

# Sailing for Literacy: Teachers' Perspectives on Implementing Reading Initiative for Nonreaders

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**Abstract:** This phenomenological study explored the perspectives of teachers in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders through the program entitled “Sailing for Literacy: Teachers’ Perspectives on Implementing Reading Initiatives for Nonreaders.” The study aimed to understand teachers’ experiences, challenges, strategies, and insights in helping struggling learners develop basic reading skills. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with selected teachers who actively implemented reading interventions in their respective schools. The findings revealed that teachers play multiple roles as facilitators, motivators, and mentors in addressing the needs of nonreaders. Patience, flexibility, and the use of varied teaching strategies, such as visual aids, phonics activities, storytelling, and interactive learning materials, were identified as effective approaches for improving learners’ reading abilities. However, teachers also encountered challenges, including limited resources, a lack of parental support, learners’ low motivation, and time constraints. Despite these difficulties, teachers remained committed to promoting literacy and creating meaningful learning experiences for nonreaders. The study highlights the importance of continuous teacher support, innovative reading programs, and collaborative efforts among schools, parents, and communities in strengthening literacy development among struggling readers.

**Keywords:** *Nonreaders, Reading Initiatives, Sailing for Literacy, Teachers’ Perspectives.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The reading initiative for nonreaders is a focused, purposeful program designed to bridge the literacy gap among learners who have yet to acquire foundational reading skills. In the Sarangani District, this initiative serves as a key educational intervention, providing structured activities, targeted instruction, and sustained support to help nonreaders progress toward reading fluency. Central to its success is the teachers’ sustained motivation of learners despite numerous challenges. This study seeks to explore teachers’ lived experiences in carrying out the reading initiative, identify the challenges they encounter, and examine the coping strategies they employ, with the ultimate aim of generating insights to enhance the effectiveness of literacy interventions for nonreaders.

Globally, there is increasing concern about the literacy of nonreaders and struggling readers. Murray and Murray (2022) noted that struggling readers are found in almost every classroom worldwide. With differing learning styles and abilities, teachers are encouraged now, more than ever, to be innovative when teaching foundational reading strategies. They recommended seven hands-on learning strategies that can promote learning and support struggling readers during literacy

instruction, including Build the Words, Feel the Words, Whole Body Letters, Five Finger Retell, Sight Word BINGO, Elkonin Boxes, and Word Swat.

In Malaysia, Nordin et al. (2023) contend that reading strategies to assist struggling early readers should be based on learners’ needs and be grounded in the Component Model of Reading (CMR), as well as cognitive and social constructivism. English teachers must understand the appropriate and fitting strategies that meet learners’ needs, as different strategies are suited to different groups of learners based on their abilities.

In South Africa, Phala (2023) posited that concerns about low learner performance can be partly attributed to how Foundation Phase teachers are prepared to support reading in their classrooms. It was noted that teachers were not prepared on how to teach reading, particularly in the home language. This means that professional development for teachers on how to teach and support learners with reading problems remains a concern.

Moreover, Laguyo (2024) argued that non-reading has persisted in Thailand despite the Thai government’s efforts to promote reading. Despite the implementation of the English

Program (EP) and other related programs, Thailand's English proficiency levels remain comparatively low, particularly in reading.

In the Philippines, Pelatero (2023) noted the Department of Education (DepEd) 3B initiative, "Hamon: Bawat Bata Bumabasa," to promote reading advocacy and ensure that every student achieves grade-level reading proficiency. This also strengthens the Every Child a Reader Program (ECRAP), which primarily aims to equip learners with reading skills to make them proficient and independent readers at their grade level (Cedeño and Billones, 2021)

In addition, Francisco (2025) reported that remedial reading instruction plays an important role in helping students who struggle with reading. By providing individualized support, teachers can help these struggling readers overcome their difficulties and challenges and develop the skills for academic success and lifelong learning.

In the Division of Davao del Norte, Taglucop et al. (2024) observed that some students are struggling to comprehend what they have read and have very limited language and vocabulary. The books and texts they have read have led them to confusion and misunderstanding, resulting in low exam and quiz scores. According to Belga (2025), citing Talisayon and Rivera (2020), public schools in Davao City and nearby municipalities struggle to meet the needs of struggling readers due to overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teacher training, and limited parental involvement in educational activities.

In the district of Sarangani, reading initiatives have become a lifeline for teachers striving to support their nonreaders and struggling readers. Under the "No Read, No Pass" policy, teachers face the challenge and the responsibility of ensuring that these learners develop the skills needed to progress to the next grade level. To address this, the district introduced Project Layag, a program symbolically named sailing alongside nonreaders toward the shores of literacy. This study seeks to chart the lived experiences of teachers as they steer through the demands of implementing this initiative, uncovering both the challenges they encounter and the strategies they employ. Beyond documenting these experiences, the study underscores the vital role of education in offering hope and opportunity to a generation of learners who face the difficult waters of illiteracy.

