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## Teaching of Reading in the Midst of Uncertainties: The Narrative of Elementary School Teachers in Digos City

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### ABSTRACT

This descriptive-phenomenological study divulged the context of teaching reading during the health crisis brought by COVID-19 among elementary pupils. This study involved ten (10) informants which, composed of one (1) full-time faculty of Rizal Central Elementary School (RCES), two (2) teaching the English subjects, and three (3) employed in the institution since the beginning of the pandemic. Through purposive sampling, ten (10) teachers qualified from the inclusion criteria set were approached to request their voluntary involvement as participants through focus-group interviews. Hence, Colaizzi's Data Analysis Approach was also employed in this study. Results indicated that Elementary teachers have a variety of experiences in teaching reading to their students with some difficulties and challenges but still have a positive outlook on the students. The study's results also revealed that the teacher cope up with those challenges by having constant follow-ups with their parents reading progress. The different pedagogical techniques in promoting students' reading were evident. However, the appropriate pedagogical techniques in teaching reading to students should be considered at all times. Hence, the result of the study also revealed that teachers use PHIL IRI to categorize the students reading progress.

### INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 2020, the COVID - 19 pandemic has led to a substantially new situation for education systems. To contain the spread of the virus that causes COVID 19, schools in many countries have partially or entirely closed, learning groups have been rearranged, and students or teachers have to be absent from school at various times (Meinck *et al.*, 2022). Schools were shattered, which isolated the learners in their respective homes because of the fear that the virus might infect them. Hence, the teachers find ways to reach the learners so that they could be able to surpass the challenges, especially in reading. As evidence, reading literacy should be developed to the point where students can acquire further knowledge through reading in all subjects and continue their educational biography through independent learning (König & Frey 2022). This study aims to build a gap in the contexts of the teaching of reading during the health crisis brought by the COVID - 19 on teaching reading among elementary pupils. Also, this is timely and relevant since it listened to the challenges experienced by the teachers, the activities they gave, and the advice to teachers in the same situation.

In Germany, the sudden shift from face to face instruction to more technologically mediated interaction and emergency remote education (ERE) was especially hard, ERE required German schools and teachers to catch up in terms of the digitalization process in education, which had been shown to lag behind other countries in the years prior to the pandemic (Lorenz *et al.*, 2021). Reading is one of the young learners' first and most important academic skills. However, a large number of students in the U.S. continue to have difficulty learning to read. Furthermore, some studies based on student reports found (tendentially) positive learning experiences

compared to usual instruction but students pointed out that they felt more uncertain about estimating their learning status (Rožman *et al.*, 2022).

In the Philippines, to make every learner a proficient reader, schools across the country are tasked to help learners develop their reading skills by developing and implementing initiatives (Dep Ed Memorandum No. 173, s. 2019), but it was revealed in the national assessments that early grade learners struggle to meet the learning standards in early language, literacy, and numeracy; many low performing learners who could not comprehend (read and understand).

Reading is one of the most critical skills of literacy that is essential not only for learners to survive academic and school demands but also in finding for themselves in the real world. UNESCO (2018) defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Dep ED Memorandum No. 181s. 2021 states that continuously envision to make every learner a reader even during this pandemic, as clearly indicated in the Division Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) and response to DepEd Memorandum no 173, s, 2019, "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa (3Bs Initiative)". In Davao City, the division of Davao city is really keen on doing something about reading of the students. It intends to improve the performance level of its learners. It was determined that having a reading program in each school is essential. The division Office then through the collaboration of the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM) project developed a reading program (eReading) which empowers teachers, supervisors, and other stakeholders to improve pupil's performance. This makes learning

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materials limited that are in dire need of learning the non-readers, the DepEd Division of Davao del Sur, through the office of Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS).

The Theory of Variation proposed by Marton and Booth (1997), argues that there is no single way to understand, experience, or think about a particular phenomenon; indeed, there is considerable variation in people's discernment. In learning, individual students make sense of new concepts differently, according to their existing understandings and frameworks of knowledge. This requires teachers to engage closely with their students to grasp the variations in understanding and knowledge so they can take account of this diversity in structuring the learning activities in a lesson (Marton & Tsui, 2004). Moreover, the Theory of Variation (Marton and Booth) underline that students' attention should be directed toward an 'object of learning. The learning object could be drawn from the subject syllabus or a teacher's assessment of students' needs. One powerful pedagogical tool is comparison, as juxtaposition can highlight similarities and, crucially, differences. Thus variation occurs in another form in the process: not only do people demonstrate variation in their perception of a phenomenon, but they can also learn by discerning variation across different objects of learning (Bowden & Marton, 1998).

The lesson was redesigned for delivery by a different colleague to a parallel class. Progress through the unit of study thus followed this iterative pattern, allowing for adjustments based on reflection and investigation. This study is relevant to the students concerning their independent learning; it may also help them cope with the pandemic in terms of their reading ability/skills. The teacher would serve as their guide to have a basis on what suitable action to monitor the student's reading progress, especially for the future researcher.

Reading, is one of the basic skills of a language. Teaching reading among the students can lead them students to get motivated to read on their own; instead of playing games, students can read their books or any printed materials that the teachers gave to them. For instance, Wigfield and Guthrie (2022) classified L1 reading motivation into "self-efficacy beliefs" (including reading efficacy and reading challenge), "intrinsic-extrinsic motivation and purpose for learning" (including curiosity, involvement, reading importance, reading avoidance, competition, recognition, and grades), and "social aspects of motivation" (including compliance and reading for social reasons).

In addition, Guthrie and Wigfield (2021) viewed reading motivation as people's purposes, values, and thoughts concerning the themes, procedures, and outputs of reading. Previous studies have proposed different dimensions of reading motivation, and researchers generally agree that reading motivation is multidimensional. Wang and Gan (2021) have developed a reading motivation questionnaire in an English as a foreign language context (RMQ-EFL) which includes five dimensions, namely, reading

efficacy, reading enjoyment, reading recognition, reading involvement, and reading compliance. The five dimensions of RMQ-EFL have their theoretical basis in the reading motivational constructs proposed by Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), Wang and Guthrie (2004), and Mori (2002).

