed their parents of a follow-up at home. Sometimes you learned to be patient with them."

These accounts highlight that individuals who embody patience and flexibility can readily adjust their schedules to accommodate others, thereby nurturing a collaborative and supportive work environment.

While both patience and flexibility are essential for success, distinguishing their unique qualities enables individuals to cultivate each trait with greater intentionality. By clarifying their differences, one can deliberately strengthen the specific skills and mindset associated with

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each. This awareness enables individuals to leverage their strengths and navigate the challenges and uncertainties of life more effectively (Craig, 2020).

Positive Reinforcement

Variations of reading teachers' nature as: an enabler, a facilitator, a humanist, a behaviorist, and an expert, as regards to their teaching practices, were proven significant to students' reading effectiveness through positive reinforcement for struggling learners (Davis, 2023).

According to Participant 2, "I used to reinforce other strategies positively to enhance their reading skills."

Participant 6 added, "I used differentiated instructions by grouping learners according to their reading levels. I provide remedial reading sessions for struggling learners during vacant time. I am positive that this reinforcement in reading will somehow improve their reading skills."

Additionally, Participant 10 expressed that coping with the challenges in teaching reading requires a multifaceted, patient approach that blends data-driven instructional support. This reinforcement will possibly enhance learners' reading skills.

These responses suggest that maintaining positive reinforcement for the locally funded teachers helps build rapport with their learners, enabling them to connect more easily and understand their learners' needs as individuals.

Use interesting educational games and activities, leverage technology and multimedia resources, and make your teaching learner-centered, and try your best to relate what you teach to learners' immediate environment (Fleming & David, 2020).

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Zheng and Zhang (2022) recommend doses of humor to spice up your teaching. Forget the authoritarian, coercive teaching approach; experience demonstrates that it just discourages students and kills their motivation. Use humor when appropriate; it can help learners engage and gain confidence.

Sufficient Reading Materials

Educational institutions stand to gain significantly from hiring teachers who demonstrate resourcefulness. In the contemporary setting, educators are expected to collaborate constructively with colleagues and integrate appropriate technologies, including freely accessible online tools, into their practice.

According to Participant 3, teaching Reading needs more instructional materials, and technology was sometimes very useful.

Participant 4 added, "Giving them reading materials was also a big factor so that they can practice reading not just in school but also at home."

Moreover, Participant 8 said, "I employed a multifaceted approach. For varied reading levels, I use small group instructions and differentiated instruction and differentiated activities, utilizing various reading materials and digital resources to meet individual needs."

These responses suggest that locally funded teachers must be resourceful to improve how struggling learners learn in the current situation. Educators enhance their practice by utilizing the diverse materials available to them. Resourceful teachers exhibit qualities that allow them to maximize the potential of these resources for effective instruction.

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It was claimed that the primary responsibility of a locally sponsored teacher is to guarantee that every learner obtains knowledge, skills, and understanding to face life's difficulties and meet global demands through reading. Reading difficulty is increasing as our curriculum evolves, offering a challenge to basic education teachers. If the student has weak reading abilities, his or her comprehension in any session is likely to suffer, which will undoubtedly influence the learning process.

It is primarily the duty of teachers and learning institutions to intensify renewed efforts with a commitment to promoting and sustaining the necessary teaching practices in rapidly changing conditions in our educational system (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2021).

CONCLUSION

In light of the study's findings and insights, the following recommendations are made.

The Department of Education shall ensure that the school's reading initiatives not only benefit learners but also provide additional compensation, adequate support, and clear implementation guidelines for teachers tasked with carrying out the program.

The locally funded teachers urged DepEd to address on-the-ground issues, which they said should be its top priority in the event of vacancies. The DepEd shall provide specialized, continuous training by adopting new teaching strategies that integrate technologies, particularly in reading.

The parents and other stakeholders shall provide support to ensure adequate, high-quality reading materials are available to support remediation programs and other activities.

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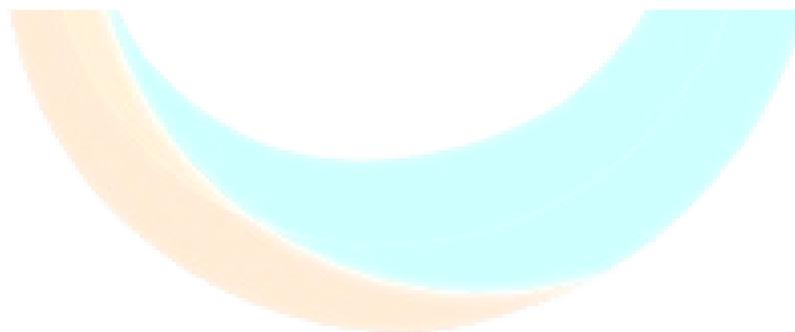
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Strengthening mentorship programs, encouraging localization/contextualization of content, and using datadriven feedback through a learning action cell session to support the curriculum.

Ensure the timely delivery of high-quality, relevant, and comprehensive teaching and instructional reading materials.

To validate the study's findings, analogous studies on a larger size must be done, taking into account additional variables not addressed in this study.



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