## II. METHOD

This study employed a phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of teachers implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders in the Sarangani District. Phenomenology was selected because it enables researchers to gain a deep understanding of participants' firsthand experiences and the meanings they attribute to those experiences within their real-life contexts. Through this approach, the study sought to capture authentic accounts of how teachers navigate the

complexities of teaching beginning readers who struggle with literacy, the instructional practices they adopt, and the personal and professional insights they develop while implementing reading interventions. As emphasized by Tomaszewski et al. (2020), drawing from Flood (2010), phenomenological research focuses on describing and interpreting the essence of lived experiences from the perspectives of those who directly encounter the phenomenon under investigation.

The study involved nine (9) Grade 1 teacher-participants currently assigned in the Sarangani District and actively engaged in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders. Participants were purposively selected from three elementary schools representing small, medium, and large school environments, thereby allowing the researcher to incorporate environmental triangulation and examine similarities and differences in teachers' experiences across varying educational contexts. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate because it ensured that participants possessed the necessary knowledge, experience, and direct involvement relevant to the research problem. According to Nyimbili and Nyimbili (2024), purposive sampling enhances the richness, relevance, and credibility of qualitative data by intentionally selecting information-rich participants who can provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon being studied.

To generate comprehensive and contextually grounded data, the study utilized in-depth interviews as its primary data collection method. This approach facilitated meaningful and reflective conversations with Grade 1 teachers, enabling them to articulate their experiences, coping mechanisms, instructional practices, and perspectives regarding the implementation of reading initiatives such as Project Layag for nonreaders. Conducting interviews in a systematic and consistent manner ensured that participants' narratives were captured accurately and comprehensively while allowing the researcher to probe for clarification and deeper understanding. The careful observance of established data collection procedures further strengthened the dependability and trustworthiness of the research process.

Following data collection, all interview transcripts underwent a rigorous and systematic qualitative analysis guided by the framework of O'Connor and Gibson (2003). Through careful coding, categorization, and thematic analysis, recurring patterns and shared meanings were identified and organized into themes that faithfully represented the lived experiences of the participants. Throughout the research process, the study adhered to fundamental ethical principles by safeguarding participants' confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, respecting voluntary participation, and ensuring the accurate representation of their narratives. By maintaining methodological rigor and ethical integrity, the research aimed to produce credible and meaningful findings that can inform literacy interventions, strengthen reading initiatives for nonreaders, and contribute to evidence-based educational practices within the broader educational community.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The experiences of teachers in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders reflect a complex and dynamic process shaped by instructional responsibilities, learner diversity, and the realities of the classroom environment. As frontline implementers of literacy interventions, teachers assume multiple roles in identifying struggling readers, assessing their individual learning needs, and designing or adapting instructional strategies that address varying levels of reading ability, motivation, and socio-emotional support. Their experiences demonstrate not only the challenges encountered in fostering foundational literacy but also the resilience, adaptability, and professional commitment required to help nonreaders progress toward reading proficiency. Presented below are the main themes, corresponding sub-themes, and significant statements that emerged from the participants' narratives, providing a comprehensive account of their lived experiences in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders.

#### ➤ *Multiple Roles of Teachers in Teaching Nonreaders*

This theme highlights the diverse and interconnected responsibilities that teachers undertake in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders, extending beyond the delivery of classroom instruction to include assessing learners' needs, planning and organizing literacy activities, monitoring progress, and providing individualized support. The participants' narratives demonstrate that teachers also assume vital emotional roles by encouraging, motivating, and nurturing learners' confidence, recognizing that effective reading intervention requires both instructional expertise and compassionate guidance. Overall, their experiences underscore that teaching nonreaders is a holistic and dynamic process in which pedagogical responsibilities are closely integrated with responsive and learner-centered emotional support, giving rise to the sub-themes Managing Instructional Responsibilities, Organizing Structured Literacy Activities, and Supporting Learners Emotionally.

- *Managing Instructional Responsibilities.*

The findings under the sub-theme Managing Instructional Responsibilities indicate that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently assume multiple and interconnected roles in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders. Beyond delivering instruction, participants described responsibilities such as identifying struggling readers, planning and organizing intervention activities, monitoring learner progress, and providing targeted support to address diverse literacy needs. The convergence of these experiences across different school environments suggests that managing instructional responsibilities is an essential and universal aspect of teaching nonreaders, regardless of institutional context. This finding supports Rasinski's (2021) assertion that effective literacy instruction requires teachers to integrate ongoing assessment, instructional planning, and responsive intervention to promote learners' reading development.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals both shared perspectives and contextual variations in the execution of these responsibilities. Teachers from small and large schools generally emphasized structured identification procedures, systematic intervention, and careful instructional planning, whereas those from medium schools highlighted learner-centered facilitation, flexibility, and greater attention to emotional support while managing instruction. Despite these differences in emphasis, all nine participants demonstrated a common commitment to adapting their practices to learners' needs, underscoring that effective reading intervention demands both pedagogical competence and contextual responsiveness. These findings are consistent with Snow and Matthews (2020), who argued that high-quality reading instruction requires teachers to balance assessment, differentiated instruction, and adaptive decision-making in response to diverse classroom conditions.