In the study of, Logan *et al.* (2021) investigated the differences between good and poor readers in terms of the role of intrinsic reading motivation in predicting reading comprehension and found intrinsic reading motivation only significantly predicts poor readers' reading comprehension. McGeown *et al.* (2022) checked for differences between good and poor readers in the relationship between reading motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic motivation) and their reading comprehension. McGeown *et al.* (2022) found intrinsic reading motivation was not significantly associated with reading comprehension for both good and poor readers. McGeown *et al.* (2022) also showed extrinsic reading motivation, especially linked with good reading comprehension. However, a significant association between extrinsic reading motivation and reading comprehension was not observed among poor readers.

### Research Questions

In the light of uncovering of the stories of the elementary school teachers amidst COVID-19 pandemic, the following objectives are; determine the struggles of the elementary school teachers in teaching reading amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic, and what are the technique/s did the teacher employed in teaching reading. Specifically, addressed to this study are the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of elementary teachers in teaching reading amidst pandemic?
2. From the challenges, how are the elementary teachers coping up amidst pandemic?
3. What pedagogical technique/s teachers employed in teaching reading amidst pandemic?

### METHOD

#### Participants

This study was participated by elementary school teachers. The use of purposive sampling technique is carried out in selecting the target participants. Purposive sampling involves in identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are incredibly knowledgeable about or experienced in the interest of the phenomenon (Cresswell & Plano, 2011). Alternatively, the purposive sampling method may prove effective when only a limited number of people can serve as the primary data sources due to the nature of the research design, aims, and objectives.

In choosing the research participants who will share their lived experiences in teaching reading in the midst of uncertainties, the following criteria are set; one (1) a full-time faculty, two (2) teaching the English subjects, three (3) employed in the institution since the beginning of the pandemic, four (4) willing to be interviewed by the researchers, five (5) an experienced teacher in how many years, and the withdrawal criteria are the following; one

(1) unwilling to keep on participating in the study, two (2) developing diseases in the inclusion criteria, three (3) nonresponses of all the questions during interview, four (4) covid-19 positive.

### Instruments

The research instrument used in this study was the interview guide Questions developed by the researchers. This interview guide was validated by the experts prior to the conduct of interview. In addition, a structure interview was observed in which a particular set of predetermined questions were prepared by the researchers in advance. The materials were gathered by researchers by a recorded conversation, photographs, paper and pencil and guided questions to record, etc. the entire journey towards teaching of reading in the midst of uncertainties.

Hence, to guarantee the protection and secrecy of every participant, the information gathered from them was defended by the researchers and kept hidden and classified. The researchers ensured and informed consent was given to the participants demonstrating their privileges and what they would anticipate in the direct of the study.

### Design and Procedure

This study employed a descriptive phenomenology in attaining the research objectives. Amedeo Giorgi (1985), noted that the best-known descriptive approach in psychology, who is widely credited as a pioneer in phenomenological thinking. Giorgi's method can be seen as distillation, in which the analyst, step by step, sifts away everything that is not essential to an adequate description of the phenomenon.

Before conducting our study, the researcher went through the validation of the research questionnaire and interview guidelines with the help of the Research Publication of UM Digos College. The researchers are sure that all documents are implemented before conducting the study. These include a letter to be signed by the RPC, Dean of College, Program Head and also the Research Adviser, and then the school Principal of the chosen school where the researchers conducted their study. During the implementation phase, the school head signed our letter and informed the school head that we were conducting a study on a specific date. With the help of the school principal, the principal wrote the name of our possible respondents, and the researcher will go to the respective classrooms given by the principal. Upon seeing the possible respondents, we ask about their time availability. An in-depth interview was done face-to-face. After an interview, the researcher translated the recorded conversations; after that, data translation was sent to our data analyst assigned through the collaboration of researchers. The data was back to us after two (2) working weeks. Materials used in the study, including the recorded conversion forms, were kept in a safe place.

In addition, Colaizzi's (1978) approach is considered in this study. The process of phenomenological data analysis

showed an active strategy to achieve the description of the living experience of those people. It includes understanding the data and identifying significant statements converted into formulated meanings. The following steps represent the Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis (Sanders, 2003; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). These are the following: One (1) each transcript should be read and re-read to obtain a general sense of the whole content. Two (2) each transcripts, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study should be extracted. Their statements must be recorded on a separate sheet. Three (3) Meanings should be formulated from the significant statements. Four (4) formulated meanings should be sorted into categories and clusters of themes. Five (5) of the study's findings should be integrated into a detailed description of the phenomenon. Six (6), the fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described; and Seven (7), the validation of the findings should be sought by the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results to their experiences (Shosha, 2012).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Teaching Experiences of

### Elementary Teachers in Teaching During Pandemic

Figure 1 presents the qualitative findings of the elementary school teachers on their teaching experiences in teaching reading in the midst of uncertainties. The study comes up with four (4) major themes: Streamlined Reading Strategies, Developed Reading Habit, Reading Comprehension Barrier, and Challenges in Communication to stakeholders. Therefore the basic themes are namely: direct involvement of parents on reading process, monitoring on student's reading is emphasized, utilizations of remedial instruction, direct instruction, more innovative and resilient, has developed habit of reading, innovative in reading strategies used, student who cannot recognize letters, phonetics, challenge in memorization, challenge with internet connectivity, buffer in communication to parents, Reading engagement limitation and slow progress in reading.

