



**PRIVATE SCHOOLS' TEACHING READING FOR KINDERGARTEN:
PRACTICES, IMPLEMENTATION, CHALLENGES, AND COPING
STRATEGIES AS BASES FOR TEACHER-TRAINING
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

JOAN HOMBREBUENO DERONIO
High School Academic Coordinator
Immaculate Conception Parochial School
naojthombrebueno@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to find out the practices, implementation, challenges, and coping strategies in teaching reading of seven (7) kindergarten teachers from three (3) private schools in the Municipality of Oton as bases for a teacher-training enhancement program. The private schools' practices in teaching reading in kindergarten were: employing phonemic awareness, integrating guided to independent reading approach, and utilizing interactive read-aloud tasks. Kindergarten reading is implemented by means of: embedding reading in the school's curriculum, conducting remedial reading tutorials, and incorporating creative reading materials. The challenges encountered were: some learners did not have phonemic awareness, learners had different levels of reading readiness, learners had short attention span, and some learners had disruptive behavior. The coping strategies were: integrating creative and engaging activities, adapting differentiated classroom instruction, and infusing teachers' love and passion for teaching.

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Keywords: *Private Schools, Kindergarten, Teaching Reading, Teachers, Practices, Implementation, Challenges, Coping Strategies, Teacher-Training Enhancement Program*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The education that occurs in early childhood stage is crucial for establishing a solid basis for a child's achievements in academics. Among the crucial skills that must be developed during this stage, reading holds a paramount position.

Reading is a receptive language process that involves recognizing, interpreting, and perceiving written materials. Proficiency in reading is crucial for accurately and efficiently understanding texts and is vital across all professional fields (Baecker, 2014). In today's world, where reading is fundamental to communication, managing learning without it is challenging.

Reading is a fundamental skill in education, and nearly all academic success relies on reading proficiency to varying degrees. Reading allows individuals to gain fresh insights, appreciate literary works, and manage daily tasks that are essential in contemporary life, including reading newspapers, job listings, instruction guides, and comprehending signs and announcements, among others.

Teaching reading and effectively learning how to read are important educational goals. In reading instruction, it is the teacher's duty to inspire students to engage with reading by choosing or developing suitable texts, creating effective reading assignments, establishing

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efficient classroom processes, promoting analytical reading, and fostering a nurturing atmosphere for reading practice. During the process, the teacher must also take into account the different types of learners and their individual needs.

The Division of Iloilo, specifically the Municipality of Oton, is faced with multifarious challenges in the teaching of reading in the kindergarten. Teachers as facilitators of the early stages of reading development in early childhood are experiencing varied problems especially the integration of reading readiness skills with instructional materials and aligning them with the competencies for kindergarten as required in the K-12 curriculum.

In the past few years, there has been an increased emphasis on refining and enhancing teaching practices in kindergarten, particularly in the domain of reading. Studies suggest that the early years are a sensitive period for language development, making it an opportune time to instill strong reading skills. Consequently, educators are faced with challenges of identifying and implementing effective teaching practices to ensure optimal reading development in kindergartners.

This study aimed at analyzing the landscape of teaching beginning reading in kindergarten by determining the practices, implementation, challenges, and coping strategies encountered by the facilitators of learning in private schools in the District of Oton. It also designed a teacher-training enhancement program as a result of the study. The study explored the multifaceted aspects of teaching reading for kindergarten, encompassing pedagogical strategies, curriculum design, teacher-learner interactions, instructional materials, and integration of technology. By examining successful teaching reading practices, kindergarten

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teachers can gain insights into different methodologies that foster a love for reading and develop good comprehension skills and language acquisition in early childhood learners.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants in the study, sampling design, research instrument, validity of the research instrument, data-gathering procedure, and data analyses.

Research Method

The study utilized the descriptive research method using in-depth interview to determine the practices, implementation, challenges, and coping strategies in teaching reading as bases for teacher-training enhancement program in private schools in the Municipality of Oton, Province of Iloilo, for schoolyear 2023 – 2024.

As stated by Aggarwal (2008), descriptive research focuses on collecting information regarding existing conditions or situations with the aim of description and interpretation. This research approach involves not just the collection and organization of data but also encompasses detailed analysis, interpretation, comparison, identification of trends, and exploration of relationships.

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Research Design

This study used qualitative research design, specifically the phenomenological approach. To further understand the insights of the selected participants, the researcher conducted a face-to-face interview and allowed them to explain the reality from their lived experiences to gather the information needed.

Phenomenology assists researchers in grasping the significance of individuals' lived experiences. A phenomenological investigation delves into what people go through and emphasizes their encounters with the phenomenon.

Phenomenological research seeks truths from the narratives of individuals from their perceptions and emotions and provides in-depth explanations of a phenomenon. Phenomenological testing findings in educational environments typically embody the views, beliefs, and thoughts of the researcher regarding the phenomenon. The phenomenological analysis explores the familiarity of the researcher with a phenomenon (Yüksel & Yildinm, 2015).

Participants in the Study

Seven (7) kindergarten teachers from three (3) different private schools in the Municipality of Oton, Iloilo, were the participants in the study. They were selected using convenience sampling because they were the only private schools offering kindergarten in the Municipality of Oton who have consented to participate in the gathering of data.

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Sampling Design

The selection of the participants in the study was based on a sampling strategy referred to as convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a sampling strategy in which particular settings, persons involved, or activities are considered deliberately in accordance to its convenience to the researcher.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which data are gathered from a group of people who are easily accessible or readily available. Participants are selected not for their representativeness of the broader population, but because they are easy for the researcher to reach. This method often involves choosing individuals based on factors like their location, availability at a specific time, or their willingness to take part in the study.