- *Organizing Structured Literacy Activities.*

The findings under the sub-theme Organizing Structured Literacy Activities demonstrate that teachers across small, medium, and large school settings consistently recognize the value of implementing systematic, organized, and routine-based reading instruction for nonreaders. Participants described the use of structured reading sessions, sequenced learning activities, repetitive practice, and carefully planned interventions to strengthen learners' foundational literacy skills. Teachers from large schools particularly emphasized curriculum-aligned instruction and progressive lesson organization, while those from small schools integrated structured reading programs with ongoing assessment. In contrast, participants from medium schools highlighted consistency, repetition, and guided practice as key elements in reinforcing reading acquisition. The convergence of these perspectives indicates that structured literacy activities are fundamental to effective reading intervention, supporting Seidenberg's (2020) view that explicit and systematic instruction plays a critical role in developing early reading proficiency.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals that although the implementation of structured literacy activities varies according to school context and learner needs, the underlying commitment to organized and intentional instruction remains consistent. Large school teachers tended to focus on planned progression and curriculum alignment, medium school teachers emphasized reinforcement through repeated practice, and small school teachers combined structured planning with diagnostic-informed instruction to address individual learner needs. Despite these contextual differences, all participants shared the belief that well-organized literacy activities provide nonreaders with the consistent support necessary for reading development. These findings align with Kilpatrick (2021), who emphasized that systematic, explicit, and carefully sequenced instruction is essential for building foundational reading skills and improving literacy outcomes among struggling readers.

- *Supporting Learners Emotionally.*

The findings under the sub-theme Supporting Learners Emotionally reveal that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently regard emotional support as an integral component of implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders. Participants emphasized the importance of encouraging learners, building their confidence, fostering positive attitudes toward reading, and creating a safe and supportive learning environment where children feel comfortable making mistakes and celebrating incremental progress. Teachers from small schools particularly highlighted nurturing learners' self-confidence and recognizing small achievements, while participants from medium and large schools underscored the role of sustained motivation and intentional encouragement in helping struggling readers remain engaged in literacy activities.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further indicates that although teachers employed different approaches to providing emotional support, they shared a common belief that affective encouragement enhances learners' willingness to participate and persevere in reading tasks. Small school teachers tended to adopt a holistic approach centered on reassurance and affirmation, medium school teachers focused on motivating learners through gradual success experiences, and large school teachers integrated emotional support into structured intervention efforts by intentionally fostering resilience and confidence. Despite these contextual variations, all nine participants viewed emotional scaffolding as essential for promoting sustained engagement and positive literacy outcomes among nonreaders. These findings align with Durlak et al. (2021), who concluded that supportive learning environments and social-emotional practices significantly strengthen students' academic engagement, motivation, and persistence in foundational learning domains such as reading.

➤ *Adaptive and Learner-Focused Teaching Practices*

The second main theme emphasizes teachers deliberate efforts to modify and personalize their instructional approaches in response to the diverse needs, abilities, and learning pace of nonreaders. The participants' narratives reveal that effective reading intervention extends beyond the use of standardized methods, requiring continuous assessment, flexible teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, and carefully sequenced support to address individual learner differences. Across the interviews, teachers consistently highlighted the importance of adjusting instructional pacing, selecting appropriate materials, and providing targeted assistance to ensure that each learner has meaningful opportunities to develop foundational literacy skills. These findings align with Tomlinson et al. (2021), who emphasized that responsive teaching grounded in ongoing assessment and instructional adaptation is essential for meeting learners' varying readiness levels and promoting successful learning outcomes. The key dimensions of this theme are reflected in the following sub-themes: Assessing Learners' Needs, Adjusting Teaching Strategies, and Applying Step-by-Step Reading Approaches.

- *Assessing Learners' Needs.*

The findings under the sub-theme Assessing Learners' Needs demonstrate that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently rely on diagnostic and ongoing assessment to inform reading instruction for nonreaders. Participants emphasized the importance of identifying learners' reading difficulties, monitoring their progress, and using assessment results to tailor instructional decisions and interventions. Teachers from small schools particularly highlighted early identification of reading gaps, while participants from large schools stressed the continuous use of assessment to refine instruction based on learner performance. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools viewed assessment as an integral component of the teaching process that guides planning and instructional adaptation. The convergence of these perspectives indicates that assessing learners' needs is a fundamental practice in reading intervention, supporting Wiliam's (2021) assertion that formative assessment plays a vital role in identifying learning needs and informing effective instruction.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals subtle contextual differences in the implementation of assessment practices while demonstrating a shared commitment to learner-centered instruction. Small school teachers tended to prioritize diagnostic assessment for the early identification of nonreaders, whereas large school teachers emphasized continuous monitoring and instructional adjustment as learners progressed. In contrast, medium school participants integrated assessment more holistically into daily teaching by using learner feedback and classroom performance to shape instructional decisions. Despite these variations, all nine participants regarded assessment as an ongoing and dynamic process rather than a single event, reinforcing its essential role in designing responsive reading interventions. These findings are consistent with Heritage and Wylie (2020), who emphasized that continuous formative assessment enables teachers to adapt instruction effectively and improve learners' educational outcomes.