### Streamlined Reading Strategies

The elementary school teacher should prepare a strategy for discussing how the students engage in the lesson. Especially in the lower grade, like Kindergarten, the teacher should always prepare a motivational video showing how essential reading is. However, during this pandemic, teachers prepared modules for their students; the teacher also prepared a video to send students engaged even in remote areas. The problem is that they cannot access it due to a lack of gadgets or internet connectivity. One participant said that:

*“Very challenging, even as teachers, we need to learn different motivations to adjust. How much more in kinder, it is not the same as others, give them reading materials to read at home know how to read, but will start. From a letter to her sounds, not being taught by the teacher what to do without engagement. Through a home visitation, as we watch the child's reading. However, mainly in the*

pandemic, in the second year of the pandemic, we think we start to reach the students to go to school to have assessments one by one; sometimes they have a specific time, sometimes two students in just two hours. (What is this?)". [Line 2, Participant 1]

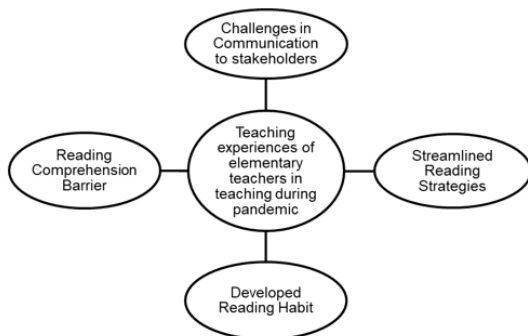
Other participants revealed that:

“Together with the parents because the parents are the ones to teach their children. Parents are the ones to follow up there (this is how to teach); some parents do not know how to teach because they will only rely on their pandemic teacher. Not even pass the module with answers, but the module’s writing is different from their writing. We know if the students or the mother write their module because it is very different. How much more in writing, how much more in reading. The positive because we have learned and can be made without being here; we are not there; our adjustment is challenging.” [Line 2, Participant 3]

According to Hartley and Viney (2018), streamline reading strategy is a comprehensive series that includes student’s books, workbooks, tests, teacher’s books, integrated videos, reading material from the Reading series, and Storylines related to the reading scheme. According to Gebhard (2018), these reading strategies are beneficial to readers in order for them to comprehend the reading texts effectively. These are the strategies students or readers use to comprehend, construct, and reconstruct the meaning of a text. It also influences readers’ reading behaviors in response to text difficulty, task demands, and other contextual variables. In the study of Abdul *et al.* (2020), issues with reading and reading comprehension more narrowly focused and streamlined goals of such approaches may help us to support students’ confident use of knowledge to increase reading efficiency in genuine reading situations that allow for the construction and reconstruction of meaning; make it easier to adapt reading behavior to particular tasks; help students develop their ability to predict how well they will perform on the task accurately; and help students self-regulate their reading process to read for comprehension (Singhal, 2021). Additionally, Quirk and Katie (2021) stated in their study that a scaffolding strategy to help honors students develop important academic writing abilities.

**Developed Reading Habit**

Reading habit is an important activity that every student should do. Reading is a complex, complicated process involving factors that influence each of us. Also, the



**Figure 1:** Thematic Diagram on Teaching Experiences of Elementary Teachers in Teaching During Pandemic

teacher should have time to teach

the students how to read and the proper pronunciation of words. Even though in this time of the pandemic, teachers should do remedial classes for those students who cannot read independently. However, today, we are facing this crisis the covid-19; teachers and students do not have any communication due to the lack of gadgets and internet connectivity. Hence, the mother teaches their children how to read even though it is essential for as long as possible.

One participant said that:

“My positive experience in the pandemic is that the children are making independent in their study that is not like before; they still have to wait for the teacher. Now they can try on their own to be able to read. I encourage them at school that they should read every day for as long as 20 minutes to make it a habit to encourage the children. Just give them time to read.” [Line 2, Participant 8]

Another participant revealed that:

“Good afternoon, based on my experience as a grade 1 teacher, it is challenging for me to deal with parents and how to get their attention. Not all parents are responsible if the teacher sets a meeting; not all parents can go. Usually, the parent does not attend; they speak at the back. More Patient and anytime the time is dangerous, and parents’ text in the middle of the night, sometimes Ten in the evening (10:00 pm) or eleven in the evening (11:00 pm). If caught phone ringing, I will do my best to respond to their text message for the sake of their children as my students.” [Line 2, Participant 7]

Reading habit refers to the behavior which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading. It is a pattern with which an individual organizes his or her reading in terms of the type, content, and quantity of materials read, the reading frequency, and the average time spent reading. A person with a good reading habit makes reading a regular activity. According to Cesar *et al.* (2017), there are four indicators of reading habits. First, the reading frequency at which the person reports reading books in their spare time. Moreover, reading is the activity when someone does to read for some minutes or hours as frequently. Second is time spent on academic reading, the time the person reports devoting to reading books on his or her study subjects. Third, time spent on non-academic reading refers to the time the respondent reports devoting to reading books that are not directly related to the subjects of his or her studies. The person often reports the Fourth motivation in the family environment on purchasing books, recommending books, and reading interest in the family.

In addition, Yusuf and Awoyemi (2018), reading is an action of an individual who reads, and habit is a product of this action as a person reads regularly. Children’s reading habits embody their reading behaviors and the frequency they engage in the reading behaviors. The more frequently children read, the more likely they are to develop regular reading habits and regard reading as a goal they want to achieve. A reading habit is formed when individuals repeatedly enact a specific behavior in a stable context. Their habits gradually increase as their self-control in enacting the given behaviors increases (Carden & Wood,

2018). Self-regulated learners may have a better ability to self-control their learning behaviors in the performance phase, which may help them maintain certain behaviors in a stable context and establish their reading habits (Carden & Wood, 2018; Zimmerman, 2013).

**Reading Comprehension Barrier.** The reading barriers had a negative impact that the pandemic would have on students with reading barriers like dyslexia, blindness, and cerebral palsy. As has been reported, students with learning differences and disabilities who are learning remote cannot get the same services they would receive in in-person learning, and they often encounter new barriers driven by the remote format, which can widen existing gaps.

