



ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN HANDLING REMEDIAL LEARNERS: GROUNDWORK FOR A SCHOOL-BASED READING INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aimed to formulate school-based reading intervention program by exploring the lived experiences of English teachers in addressing the academic and behavioral needs of remedial learners. A researcher-made interview guide was used to the ten (10) English teachers handling remedial learners. Through in-depth interviews and reflective narratives on the experiences of English teachers handling remedial learners, the findings reveal recurring themes such as improved classroom management skills, increased professional growth, developed learners self-confidence and motivation, and enhanced teacher-parent collaboration. On the challenges of English teachers handling remedial learners, the following were revealed: learners' diverse learning gaps, learners' poor attention span, learners' lack of parental support, and learners' undiagnosed learning disabilities. Regarding how teachers cope with the challenges encountered in handling remedial learners, the analysis revealed the following: use differentiated instruction, use multisensory and interactive teaching method, use of scaffolding technique, and use of home-school communication.

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Keywords: *Teachers Experiences, Handling Learners, Low Emerging Learners, Reading Intervention Program*

INTRODUCTION

The persistent issue of literacy under performance among Filipino learners has long been recognized as one of the most pressing challenges confronting the basic education system. Recent national assessments and school-level diagnostic data reveal that many learners continue to struggle with foundational reading and comprehension skills, which significantly affects their overall academic progress. The Department of Education (DepEd) acknowledges this challenge, noting that a considerable number of learners across grade levels perform below minimum proficiency, requiring structured and targeted remedial instruction to meet expected competency standards. This need is further emphasized in programs under the national learning recovery initiatives, which identify struggling readers as priority beneficiaries for intervention.

Siwagan and Ubayubay (2025) found that teachers face significant obstacles such as learners' unfamiliarity with basic literacy elements, inconsistent attendance, and challenges in establishing classroom rapport—factors that increase the instructional burden placed on remedial teachers. These difficulties require teachers to develop creative, evidence-based strategies to support learner improvement.

Research also shows that remedial instruction becomes an avenue for teacher growth and reflection. Gatcho and Bautista (2019) observe that handling remedial learners enhances teachers' pedagogical skills, assessment literacy, and collaborative practices, as they must

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constantly adjust methods and coordinate with parents, colleagues, and school administrators.

This highlights the multidimensional nature of teachers' experiences—both challenging and professionally enriching.

Despite these efforts, the absence of a structured and context-specific reading program in schools often leaves teachers with little guidance or resources in handling remedial learners. Their experiences, strategies, and insights are therefore critical in shaping responsive and effective school-based reading intervention program tailored to the actual needs of learners and the capacities of teachers.

As a classroom teacher handling remedial learners, conducting a study on the experiences of teachers in remediation is essential because it provides evidence-based insights into the real challenges, effective practices, and support needs involved in addressing literacy gaps. Teachers consistently face issues such as learners' low foundational skills, difficulty decoding and comprehending texts, and classroom-level barriers that require innovative and targeted approaches, while research also shows that remedial teachers undertake multiple roles—diagnosticians, instructional designers, and progress evaluators—which demand specialized skills and continuous improvement. By documenting and analyzing these experiences, the study becomes a critical groundwork for developing a school-based reading intervention program that is responsive to actual teacher and learner needs, aligned with assessment-driven identification of struggling readers as mandated in DepEd's literacy and remediation policies, and capable of creating sustainable and context-appropriate solutions for improving reading outcomes.

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This study sought to explore the experiences of English teachers in handling remedial learners in reading, identifying the common challenges they face, the strategies they employ, and the support systems they find effective or lacking. The findings may serve as the groundwork for the development of a school-based reading program aimed at improving reading proficiency among struggling learners. In doing so, the study aimed to contribute to the broader goal of promoting literacy, enhancing academic performance, and fostering a culture of reading within a school community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

The chapter presents the underlying processes of this phenomenological research study and discuss the parts, namely: Research Method, Research Design, Participants in the Study, Sampling Design, Research Instruments, Validity of the Research Instrument, Data Gathering Procedure, and Data Analyses.

Research Method

The study employed a descriptive qualitative research method using in-depth interview to explore the English teachers' experiences in handling remedial learners as groundwork for a school-based reading intervention program.

The goal of descriptive research is to collect data that will provide impartiality to present concerns (Naeem, 2023).

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Research Design

The study utilized the phenomenological research design using in-depth interview. An in-depth interview is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method to obtain detailed information about a topic from a participant.

Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

Participants in the Study

The participants were ten (10) purposively selected English teachers from the Schools District of New Lucena, Iloilo. These teachers taught in the district during the 2025-2026 school year and handled remedial learners. For the purpose of this study, they were identified as Participants 1 through 10.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling design was used in this study. A purposive sampling is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The researcher gain some insights into the world of his or her participants and to describe their perceptions and reactions.

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Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a researcher-made in-depth interview-guide. This was the appropriate instrument to use since the study would require qualitative data, which are mainly narrative.