- *Adjusting Teaching Strategies.*

The findings under the sub-theme Adjusting Teaching Strategies indicate that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently adapt their instructional approaches to address the diverse learning needs of nonreaders. Participants emphasized the importance of modifying lesson delivery, instructional methods, and learning activities in response to learners' reading abilities, progress, and individual challenges. Teachers from small schools highlighted the need for flexibility and responsiveness in accommodating varying learner capacities, while participants from large schools focused on tailoring strategies to address specific reading difficulties and skill gaps. Similarly, teachers from medium schools stressed the importance of adapting instruction to ensure that learners receive appropriate and meaningful support. The convergence of these perspectives demonstrates

that instructional adaptability is a critical component of effective reading intervention, supporting Parsons et al. (2021), who argued that responsive teaching enhances learning outcomes by aligning instruction with students' individual needs and readiness.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals complementary variations in how teaching strategies are adjusted across different school environments. Teachers from small schools tended to emphasize aligning instruction with learners' current performance levels and pacing, whereas those from large schools prioritized targeted interventions and scaffolded support to address specific literacy deficiencies. In contrast, medium school teachers highlighted maintaining instructional flexibility while balancing curriculum expectations with individualized learner support, often adapting lessons based on students' readiness and engagement. Although these approaches differ in emphasis, they collectively illustrate a shared commitment to learner-centered instruction and reinforce the view that effective reading interventions require continuous adaptation of teaching practices rather than rigid adherence to predetermined methods.

- *Applying Step-by-Step Reading Approaches.*

The findings under the sub-theme Applying Step-by-Step Reading Approaches reveal that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently employ systematic, sequential, and scaffolded instructional practices to support the literacy development of nonreaders. Participants emphasized the importance of introducing reading skills gradually, providing explicit guidance, and reinforcing learning through repeated practice to ensure mastery of foundational concepts. Teachers from large schools particularly highlighted structured phonics instruction, guided reading, and carefully sequenced learning activities, while participants from medium schools stressed the value of gradual progression and continuous reinforcement. Although teachers from small schools provided fewer explicit descriptions of procedural routines, their emphasis on assessment-informed instruction and responsive teaching reflects the underlying principles of step-by-step learning. The convergence of these perspectives suggests that structured and incremental instruction is essential for helping nonreaders acquire foundational literacy skills.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further demonstrates both consistency and contextual variation in the implementation of step-by-step reading approaches. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize formalized and program-based instructional sequences with deliberate repetition and progression, whereas medium school teachers combined gradual skill development with motivational support to sustain learner engagement. In contrast, teachers from small schools focused on identifying learners' specific needs and using those assessments to determine appropriate instructional sequences and interventions. Despite these differences in implementation, all participants shared the common goal of scaffolding learners' reading development through structured and progressive

instruction. These findings are supported by Castles et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of systematic and cumulative teaching of phonics and decoding skills, and by Foorman et al. (2020), who highlighted that explicit, sequenced literacy instruction is fundamental to improving reading proficiency among struggling learners.

- *Challenges and Growth in Teaching Reading.*

The theme Challenges and Growth in Teaching Reading captures the complex realities teachers face in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders, including limited instructional resources, time constraints, and the diverse learning needs of struggling readers. Despite these challenges, the participants' narratives reveal a strong sense of resilience and commitment as they continually adapt their teaching practices, modify interventions, and seek effective ways to support learners' literacy development. Their experiences demonstrate that reading instruction requires not only pedagogical competence but also flexibility, creativity, and perseverance in responding to evolving classroom demands. Consequently, the challenges encountered by teachers become valuable opportunities for reflection, innovation, and professional growth, enabling them to refine their instructional approaches and enhance the effectiveness of reading interventions. The different dimensions of this theme are further reflected in the sub-themes Facing Instructional Constraints, Dealing with Learner Difficulties, and Gaining Insights from Experience.

- *Facing Instructional Constraints.*

The findings under the sub-theme Facing Instructional Constraints reveal that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently encounter challenges related to limited instructional resources, insufficient time, and competing classroom responsibilities while implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders. Participants described difficulties in securing appropriate learning materials, allocating adequate time for individualized reading instruction, and balancing literacy interventions with other teaching duties. Teachers from small schools primarily emphasized shortages of instructional resources and limited support materials, whereas participants from large schools highlighted the challenges of managing instructional time and sustaining learner engagement within larger and more diverse classes. Similarly, teachers from medium schools reported experiencing both resource limitations and time constraints, underscoring the widespread nature of these barriers. The convergence of these perspectives supports the findings of Kim and Park (2021), who argued that limited resources and instructional time can significantly impede the effectiveness of literacy instruction and intervention programs.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further demonstrates that while the specific manifestations of instructional constraints vary across school contexts, their impact on reading intervention remains consistently significant. Small school teachers focused on overcoming material

shortages and limited access to instructional resources, large school teachers emphasized balancing individualized support with the demands of larger class populations, and medium school teachers described managing both resource scarcity and competing instructional priorities. Rather than presenting contradictory views, these perspectives collectively illustrate that instructional constraints are multifaceted and shaped by contextual conditions. Nevertheless, all nine participants demonstrated adaptability and resourcefulness in addressing these challenges, reinforcing Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2020) assertion that systemic factors such as time allocation, class size, and access to instructional materials substantially influence teachers' capacity to deliver effective and equitable literacy instruction.