One participant revealed that:

*“Negative side from that we do not know them very well, or we do not engage them very much in reading. Especially since we do not have face-to-face because of the pandemic, we do not know if where are or if they are still in the fast reader or what level of reading, they are. We cannot judge them face to face, so that is our first problem; we no longer have face-to-face”.* [Line 4, Participant 9]

Other participants said that:

*“For me, today is the time of the pandemic. It seems that we identified those children who had difficulty reading, so on my part, the students need to go to school, especially those students who have a hard time reading, and can teach them one by one. It was very different before the pandemic still have face to face classes because everyone seemed to have a hard time, and we could not be able to focus on them, while now he will be focused one by one and giving them materials aside from one on one in school, they will be here to follow up because they will be provided with materials according to their reading level and then we will follow up at their parents’ house.”* [Line 2, Participant 2]

According to the study by Davis, *et al.* (2019), student barriers to online learning may include a misinterpretation of expectations, poor time management, and poor interpersonal communication. In contrast, instructor barriers may involve identifying expectations, providing feedback, and poor interpersonal relations. In addition, Apriyanti (2020) discovered in her study that kindergarten and primary school parents face difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic, including their inability to guide their children to learn and the children’s lack of concentration, unwillingness to learn, desire to attend school, inability to learn online, and limited comprehension of the materials. In their study, Fauzi *et al.* (2020) discovered that teachers face difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic, including a lack of opportunities, network and internet use, planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning, and parent collaboration.

However, Mailizar *et al.* (2020) discovered that teachers, schools, curricula, and students were the four components of problems encountered by teachers in the Covid-19. In addition, Rasmitadila *et al.* (2020) discovered that teachers face challenges when implementing distance education during the Covid-19 pandemic, including technical barriers, student conditioning, and student participation in education.

### Challenges in communication to stakeholders

During this pandemic, teachers have a hard time communicating with their students and parents due to a lack of gadgets. The challenge is that the teacher cannot contact the parents, even though they have a module, but they cannot even go to school to get the module of their students. As a teacher, the best thing to do is to visit them at their home, but the students are not there when the teacher’s do home visitations.

One participant said that:

*“Some parents are not responsive in terms if you ask them if this is the standing of their child at the same time, not all parents have a cellphone; you can contact them thru messenger, and some, can’t because they have numbers on the enrolment form, cannot contact.”*

[Line 4, Participant 7]

Other participants revealed that:

*“The teaching reading amidst of pandemic, as I have said, is a challenging one, I encountered those unresponsive parents regarding communication and the lack of internet connectivity. That is why we urged ourselves to contact them and be consistent in our communication.”* [Line 2, Participant 6]

It is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders can access communications, so multiple channels will be necessary if different stakeholders rely on different modes of communication (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020; UNICEF Romania, 2020). It is essential to open communication channels with teachers and teachers’ unions, parent organizations, and other community groups to facilitate positive responses to policy changes.

Communication efforts should match local norms and come from sources whom local communities know and consider credible. Word-of-mouth communication from well-respected community leaders and community members is still an important channel, particularly in areas with limited technology or limited literacy (Carvalho *et al.*, 2020). Lao PDR used village loudspeakers to disseminate important messages about the school (Karki, 2020). Before the pandemic, evidence pointed to poor communication between parents and schools contributing to low student performance. In another low-cost text message intervention, the schools sent the parents information on student outcomes like absenteeism, performance, and conduct. After four months, students whose parents received the messages had significantly higher math grades, improved attendance, and a lower prevalence of destructive behaviors; they were less likely to fail the grade at the end of the year (Berlinski *et al.*, 2021).

### Coping Mechanism of Elementary Teachers during Pandemic

Figure 2 presents the qualitative findings of the elementary teachers on coping mechanism of elementary teachers during pandemic. The study comes up with three (3) major themes: Reading Level (Diagnostic), Coaching and Monitoring, and Reading Level (Evaluative). Therefore, the basic themes are; Direct instruction and mentoring, categorization of learners, provide reading materials,

Constant communication and mentoring, dedication to work, satisfying to see changes in communicating with parents, evident progress with student's reading, categorization of learners help in level of coaching and evaluation of reading is easier.

Reading Level (Diagnostic). The teachers utilize this to see whether pupils can independently read and pronounce the letter. On the other hand, teachers utilize this exam to test students' reading aptitude and vocabulary growth while reading. Diagnostic tests are given to students to provide more specific and exact information about their strengths and shortcomings in a particular area. In reading, for example, diagnostic exams will offer detailed information on a student's level of performance in the five major components of reading, which include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

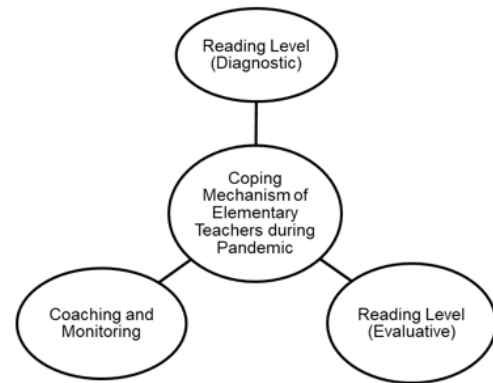
One respondent revealed that:

*"However, we can see what level the child is at depending on whether it is in PHIL IRI (PHILIPPINE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY); there is a process of what level the child is. The first level is FRUSTRATION, having a hard time. The second stage is INSTRUCTIONAL; they can read but still need teacher guidance. Do not stop; as a teacher, do not stop looking for ways to help the child. Because I do not think that is a hopeless case, especially for children, it would have been better. However, during the pandemic, we still have face-to-face, but we are still regular face-to-face, have close contact with children, and have closely followed up."* [Line 6, Participant 10]

Although all children have indeed been affected by rapid and drastic changes in all aspects of their lives since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic, the group of kids with developmental learning problems and other impairments demand particular concern Zawadka *et al.* (2021). Such information allows for early detection and targeted remediation of learner difficulties in specific areas. Diagnostic assessment that is easy to administer and score will readily apply in pedagogical settings. Read-aloud is a common diagnostic technique for word recognition. Examinees read words in lists or connected texts aloud, and their performance indicates word recognition competence. The accurate and rapid articulation builds upon phonological information activation, which is triggered by successful word recognition (Kearns & Ghanem, 2019). The Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is a systematically organized set of diagnostic instruments containing word reading, text reading, and comprehension questions (Gillet *et al.*, 2011).