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that is used to conduct detailed interview with a small number of participants. In contrast to other forms of qualitative research, an in-depth interviewing approach invests a significant amount of time with each participant employing a conventional format. The researcher instrument was consisted of four questions namely: the profile of teachers, their experiences, challenges and coping strategies in handling remedial learners.

Validity of the Research Instrument

A panel of experts was requested to validate the researcher-made interview-guide. The panel experts was composed of a research-expert, an English major, and a qualitative research expert. All comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the research instrument were considered before finalizing the research instrument.

Data Gathering Procedures

After a panel of experts, including the Dean of the Graduate School, validated the researcher-made interview-guide, the researcher secured a permit to conduct the study from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Iloilo.

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Then, a letter of consent was obtained from the office of the School Principals and of the public schools district Supervisor to conduct the study in the different elementary schools in the District of New Lucena.

A letter about the study was also given to each of the ten (10) participants before the conduct of the interview.

After all the permits and consent letters were ensured, the participants were gathered in one room for a face-to-face orientation. Further, the personal information of the participants was gathered before they answered the main questions. When the transcribed responses were completed, the researcher consolidated all the information. Lastly, the responses were analyzed thematically.

Data Analyses

The data gathered for the study was transcribed, interpreted, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is a research method used to identify and interpret patterns of themes in a data set; it often leads to new insights and understanding (Naeem, 2023).

Therefore, the researcher followed the six-step thematic analysis as it is considered as the most influential and widely accepted approach. These steps include familiarization with the data generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This process was ensured a systematic approach to analyzing the data, allowing the researcher to accurately understand the findings, represent

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the participants' experiences, and provide meaningful interpretation relevant to the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This descriptive qualitative study using the phenomenological research design aimed to explore the English teachers' experiences in handling remedial learners as a groundwork for a school-based reading intervention program.

The participants in the study were ten (10) English teachers in the District of New Lucena. They were chosen through purposive sampling.

The instrument used in the study was an in-depth interview guide to collect responses from the participants. The instrument was subjected to face-and-content validation by a panel of experts.

The data collected during the interviews were transcribed manually and then analyzed thematically.

The following were the findings of the study:

Based on the results of in-depth interview the following are the profile of English teachers handling remedial learners:

Regarding age, one (1) was classified as young (below 35 years old) and nine (9) were classified as old (above 35 years old). In terms of sex, all ten (10) participants were female.

As for grade level assignment, one (1) was assigned to Grade 1, while Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 each had two (2) teachers, and one (1) was assigned to Grade 6. Regarding professional

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position, one (1) was a Teacher I, two (2) were Teacher II, six (6) were Teacher III, and one (1) was a Master Teacher I.

In terms of educational attainment, six (6) were baccalaureate degree holders, two (2) had earned MA units, and two (2) were full-fledged master's degree holders. Finally, regarding years of teaching experience, two (2) had served for a short duration (10 years and below), while eight (8) had served for a long duration (11 years and above).

On the experiences of English teachers in handling remedial learners, the responses were improved classroom management skills, increased professional growth, developed learners' self-confidence and motivation, and enhanced teacher-parent collaboration.

On the challenges of teachers in handling remedial learners, responses were learners' diverse learning gaps, learners' poor attention span, learners' lack of parental support and learners' undiagnosed learning disabilities.

On how English teachers cope with the challenges encountered in handling remedial learners, responses were use of differentiated instruction, use of multisensory and interactive teaching method, use of scaffolding technique and use of home-school communication.

Based on the results, a school-based reading intervention program was formulated to address the needs of learners.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following insights were drawn:

In handling remedial learners, teachers play a crucial role not only as facilitators of learning but also as patient, adaptive, and empathetic guides who bridge the gaps in learners'

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foundational skills. The experiences shared by English teachers highlight that remedial instruction requires far more than simply reteaching lessons—it demands differentiated strategies, emotional commitment, and a deep understanding of learners’ individual needs.

Teachers reported that remedial learners commonly struggle with core literacy skills such as reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and writing organization. These challenges are often rooted in earlier learning deficiencies, limited exposure to English, low self-confidence, and, in some cases, external factors such as lack of parental support or inconsistent study habits. As a result, teachers are compelled to modify traditional teaching approaches, incorporate multisensory strategies, scaffold lessons, and provide one-on-one guidance to ensure meaningful progress.

Despite these challenges, teachers consistently described their remedial teaching experience as both demanding and rewarding. Many emphasized that witnessing learners’ gradual improvement—whether in confidence, participation, or skill mastery—serves as a significant motivator. The experience also enhances teachers’ professional growth, pushing them to innovate, reflect on their methods, and adopt more learner-centered approaches.

Overall, the study provides a deeper appreciation of the complexity of remedial instruction. It underscores the need for institutional support such as training, manageable class sizes, and appropriate learning materials. More importantly, it highlights that the success of remedial programs rests heavily on teachers’ dedication, adaptability, and belief in their learners’ capacity to improve.

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