- *Dealing with Learner Difficulties.*

The findings under the sub-theme Dealing with Learner Difficulties reveal that teachers across small, medium, and large school contexts consistently encounter learner-related challenges that influence the implementation of reading initiatives for nonreaders. Participants described working with learners who exhibit varying reading abilities, low levels of motivation, short attention spans, limited literacy exposure, and diverse linguistic backgrounds, all of which require individualized instructional responses. Teachers from small schools primarily emphasized differences in learners' reading performance and motivation, while participants from large schools highlighted behavioral and cognitive challenges, including limited attention span and difficulties in retaining reading skills. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools underscored the influence of socio-linguistic and environmental factors on learners' literacy development. The convergence of these perspectives indicates that learner diversity is a significant consideration in reading intervention and supports the findings of López and Carter (2022), who emphasized that variations in learners' cognitive and linguistic backgrounds substantially affect reading achievement and instructional planning.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further demonstrates that although the specific learner difficulties observed differ across school contexts, teachers uniformly recognize the need for responsive, patient, and differentiated instruction. Small school participants tended to focus on addressing differences in learner motivation and academic readiness, whereas large school teachers emphasized managing behavioral challenges and sustaining learner engagement during instruction. In contrast, medium school teachers highlighted contextual influences, such as language exposure and home environments, that shape reading development and intervention outcomes. Despite these contextual nuances, there were no contradictory perspectives among the participants; rather, their experiences collectively affirm that supporting nonreaders requires flexible teaching practices tailored to individual learner needs. These findings are consistent with Graham et al. (2021), who argued that effective reading instruction must accommodate learner variability by adapting strategies to students' cognitive, motivational, and contextual

characteristics.

- *Gaining Insights from Experience.*

The findings under the sub-theme Gaining Insights from Experience reveal that teachers develop a deeper understanding of effective reading instruction through their sustained engagement with nonreaders and the challenges encountered in daily classroom practice. Participants across small, medium, and large school contexts recognized that literacy development is a gradual, individualized process that requires patience, persistence, and continuous instructional adjustment. Teachers from small schools emphasized the importance of nurturing learners' motivation and strengthening foundational skills, while participants from large schools highlighted perseverance and the value of recognizing incremental progress rather than expecting immediate results. Similarly, teachers from medium schools stressed that building learners' confidence and celebrating gradual improvement are essential aspects of successful reading intervention. The convergence of these perspectives supports Farrell's (2021) view that reflective teaching enables educators to transform classroom experiences into meaningful pedagogical insights that enhance instructional effectiveness.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further demonstrates that although teachers draw different lessons from their experiences depending on their school context, they share a common belief that professional growth emerges through reflection and sustained interaction with struggling readers. Small school participants tended to focus on learners' emotional and motivational development, whereas teachers from large schools emphasized structured progression, resilience, and acceptance of the non-linear nature of reading acquisition. In contrast, medium school teachers highlighted increased learner confidence and consistent engagement as indicators of meaningful progress. Despite these contextual nuances, all nine participants agreed that success in reading intervention should be measured not only by reading proficiency but also by learners' persistence, confidence, and willingness to learn. These findings align with Loughran (2020), who argued that reflective practice and accumulated classroom experience are fundamental to the development of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and their capacity to respond effectively to diverse learner needs.

Meanwhile, the coping mechanisms of teachers in implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders reflect the adaptive strategies and professional practices they employ to address the complexities of supporting struggling readers in diverse classroom settings. The participants' narratives demonstrate that teachers cope with instructional challenges by modifying their teaching approaches, providing consistent emotional and motivational support, and engaging in collaborative practices while maximizing available resources to improve the effectiveness of literacy interventions. These coping mechanisms enable teachers to respond to learners' varying needs, sustain meaningful instruction despite

contextual constraints, and foster continuous literacy development among nonreaders. The major themes and corresponding sub-themes that emerged from the participants' lived experiences are presented in the succeeding sections.