### Coaching and Monitoring

The elementary school teachers should have individual coaching for their students who cannot read on their own with these strategies; the students and the teacher have an interaction with each other. However, from the word mentoring, the teacher calls the attention of each student to monitor their progress, especially in reading. According to our respondents, reading is the most important in today's generation; even though they can still read, they



**Figure 2:** Thematic Diagram on Coping Mechanism of Elementary Teachers during Pandemic

do not know the sounds of the words they read. Thus, the DepEd, through the Bureau of Learning Delivery-Teaching and Learning Division (BLD-TLD), shall continue to administer the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) assessment to learners in public elementary schools nationwide.

One respondent reveals that:

*"We need constant to follow up and then one by one like individual coaching, individual mentoring is what we do, and that is why "constant follow up" after batch one after a month when they return. We give reading materials and worksheets aside from their module. It is their assignment, and then we chat with them to see if they have finished what we give them and cursive assignments."* [Line 6, Participant 1] Parents are very involved in Modular Distance Learning (MDL) maintaining enthusiasm, coaching, teaching and monitoring pupils' compliance. As parents tutored and coached their children, they employed tactics and procedures to assist them, such as translating materials into their mother language, scheduling, monitoring activities, and creating goals. Parents also monitor their children's compliance and progress by inspecting completed outputs, organizing learning kits, and communicating with the school. To the study by Johnston (2022), in response to the worldwide pandemic, literacy coaching programs must re-imagine novel methods to engage teachers and coaches in a collaborative approach through technology. Coaching focuses primarily on enhancing performance in a particular skill area, typically over the short term. Typically, the coach sets goals, or at least intermediate or sub- goals, within his recommendation, while the student is responsible for the objective and the instructor is responsible for its execution. Mentoring and coaching encourage the development of a professional and personal relationship that enables individuals to acquire the relevant and competitive academic skills they need to succeed. Several successful studies on coaching approaches have determined that if coaching remains on an individual level, school sector improvement will be unsuccessful. This evaluation examines parents' involvement in Modular Distance Learning (MDL) in inspiring, coaching, tutoring, and checking students'

compliance. It examines the problems that parents face and their best approaches for helping Modular Distance Learning (MDL). Gumapac *et al.* (2021).

### Reading Level (Evaluative)

Children sit one-on-one with their instructor and read from a book appropriate for their grade level to evaluate their reading level, but the pandemic has ceased this practice. Evaluate itself: must determine whether readers have comprehended what they have read. However, other evaluations are available, including diagnostic and summative assessments. As teachers, we must assess our students' or readers' understanding of why they need to read a book and why they need to know how to read. Because, as we all know, reading is the most specific skill to master. Even if we do not have face-to-face communication in this epidemic, we instructors try our best to reach out to our pupils and assess their reading ability.

One respondent revealed that:

*“As a teacher, it helped me a lot in evaluating my students where they are and where I can start. What else can we do for students? Average is not so much; there is no choice, so it is just what can be done for them, we cannot even go face to face, and we cannot even go to their houses. So, that is the thing we can do to our students.”* [Line 8, Participant 8]

This study focused on Flojo (2017), and it emphasized that the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory determined the strengths and weaknesses of students.

Her study was done to analyze the existing learners' difficulties in reading and define the source of their difficulties in reading comprehension. The study revealed that learners should be guided to be more aware of their level of achievement and specific strengths and weaknesses in reading. With increased learners' awareness, the instruction becomes more effective. In addition, her study showed that repeated inventories at periodic intervals at the beginning and end of the school year would make it possible to determine changes in the level of reading achievement and in the development of more specific skills and strategies. In this manner, a precise measure of a child's development and progress could be gained. Intervention programs were done to cater individually to the needs of pupils with reading difficulties. According to Anderson (2017), all readings begin with the recognition of words. In the early years of the child's growth, they learn to produce new words through letter- sound recognition and letter blending.

### Thematic Diagram on Pedagogical Techniques used in Teaching Reading during Pandemic

Figure 3 presents the qualitative findings of the elementary teachers on pedagogical techniques used in teaching reading during pandemic. The study comes up with seven (7) major themes: Teacher's responsibility, Enforcement, Monitoring, Set the Atmosphere for Learning, Teacher's Method, Pre- qualification (Learner's Stratification for Intervention Program), and Multifaceted Learning

Materials. Therefore, the basic themes are; multifaceted learning resource, collaboration with parents, learner's stratification for intervention program, enforcement my teacher, dedication of teachers, sound words technique, digitized to learning materials, flexibility in monitoring and good relationship with parents and learners.

### Teacher's Responsibility

As a teacher, we can do anything for our students. The teacher's primary role is to help the students who do not know how to read, write, and many more. Also, the teacher is the second mother or father of the students inside the classroom setting or set up. However, teacher responsibility is a big word for teachers in elementary because we are the foundation of the ability of the students in higher grades; when the students do not know what the basic principle of reading the elementary teacher will blame why you are students did not know they basic principle of reading.

Furthermore, as teachers, we need to teach our students in terms of reading and writing; we need to teach them as long as we can teach them and learn them. In addition, teachers put in much work outside of lessons to ensure that they provide an engaging learning environment and support students. The responsibilities of a teacher will vary slightly depending on the level they are teaching at, the subject they are teaching, and the educational setting they are teaching in.