In convenience sampling, the researcher has a specific purpose or objective in mind when selecting the participants, such that they should be kindergarten teachers, and currently teaching in any of the private school in the Municipality of Oton, Iloilo, for schoolyear 2023 - 2024.

Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made interview guide questionnaire as its research instrument. This instrument was suitable as this study aimed to gather qualitative data primarily derived from the participants' narratives. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the experiences, perceptions, opinions, or motivations of the participants. Qualitative

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interviews typically include follow-up questions and are carried out in a conversational or discussion-based format between the researcher and the participants.

Validity of the Research Instrument

A panel of experts was requested to validate the researcher-made interview guide questionnaire. The panel of experts was composed of a research expert, an English major teacher, and a qualitative research expert. All comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the research instrument were considered before finalizing it. The research instrument was considered valid and then approved by the panel of experts after some corrections and revisions that were made.

Data-Gathering Procedures

In gathering data for this study, the researcher utilized convenient sampling in selecting the seven (7) participants from three (3) private schools in the District of Oton, who were conveniently selected to participate in this study. As mentioned, data were gathered through conducting a face-to-face interview using a researcher-made in-depth interview guide questionnaire.

Before the actual interview, the panel of experts, including the dean of the Graduate School validated the researcher-made in-depth interview guide, then permits from the different private schools in the Municipality of Oton were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. A letter of consent was also obtained from the office of the school principal

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or school administrator of each selected private school. A consent letter was secured from each of the kindergarten teacher participants. The interview was conducted face-to-face during the respondents' most convenient time.

Data Analyses

After the interview, the data gathered from the interviews were analyzed by means of thematic analysis to determine the emerging themes which were patterns of ideas, actions, and meanings that occur in the participants' responses.

Thematic analysis refers to the method of recognizing patterns or themes found within qualitative data. The goal is to identify themes that can aptly represent the stories within the dataset. This task entails thorough reading and re-reading of the transcribed material to pinpoint those themes (King, 2004). As noted by Maguire and Delahunt (2017), the aim of thematic analysis is to recognize meaningful or interesting themes and use them to guide the research. This process includes summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting the gathered data to extract meaning from it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the recommendations arrived at by the researcher.

Teaching reading in kindergarten involves addressing several challenges, such as varying levels of reading readiness, short attention spans, and gaps in phonemic awareness.

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Educators must use differentiated instruction, engaging activities, and targeted strategies to meet each child’s unique needs, foster early literacy skills, and maintain student interest and engagement.

This study sought to determine the private schools’ practices, implementation, challenges, and coping strategies in teaching reading in kindergarten as bases for the formulation of a teacher-training enhancement program.

The participants in the study were the seven (7) kindergarten teachers from three (3) different private schools in the Municipality of Oton, Province of Iloilo.

This study used a researcher-made in-depth interview guide questionnaire to gather data. The research instrument was subjected to validity test and was found valid and appropriate to use by the panel of expert validators.

The following are the findings of the study:

The practices employed in teaching reading in the kindergarten were: employing phonemic awareness, integrating guided to independent reading approach, and utilizing interactive read-aloud tasks.

Teaching reading for kindergarten in the private schools was implemented through: embedding reading in the school’s curriculum, conducting remedial reading tutorials, and incorporating creative reading materials.

The challenges encountered in teaching reading for kindergarten were: some learners lacked phonemic awareness, learners had different levels of reading readiness, learners had short attention span, and some learners had disruptive behavior.

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The teachers' coping strategies in teaching reading in kindergarten were: integrating creative and engaging activities, adapting differentiated classroom instruction, and infusing teachers' love and passion for teaching.

To improve the current practices of kindergarten teachers and enhance the implementation of private schools' teaching reading in kindergarten, a teacher-training enhancement program was formulated as a result of the study.

Based on the findings of the study, the following insights were realized:

Teaching reading by incorporating play into reading helps engage young learners more. Creating a classroom environment filled with creative materials helps them become familiar with written language. Demonstrating reading behaviors, such as reading with expression and discussing stories models positive reading habits to young learners.

Teaching reading in private schools is implemented through a well-rounded approach, thus ensuring that reading is considered as equal in importance as teaching other subjects. Kindergarten teachers provide extra support for struggling students, and make effort for the teaching reading process to be more engaging.

Teaching reading is not easy. Various challenges greatly impact the effectiveness of teaching reading to learners. Also, students' behavior towards reading affects their preparedness for further reading instruction.

Kindergarten teachers' resilience and creativity, in addition to giving them access to training enhancement program will enable them to overcome obstacles in teaching reading, as well as give them support to positively impact early childhood education.

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Recommendations

The following recommendations may be considered:

Private schools kindergarten teachers must teach reading that involves the use of post-modern teaching strategies, create a print-rich environment, and incorporate daily read-alouds to model fluent reading; encourage a love for reading with a cozy reading corner and differentiated instruction to meet individual needs; and involve families by sharing recommended reading strategies and balancing educational technology with traditional reading practices.

Private school administrators should prioritize supporting kindergarten teachers through teacher-training enhancements. They may utilize the SPARKLE: – Strategic Program for Advancing Reading and Kindergarten Learning Excellence – Training Matrix which is the output of this study. Additionally, they should provide access to a variety of teaching resources, as well as foster a collaborative environment where teachers can share best practices. However, they should ensure manageable class sizes to further enable teachers to meet the diverse needs of their kindergarten students.

Parents of kindergarten learners must be involved in supporting their children's reading development by engaging and establishing a consistent reading routine at home, making their home a reading laboratory, and cultivating a culture of reading inside the home to help foster a love for reading and support their literacy growth.

For future researchers, the findings of this study could serve as a valuable reference for similar investigations within this context.

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