#### ➤ *Instructional Adaptation*

The theme Instructional Adaptation captures the deliberate and responsive ways in which teachers modify their instructional practices to address the diverse needs, abilities, and learning pace of nonreaders. The participants' narratives reveal that effective reading intervention requires flexibility in lesson delivery, adjustments in instructional pacing, differentiation of learning activities, and the use of scaffolded support to accommodate individual learner differences and promote meaningful literacy development. By continuously adapting their teaching strategies, teachers are better able to ensure that struggling readers remain engaged, receive appropriate assistance, and make gradual progress toward foundational reading proficiency. The key dimensions of this theme are reflected in the following sub-themes: Pace Adjustment, Differentiated Instruction, and Scaffolded Instruction.

##### • *Pace Adjustment.*

The findings under the sub-theme Pace Adjustment indicate that teachers cope with the challenges of implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders by intentionally modifying the speed and progression of instruction according to learners' reading readiness and individual learning needs. Participants from small, medium, and large school contexts consistently emphasized that adjusting instructional pacing enables struggling readers to process lessons more effectively while ensuring that learners with varying abilities remain actively engaged. Teachers recognized that flexible pacing is essential for creating an inclusive learning environment where students can develop foundational literacy skills at an appropriate and manageable rate. This shared perspective supports Tomlinson and Moon (2021), who argued that responsive instruction requires teachers to adjust the pace of learning to accommodate diverse learner readiness and maximize educational outcomes.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals contextual variations in how pace adjustment is implemented while maintaining a common instructional purpose. Teachers from large schools tended to emphasize structured, step-by-step progression and guided instruction that gradually builds learners' confidence and competence, whereas participants from small schools focused on balancing the needs of both fast and slow learners within limited instructional time and resources. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools highlighted individualized pacing and emotional responsiveness, ensuring that learners receive sufficient time and encouragement to master reading skills without undue pressure. Despite these differences in emphasis, all nine participants viewed pace adjustment as a critical coping mechanism that supports equitable and effective reading instruction. These findings are consistent with Darling-

Hammond et al. (2020), who emphasized that flexible instructional pacing is fundamental to literacy development, particularly for struggling readers who benefit from repeated practice and gradual skill acquisition.

##### • *Differentiated Instruction.*

The findings demonstrate that teachers cope with the challenges of teaching nonreaders by employing varied instructional approaches that accommodate differences in learners' reading abilities, learning pace, and individual needs. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently described modifying lesson content, activities, and instructional methods to ensure that each learner receives appropriate support and opportunities for success. This shared commitment to learner-centered instruction reflects teachers' recognition that no single teaching approach is effective for all nonreaders and that instructional flexibility is necessary to promote meaningful literacy development.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals contextual variations in the implementation of differentiated instruction while demonstrating substantial agreement on its importance. Teachers from large schools tended to emphasize systematic and structured adjustments to instruction that align with learners' specific reading needs, whereas participants from small schools highlighted the challenge of simultaneously addressing multiple reading levels within limited instructional time and available resources. In contrast, teachers from medium schools focused on incorporating varied learning activities and engagement strategies to maintain learners' participation and motivation throughout the intervention process. Despite these differences in emphasis, all nine participants viewed differentiated instruction as an indispensable coping mechanism that enables them to deliver inclusive and responsive reading instruction. This finding is further supported by Smale-Jacobse et al. (2020), who emphasized that effective differentiation requires the continuous adaptation of instructional content, processes, and learning environments to improve literacy outcomes, particularly among struggling readers.

##### • *Scaffolded Instruction.*

The findings under the sub-theme Scaffolded Instruction reveal that teachers cope with the challenges of teaching nonreaders by systematically breaking down reading tasks into manageable steps and providing sustained guidance until learners develop confidence and independence. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized the importance of explicit instruction, repeated practice, and gradual progression in helping struggling readers acquire foundational literacy skills. Teachers described using guided demonstrations, sequenced activities, and continuous reinforcement to ensure that learners master each reading skill before advancing to more complex tasks. These findings align with Van de Pol et al. (2021), who described scaffolding as a dynamic instructional process in which teachers provide

temporary support that is progressively withdrawn as learners gain competence and autonomy.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further demonstrates both convergence and contextual variation in the implementation of scaffolded instruction. Teachers from large schools tended to emphasize structured intervention sessions supported by organized programs and instructional materials, whereas participants from small schools focused on integrating scaffolded support into daily classroom instruction through continuous reinforcement and the careful breakdown of learning tasks. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools highlighted the use of repetitive and well-structured activities to strengthen retention and promote gradual mastery of reading skills. Although these approaches differ in delivery, all nine participants shared the belief that scaffolded instruction is an essential coping mechanism that enables nonreaders to progress through reading tasks with appropriate guidance and increasing independence. This finding is further supported by Fisher and Frey (2020), who emphasized that the gradual release of responsibility—from teacher modeling to guided practice and ultimately independent learning—is fundamental to effective literacy instruction, particularly for beginning and struggling readers.

#### ➤ *Emotional Support*

The theme Emotional Support captures the ways teachers provide encouragement, patience, and motivation to help nonreaders overcome anxiety, fear, and low confidence in reading. It highlights the importance of creating a safe, nurturing, and supportive learning environment where learners feel valued, accepted, and willing to participate despite their difficulties in literacy development. Through consistent emotional reinforcement, teachers help strengthen learners' self-esteem, sustain their engagement, and foster a more positive attitude toward reading. The sub-themes that emerged under this main theme are presented below.