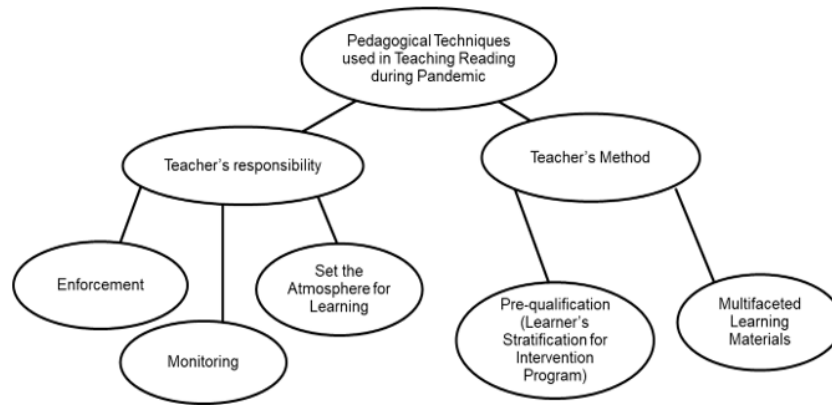
One respondent revealed that:

*“The teacher should not be lazy. Even if the students do not need help, a teacher cannot do anything about this. Though “it is too long,” we “always repeat” as long they can go to their home, they have to review. What does the sound of A ‘A, /a /’ VERY GOOD! is not a technique but the dedication you develop as a teacher. Need to help them. The teacher will get angry, so they can get the correct pronunciation of the letters.”* [Line 12, Participant 1]

According to UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank (2020) supported teachers by giving immediate feedback by Providing feedback to students, maintaining constant communication with the students and parents, and Reporting to local education units to keep track of learning.

Reading is a prerequisite for higher learning, and the best opportunity to teach children with reading skills is as early as possible, specifically in the K-3 stage. Teachers play a significant role in continuously delivering quality education amid the pandemic. The study by Lapada *et al.* (2020) suggests that teachers were highly aware of the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers continue to formulate Self-Learning Modules (SLMS) to facilitate remote instruction.

On the other hand, DepEd order no. 70, s. 2011 states that, reading is one of the most essential and critical skills that every learner should develop at an early age. It is introduced in kindergarten and then emphasized in Grade III. So, to address this, the Department of Education enforces the “Every Child A Reader Program (ECARP), which ensures that every child can read by the time they



**Figure 3:** Thematic Diagram on Pedagogical Techniques used in Teaching Reading during Pandemic

reach Grade III. However, a new learning modality is at stake in teaching reading in K to 3 stages. Therefore, this study will seek to know the role of teachers in reading instruction of Kindergarten to Grade III learners during the Modular Distance Learning (MDL) modality.

### Enforcement

As teachers, we need to follow the guidelines, especially in reading. However, we cannot follow those guidelines because the students did not meet the specific standard of reading. Furthermore, the students who do not know how to read have a remedial class for those students so they can be promoted to the higher grade next school year. As teachers, we can do anything for our students so that they can read and know the basic literacy skills in reading. In connection with this, the teacher will send reading materials to their parents so the students can read independently. However, the reading materials that we sent to their parents, the students did not read those materials.

One respondent reveals that:

*“The teacher should not be lazy. Even if the students don’t need your help, you as a teacher can’t do anything about this. Though “it’s too long,” we “always repeat” as long they can go to their home, they have to review. What does the sound of A “A, /a /” VERY GOOD! This is not a technique but the dedication you develop as a teacher. You need to help them. The teacher will get angry, so they can get the correct pronunciation of the letters.”* [Line 12, Participant 1]

According to Echauri & Torno (2017), motivated readers improve by reading more and using complex cognitive strategies. The teachers’ expectations and relationships with their students affect students’ learning. Literacy support that students academically succeed when they feel welcomed, esteemed, and provided with materials that challenge them, thus, enhancing their knowledge, experiences, and interests. This concept stresses the importance of expectations and relationships between teachers and students in a classroom. Therefore, having a face-to-face classroom encourages more effective reading development since learners become connected to listening, speaking, and writing and are applied strategically according to context and purpose. Stressed that teachers

have also encountered problems implementing modular distance learning Malipot (2020). However, implementing modular instruction fostered various challenges for teachers, students, and parents, especially in teaching reading in the early grades.

In addition, Gove and Cvelich (2011) state that reading programs can involve face-to-face and technology-enabled distance learning methods to demonstrate specific pedagogical skills for teaching alphabetic and comprehension, for instance. Identifying the reading outcomes and the problem is crucial and formulating appropriate interventions. In this way, reading improvement is monitored.

### Monitoring

Monitoring comprehension is difficult for young readers. They are unaware of all the things going on in their heads while reading. Readers need to be able to spot the signals that show when meaning is breaking down. A study into monitoring comprehension intends to help readers monitor their reading to ensure they understand. Monitoring comprehension is all about understanding the signals that show the reader meaning is breaking down. However, teachers should continuously monitor their students, especially in reading. Furthermore, we teachers need patience in monitoring our students’ progress.

One respondent reveals that:

*“Being a Patient teacher to the students. Patient always.”* [Line 12, Participant 7]

As a child reads, they should make sure they understand the text and fix up any misunderstandings or words they misread. Reading is a problem- solving process, and readers need to be aware of when they are inaccurate or do not understand what they are reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). When children self-correct, they are also self-monitoring to ensure that what they are reading looks right, sounds right, and makes sense and searches. When this whole process comes together seamlessly, it improves and refines a child’s reading process. On the other hand, evaluation is judging, appraising, or determining a program’s worth, value, and quality. Monitoring and evaluation are done in the education sector to monitor programs like school reading programs. In education, two

activities occur teaching done by the teachers and learning by the pupils. However, Miller (2017) also mentioned that monitoring is seeing what a teacher is doing in a systematic approach to overseeing the planning, learning, and teaching.

### Set the Atmosphere for Learning

Studying and continuing education regarding student engagement is essential, and students should guide the strategies teachers employ. Teachers, administrators, and college professors do not always hear what students enjoy most about learning. The development of the students depends on their capacity for classroom interaction. The conversation should be encouraged. However, for some students, one-on-one interactions are complex due to the profound influence of personal technology. Teachers should recognize students' interest in technology and encourage them to share it with other students or classmates through interaction. Student engagement increases when a teacher applies a lesson to a function outside of the classroom, such as a career. Physically, the classroom environment should be conducive to learning. Increased student comfort increases learning. Teachers are challenged to define what student engagement means to students as the need to increase student engagement is addressed. Teachers and students intuitively know what it is like to be in a classroom, even though there are no clear standards or rules for the subject today. As a result of listening to students and following their instincts, an engaging learning environment is created in which students can flourish.