- *Confidence Building.*

The findings under the sub-theme Confidence Building reveal that teachers play a vital role in strengthening nonreaders' self-esteem by providing continuous encouragement, step-by-step guidance, and emotional reassurance throughout reading instruction. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized that learners' confidence develops through sustained teacher support, positive reinforcement, and repeated opportunities for successful reading experiences. Teachers described intentionally celebrating small achievements, offering reassurance during reading tasks, and maintaining a patient and supportive classroom climate to help learners overcome fear and hesitation in reading. These findings align with Fredricks, Hofkens, and Wang (2020), who emphasized that emotional support and teacher encouragement significantly enhance student engagement and academic confidence, particularly among learners experiencing academic difficulties.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals both shared understandings and contextual variations in how confidence building is enacted across school environments. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize structured and systematic confidence-building strategies embedded within guided instruction and formal reading interventions, whereas participants from small schools focused more on individualized emotional support and close teacher–learner relationships to build trust and confidence. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools highlighted patience and consistent motivational support as key factors in gradually strengthening learners' self-belief in reading. Despite these contextual differences, all nine participants consistently agreed that confidence building is essential for reading development among nonreaders. This finding is further supported by Pekrun et al. (2021), who highlighted that positive academic emotions such as confidence and enjoyment significantly influence learners' persistence, engagement, and achievement in foundational skills like reading.

- *Motivation Support.*

The sub-theme Motivation Support reveals that teachers sustain nonreaders' engagement in reading through continuous encouragement, emotional reassurance, and purposeful reinforcement of learners' efforts. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized that motivation is cultivated through patience, persistence, and the deliberate recognition of learners' incremental progress, regardless of how minimal it may appear. Teachers described the importance of maintaining learners' interest in reading by acknowledging small achievements, providing consistent verbal encouragement, and creating a supportive classroom atmosphere that reduces anxiety and promotes persistence. These findings align with Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020), who emphasized that teacher motivational practices, including encouragement and feedback, play a significant role in enhancing learners' persistence, engagement, and academic effort.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further shows both convergence and contextual variation in how motivation support is enacted across school environments. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize structured motivational strategies embedded within guided instruction and organized reading programs, while participants from small schools highlighted more personalized emotional reinforcement and closer teacher–learner relationships to sustain engagement. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools focused on the importance of maintaining their own instructional motivation and resilience by recognizing learner progress as a source of professional fulfillment and sustained commitment. Despite these variations, all nine participants consistently agreed that motivation support is essential in sustaining learners' participation in reading initiatives. This finding is further supported by Lazarides et al. (2021), who found that teacher motivational support significantly predicts students' reading engagement and persistence in challenging learning tasks.

- *Teacher–Learner Relationship.*

The findings under the sub-theme Teacher–Learner Relationship reveal that strong, supportive, and trusting relationships between teachers and nonreaders are essential in fostering learners' emotional readiness, engagement, and persistence in reading activities. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized that patience, empathy, understanding, and continuous encouragement are central to managing learners' reading difficulties and sustaining their participation in literacy interventions. Teachers described how positive relationships help reduce learners' anxiety, build trust, and create a safe learning environment where nonreaders feel valued and willing to participate despite challenges. These findings align with Roorda et al. (2020), who found that positive teacher–student relationships significantly enhance students' engagement, emotional well-being, and academic outcomes, particularly in early literacy development.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals both shared perspectives and contextual variations in how teacher–learner relationships are established and maintained across school environments. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize structured emotional support through consistent guidance, patience, and systematic interaction within formal reading interventions, while participants from small schools highlighted closer personal connections and individualized emotional attention as key to supporting struggling readers. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools focused on relational trust and sustained rapport as essential factors in maintaining learners' motivation and participation over time. Despite these contextual differences, all nine participants consistently agreed that strong teacher–learner relationships are fundamental to both the emotional and academic development of nonreaders. This finding is further supported by Cornelius-White et al. (2021), who emphasized that teacher warmth, empathy, and supportive interaction are strongly associated with increased student motivation and improved reading achievement.

➤ *Professional Collaboration*

The theme Professional Collaboration highlights how teachers engage with colleagues, school leaders, and reading program implementers to collectively address the challenges of teaching nonreaders. It underscores the importance of shared instructional strategies, resource sharing, professional development opportunities, and collaborative problem-solving in strengthening the implementation of reading initiatives. Through sustained collaboration, teachers are able to refine their instructional practices, gain new insights from peers, and access both emotional and professional support that enhances their capacity to respond effectively to diverse learner needs. Overall, the theme reflects that improving literacy outcomes for nonreaders is not solely an individual task but a shared professional responsibility grounded in cooperation and collective action. The sub-themes that emerged under this main theme are presented below.

- *Peer Support.*

The sub-theme Peer Support reveals that teachers cope with the challenges of implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders by relying on collaboration and mutual assistance from colleagues within their schools. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized that sharing strategies, lesson ideas, and emotional encouragement with fellow teachers strengthens their ability to address diverse reading difficulties and sustain effective instruction. Teachers described peer collaboration as both a practical and emotional resource, allowing them to exchange instructional techniques, seek advice on learner difficulties, and maintain motivation in demanding teaching contexts. These findings align with Louws et al. (2020), who found that peer collaboration among teachers enhances professional learning and instructional effectiveness through shared reflection and collegial support.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals both shared understandings and contextual variations in how peer support is experienced and utilized across school environments. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize structured collaboration through formal meetings, shared resources, and organized support systems, while participants from small schools highlighted informal exchanges, close collegial relationships, and spontaneous sharing of instructional strategies as their primary form of support. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools focused on the emotional dimension of peer support, particularly the reassurance gained from knowing they are not alone in addressing reading challenges. Despite these contextual differences, all nine participants consistently agreed that peer support is essential in strengthening both instructional capacity and emotional resilience in reading instruction. This finding is further supported by Opfer and Pedder (2021), who emphasized that teacher learning is significantly shaped by collaborative peer interactions that foster adaptive teaching practices and continuous professional growth.

- *Program Utilization.*

The sub-theme Program Utilization reveals that teachers cope with the challenges of implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders by actively using district-provided materials and aligning their instruction with structured reading programs such as Project Layag. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized that these programs provide essential instructional guides, learning materials, and structured frameworks that support beginning readers and help standardize reading instruction across classrooms. Teachers described program utilization as a practical coping mechanism that reduces instructional uncertainty and ensures continuity in delivering reading interventions for nonreaders. These findings align with Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who emphasized that well-designed instructional programs and teacher learning systems improve literacy outcomes by providing structured guidance, resources,

and sustained professional support.

Triangulation of the participants' narratives further reveals both convergence and contextual variation in how reading programs are utilized across school environments. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize strict adherence to structured implementation and systematic use of program materials to ensure consistency in formal reading instruction, while participants from small schools highlighted program alignment as a strategy to compensate for limited instructional resources and support gaps in learning materials. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools focused on the flexibility of program use, particularly how structured materials can be adapted to encourage creativity and responsiveness in addressing nonreaders' needs. Despite these differences in emphasis, all nine participants consistently agreed that program utilization strengthens instructional effectiveness and promotes consistency in reading instruction. This finding is further supported by Reeves and Hamilton (2021), who found that curriculum-aligned literacy interventions significantly enhance teacher effectiveness and improve learner progress in foundational reading skills.

- *Reflective Practice.*

The theme Reflective Practice reveals that teachers cope with the challenges of implementing reading initiatives for nonreaders by continuously evaluating and adjusting their instructional strategies based on learners' progress and classroom experiences. Across small, medium, and large school contexts, participants consistently emphasized that reflection enables them to improve teaching approaches, become more flexible, and better respond to learners' reading difficulties. The narratives show that reflective practice functions as a continuous cycle of professional learning, where teachers critically examine their instructional decisions and refine their strategies to better support nonreaders' literacy development. These findings align with Farrell (2021), who emphasized that reflective practice enhances teacher professional growth by enabling continuous evaluation and improvement of instructional decisions.

Triangulation of the participants' responses further reveals both shared understandings and contextual variations in how reflective practice is enacted across school environments. Teachers in large schools tended to emphasize structured reflection through formal training sessions, program evaluation, and systematic instructional adjustments, while participants from small schools highlighted personal reflection and immediate, experience-based classroom adaptations as their primary coping mechanism. Meanwhile, teachers from medium schools viewed reflection as a motivational process that sustains their creativity, patience, and commitment to teaching nonreaders. Despite these contextual differences, all nine participants consistently agreed that reflective practice is essential for improving instructional effectiveness and supporting teacher growth.

Finally, this study presents the key insights on Enhancing Literacy Initiatives for Nonreaders. These insights emphasize the importance of integrating adaptive instruction, emotional support, and professional collaboration to develop more effective and inclusive literacy programs. They highlight that improving reading outcomes for nonreaders requires a balanced approach that combines structured instructional design with flexibility, alongside strong emotional and professional support systems for teachers. Overall, these insights aim to strengthen the implementation of reading initiatives and promote meaningful, sustained literacy development among struggling readers. Two actionable insights emerged from the study: (1) Strengthen Structured and Differentiated Reading Interventions and (2) Establish Collaborative and Emotionally Supportive Teaching Systems. The findings further suggest that literacy programs should be both systematic and flexible, providing teachers with guided materials, structured frameworks, and remediation opportunities while still allowing instructional adaptation based on learners' diverse needs. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of institutionalizing professional collaboration, peer support, and emotional reinforcement to sustain teacher effectiveness and learner engagement. Taken together, these insights point to the need for a holistic literacy approach that integrates instructional quality, emotional responsiveness, and collaborative professional practice to effectively address the needs of nonreaders.

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