One respondent reveals that:

*“So, now that we have limited face-to-face aside from educational videos on YouTube, we also give them LR (Learning Resources). We also supply books for reading and worksheets at the same time they have time to read, its looks like developing reading power. Because the child is more attracted, their interest is caught when they have a video to see. Rather than printed than be given to them. It is better when they have watched those so that they can learn.”* [Line 10, Participant 2]

All face-to-face lessons were cancelled during the school closures, and many institutions, including public schools, colleges, and even universities, immediately switched to online lessons. The abrupt shift to online-only education has been particularly stressful for many instructors and students who prefer in-person instruction. Online education is frequently stigmatized as a weaker option that provides a lower quality education than face-to-face education (Hodges *et al.*, 2020). Indeed, a comprehensive EDUCAUSE survey uncovered such negative attitudes toward online-only education (Pomerantz & Brooks 2017).

The online flipped classroom is comparable to the conventional flipped classroom model in that students are encouraged to prepare for class by completing pre-class activities such as watching video lectures and taking quizzes students in online flipped classrooms do not meet face-to-face but online (Stohr *et al.*, 2020)

### Teacher's Method

The teaching method is the most important for a teacher because, as a teacher, he needs to be more creative in discussing lesson. We, teachers, have many teaching methods we want to incorporate when we are having our discussions. However, we usually incorporate into our lesson the Formative, Summative assessment. Also, we incorporate the active learning method when needed for intervention programs by having a one-on-one with the students. Furthermore, teaching is one of the main components of educational planning, which is a critical factor in conducting educational plans. Despite the importance of good teaching, the outcomes are far from ideal.

One respondent revealed that:

*“He has become teacher attitude, our commitment to work as a teacher, and reading materials (even if I have not put it on the board, you should have seen the tarpaulin like chants, sentences for smoothness and fluency) so many techniques. Lay on the blackboard the tarpaulin that we use to be able to read by the students here in the classroom. An extra mile and expense to the teachers and commitment to help the child and provide what the students deserve.”* [Line 12, Participant 10]

Observation Tool on Reading Teaching Practices is a tool used here that was developed by Suárez *et al.* (2018) and combines a field format and systems of categories. It consists of Fourteen (14) criteria—alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, use of teaching resources, prior knowledge of children, reinforcement, feedback, modeling, direct instruction, guided oral instruction, extracurricular tasks, reading and writing, psychomotor skills, functional reading skills, and vocabulary—and seventy-seven (77) categories on practices in teaching reading. Some nations support teachers in this manner. The flipped classroom is a straightforward method for providing learning resources such as articles, pre-recorded videos, and YouTube links before class. The online classroom time is then utilized to deepen understanding through faculty and peer discussion (Doucet *et al.*, 2020). Reading is one of the most important skills a child can learn (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016). This skill is essential to a child's success not only in school but also in later life. One must be familiar with and employ various teaching methods to teach a child to read. A combination of two or more methods can be used to educate a child or another individual. In this method, the alphabet is taught to children first.

### Pre-Qualification (Learner's Stratification for Intervention Program)

Using the PHIL IRI provided by the DepEd, the Pre-Qualification for student intervention program classifies the student as a reader or non-reader. The Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) Assessment Tool aims to test and describe students' reading performance in the classroom. The data received from the assessment can assist teachers in designing and delivering effective reading instruction to their students. This diagnostic

approach to describing children's reading includes inclusionary ideas emphasizing the need for learner-centered, responsive, and culturally aware education. At the school level, the Phil-IRI assessment data will assist principals in developing reading programs and activities that will improve student learning outcomes. The DepEd Order offers administrative rules for the redesigned Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). The instrument is administered to students in grades 3 to 6 in elementary schools nationwide. It explains the responsibilities of the various levels of governance concerning the dissemination and use of the instrument mentioned above. The Phil-IRI Group Screening Test (GST) will be administered to all students in Filipino or English. Students identified as performing below expectations (those with a total Raw Score of less than 14 on the Phil-IRI GST) should undertake additional evaluation using the Phil-IRI Graded Passages.

Before the appointed test administration date, the teachers administering the Phil-IRI should read the handbook thoroughly and prepare all the relevant materials and forms. The administration handbook contains information on the mechanics of the administration, including instructions for administering, scoring, and interpreting data. The Handbook for Reading Intervention as part of the Phil-IRI material or other suitable reading activities may be utilized as a reference or guide for interventions.

One respondent revealed that:

*"Whether we are in PHIL IRI, have the proper steps, or have the suitable measures used in the pedagogy, like activities and interventions, then we have reading program implementations metrics. We are using, and we are following them to help the child. At the school level, we are also at the division level, where the division is given and followed up here in school. So, we have the child's instructional level, independence, and frustration. We have ways to address the child's frustration level, and we can give them Phonemic awareness or rhyme syllables words, rhyming sounds, and poems. So, we also have a time frame to see the child's progress. Because there are a lot of pedagogies already in school reading program implementation, we are there."* [Line 10, Participants 10]

This intervention program occurred as part of a broader project, aiming to intervene with kindergarteners and first and second graders. The study conducted by (Jamshidifarsani *et al.*, 2019; Solheim *et al.*, 2018) states that early intervention with children training in the alphabetic principle through phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondence (pre-reading skills), as well as the spelling and decoding processes (reading skills), which are the foundations for fluency and reading comprehension. According to Lynch's (2019) research, Interventions, also known as academic interventions, target a student's academic problem areas, such as reading, mathematics, or another subject. When a child struggles with reading skills, for example, educators will employ reading intervention strategies. This intervention entails more detailed progress monitoring and frequent adjustments to help students achieve their highest academic potential.

Also included in the definition of instructional intervention is Response to Intervention, which consists of three intensifying levels of intervention aimed at addressing the child's fundamental academic need. According to Armbruster *et al.* (2001), phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are the five major areas of reading. Alvermann and Montero believe instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency impact children's early reading development. It is necessary for a child to learn and understand each area in order for a child to achieve reading success. Phonemic awareness is necessary for the development of phonics; phonics is necessary for word recognition; word recognition is necessary for fluency; and fluency is necessary for reading comprehension (Eldredge, 2005). In addition Pardo (2004) states that it emphasized the relationship shared between all components of reading when noting that, before establishing good comprehension skills, students must acquire decoding skills, fluency skills, background knowledge, vocabulary, motivation, and engagement.

### Multifaceted Learning Materials

Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Learn how readers integrate these facets to make meaning from print. Reading is making meaning from print. It requires that we: Identify the words in print – a process called word recognition. Also, the teacher needs to adapt different types of reading strategies so that the teacher can apply these strategies to their students when teaching reading. Fundamental Reading Skills recognize these strategies. (a) Phonemes, the minor units of spoken language, combine to form syllables and words. (b) Phonics is the relationship between the letters (or letter combinations) in written language and the individual sounds in spoken language. (c) Fluent readers can read orally with appropriate speed, accuracy, and proper expression. (d) Vocabulary development is closely connected to comprehension. The larger the reader's vocabulary (either oral or print), the easier it is to make sense of the text. Furthermore, teachers can use big books to have reading material to be presented in front of the students, and the students can easily read on their own. Therefore, a teacher should be more creative in terms of students' reading skills because students can easily distract when the teacher is boring. So, a teacher should be more attentive in teaching the students reading ability.

One participant revealed that:

*"So, now that we have limited face-to-face aside from educational videos on YouTube, we also give them LR (Learning Resources); we also supply books for reading and worksheets at the same time they have time to read, its looks like developing reading power. Because the child is more attracted, their interest is caught when they have a video to see. Rather than printed than be given to them. It is better when they have watched those so that they can learn."* [Line 10, Participant 2]

Another participant said that:

“Pedagogical approach, I guess, is all about flexibility, consistency, and the assistance of the students in monitoring and evaluating their reading progress. Flexibility, consistency, and assistance to parents in reading. First is the ‘ONLINE KAMUSTAHAN’, constant follow-up and evaluation of reading progress. We monitor in order for us to see the progress of this child; it is challenging without the face-to-face class. Monitoring, and constant communication, by using the reading materials suited to their reading ability.” [Line 10, Participant 6]

Another participant revealed that:

“So, now that we have limited face-to-face aside from educational videos on YouTube, we also give them LR (Learning Resources); we also supply books for reading and worksheets at the same time they have time to read, it looks like developing reading power. They will follow our pronunciation like ‘A, /a/.’ They can see the word ‘A,’ and they will follow.” [Line 10, Participant 1]

And another participant also revealed and described her experience:

“We give the simplest, for example, it is the letter A, we put it at the bottom part with the sounds that can be read to know that this is letter A and the pronunciation is (AH) is the sound, letter B and the pronunciation is (BAH). If we are here at school, we do not have to write a letter anymore, but give it to the parent, have to write it so that they can read the sound and know the sound of the letter. We will also give in our GC and YouTube video clips of the sounds of the letter, there are already colors, numbers, and so many basics to be found. That is why not all of us can access it. We will give a printed letter. We write it one by one, which is time-consuming on our part. Because when the child comes here for our face-to-face assessment individually, we can see whether they have been taught or not. With all the reading materials and video clips provided by GC, they open or click the link given. However, there is the child who ‘does not know teacher’ did your parent teach this (no teacher)? That is why we tend not to be surprised why they do not know how to read.” [Line 10, Participant 9]

Teachers use multifaceted learning materials when they use materials that correspond to a student’s reading level. However, in the current generation, technology is indispensable. (Salmerón *et al.*, 2018) Have conceptualized digital reading as a multidimensional construct involving the application of navigation, integration, and critical evaluation processes, as well as the interaction of these processes with individual differences, task differences, and variations of digital reading interfaces. According to this view, digital reading and digital authorship are standard digital literacy practices (Coiro & Hobbs, 2017).

## DISCUSSION

Based on this study we used theory of variation to gather the lived experiences of elementary school teachers. Reading instruction during the pandemic broadens our perspective. As stated in our results, (A) Teaching experiences, a teacher can use different reading strategies suited to the student’s reading ability. (B) In Coping Mechanism, teachers also use different reading materials that are suited to the student’s reading ability; teachers monitor the student’s reading level; and (C) pedagogical techniques, a teacher also uses different techniques in

teaching reading during the pandemic.

Indeed, it is not easy to manage students and improve their reading skills. It was revealed that teachers use a variety of pedagogical strategies to help students learn to read during the pandemic, including Teachers’ responsibility, Enforcement, Monitoring, and Creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. As educators and researchers, we realized that reading strategies are the most effective way to improve students’ reading skills. Despite the turmoil caused by the health crisis and the absence of face-to-face classes, teachers are willing to sacrifice everything due to their patience and optimism.

Therefore conclude, as indicated by the above result, the researchers conclude that Rizal Central Elementary School teachers are unquestionably prepared to teach reading. Utilizing the strategies and seminars they learn. Researchers can assert that teachers are unsung heroes worthy of imitation.

## CONCLUSION

After intensive investigation, this indication was conveyed by the researchers. The study represents the following implication that focuses on individualized intervention and online kamustahan.

The primary purpose of this intervention is to determine whether the students are readers or non-readers. These programs used the teacher to help the students who need peer tutoring and teaching reading. The mentioned program can improve the students reading difficulty. Further, it can help boost the student’s confidence and motivation in reading class. However, individualized intervention can help the student to be able to read on their own. Furthermore, the collaboration between teachers and parent is the foundation of the education system. As they are the first point of contact for all educational needs. For instance, the teacher sends a message to the parents of students who need individualized reading intervention and monitors by using online kamustahan. In addition, the social system is now proven to be a literal lifesaver because teachers support the student through individualized intervention and monitoring using online kamustahan. In that sense, in dealing with the social system bridged and support teachers, classmates, parents, and friends so that they need help with difficulties especially in reading.

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