

Lived Experiences of Teachers in Handling Learners' Reading Comprehension Difficulties

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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension issues refer to difficulties in understanding, interpreting, and making meaning from written text, which can negatively affect learners' overall academic performance and learning progress. This study explored the lived experiences of teachers in addressing reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies among Grade 5 and Grade 6 learners in selected elementary schools in the Misamis Occidental Division, Philippines. The study employed an existential-phenomenological research design. Participants were 10 teachers who were purposively selected. Data was gathered through semi-structured interview guide. Findings revealed five major themes: managing emotional, psychological, and physical demands; creating supportive environments in challenging learning environments; balancing time constraints and instructional demands; building collaborative and supportive relationships; and utilizing adaptive instructional resources and strategies. The findings highlighted teachers' resilience, adaptability, collaboration, and commitment in addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties despite instructional challenges, limited resources, workload pressures, and diverse learner needs. The study recommends that school administrators, teachers, and education stakeholders strengthen instructional support systems, and resource provision to help teachers effectively address learners' reading comprehension difficulties.

Keywords: Adaptive Teaching, Instructional Strategies, Lived Experiences, Reading Comprehension, Struggling Readers, Teacher Resilience

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Reading comprehension is a foundational skill essential for learners' academic success, lifelong learning, and active participation in society. It enables learners to understand, interpret, and construct meaning from written texts through cognitive processes such as decoding, vocabulary development, inferencing, and critical thinking (Elston et al., 2022; Niculescu & Dragomir, 2023; Vaughn et al., 2024). Through effective reading comprehension, learners are able to acquire, organize, and apply knowledge across learning areas (Al Roomy, 2022; Sutiono et al., 2022). Strong comprehension skills therefore support independent learning and academic achievement, making reading comprehension a core competency in formal education (Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025; Dinoro et al., 2023; Madrid et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, many learners continue to experience significant difficulties in reading comprehension. These difficulties occur when learners are able to decode words but struggle to construct meaning from written texts (Hezam et al., 2022; Idulog et al., 2023; Septia et al., 2022). Common manifestations include difficulty identifying main ideas, limited vocabulary knowledge, weak inferencing skills, and challenges in connecting ideas within and across texts (Gedik & Akyol, 2022; Hezam et al., 2022; Vaughn et al., 2024). When unaddressed, these challenges negatively affect learners' academic performance, motivation, and engagement, often resulting in long-term learning gaps and disengagement from reading activities (Ligpitan et al., 2025; Madrid et al., 2025; Ocampo et al., 2024).

In the Philippine context, reading comprehension difficulties remain a persistent educational concern. Many learners struggle in multilingual environments where English or Filipino is not their first language, contributing

to ongoing functional literacy challenges (Manuel et al., 2025; Po et al., 2025; Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025). Recent assessments indicate that only about 50–60% of Grade 3 learners reach expected reading proficiency levels, while local studies report that approximately 35–45% of learners are either non-readers or struggling comprehenders (Madrid et al., 2025; Ligpitan et al., 2025; Dinoro et al., 2023). Contributing factors include limited exposure to reading materials, large class sizes, inadequate learning resources, low language proficiency, and socioeconomic constraints (Gedik & Akyol, 2022; Hezam et al., 2022; Vaughn et al., 2024).

In response, the Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented various policies and programs aimed at strengthening literacy outcomes. These include DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2022, which promotes accelerated literacy development through early-grade interventions and teacher capacity building, and the Reading Program Framework, which supports mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) from Kindergarten to Grade 3 (DepEd, 2022, 2023). Initiatives such as Every Child a Reader and the assignment of School Reading Coordinators further aim to systematically identify learners with reading difficulties and provide targeted interventions (Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025; Po et al., 2025; Ocampo et al., 2024).

Teachers play a central role in addressing reading comprehension difficulties, not only as instructors but also as assessors, intervention facilitators, emotional supporters, and learning environment managers. They are responsible for diagnosing learners' reading levels, designing remediation activities, and providing encouragement to learners who experience frustration and low confidence in reading (Hezam et al., 2022; Idulog et al., 2023; Septia et al., 2022). In many classrooms, teachers also manage emotional and behavioral barriers to learning while working within constrained environments such as large class sizes, limited instructional materials, and diverse learner needs. Recent school-based assessments indicate that approximately 30–45% of learners require targeted intervention to achieve grade-level reading comprehension, particularly in fluency, vocabulary, and inferencing skills (Ligpitan et al., 2025; Madrid et al., 2025; Ocampo et al., 2024). These realities highlight the complex, multidimensional role of teachers in reading instruction beyond mere content delivery.

Existing studies consistently show that reading comprehension difficulties often originate in the early grades and, if not addressed, may persist and negatively affect later academic achievement and motivation (Hezam et al., 2022; Ocampo et al., 2024; Ligpitan et al., 2025). However, most available literature is quantitative in nature and primarily focuses on learner performance outcomes rather than the instructional realities faced by teachers (Po et al., 2025; Ocampo et al., 2024; Ligpitan et al., 2025). As a result, there is limited understanding of how teachers experience, interpret, and respond to reading comprehension challenges within actual classroom contexts.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of teachers in handling reading comprehension difficulties among learners. Specifically, it seeks to generate insights into how teachers design and implement instructional strategies, manage emotional and environmental challenges in reading instruction, and adapt to contextual constraints in resource-limited settings. The study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of effective classroom practices, teacher resilience, and adaptive strategies that support struggling readers.

The findings of this study are expected to benefit several key stakeholders. For teachers, the study may provide practical insights into effective instructional strategies, classroom management approaches, and emotional coping mechanisms when teaching struggling readers. For school administrators, including principals and school heads, the findings may serve as a basis for strengthening instructional supervision, improving resource allocation, and designing targeted teacher development programs in reading instruction. For policymakers—particularly officials from the Department of Education (DepEd), including curriculum planners, division supervisors, and program implementers the study may inform the enhancement of literacy programs, intervention frameworks, and policy decisions aimed at addressing persistent reading gaps. Ultimately, by strengthening teachers' capacity to address reading comprehension difficulties, the study contributes to improved learner literacy outcomes, increased academic performance, and more meaningful engagement in learning.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the Transactional Theory of Reading by Rosenblatt (1978) and the Constructivist Learning Theory by Piaget (1952).

Transactional Theory of Reading, proposed by Louise Rosenblatt (1978), conceptualizes reading as an active and dynamic process in which meaning is constructed through the interaction between the reader and the text. From a phenomenological perspective, this theory aligns with the present study as it emphasizes how meaning is shaped by the reader's lived experiences, emotions, prior knowledge, and engagement with the text, rather than being fixed within the text itself (Rosenblatt, 1978). In this sense, reading comprehension is understood as a subjective and experience-based process, consistent with the study's focus on teachers' lived experiences in addressing learners' reading difficulties. The theory identifies two reading stances: the efferent stance, which focuses on extracting information, and the aesthetic stance, which involves personal and experiential engagement with the text. These stances reflect how individual experiences shape comprehension, as supported by studies showing that learner-centered and culturally responsive strategies enhance engagement and understanding (Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025; Laroya & Baga, 2025). Thus, the theory provides a lens for understanding how meaning-making in reading is experienced differently by learners depending on context, background, and purpose (Laroya & Baga, 2025).

Within the context of this phenomenological study, the Transactional Theory of Reading helps explain how teachers experience and interpret reading comprehension difficulties in real classroom situations. Learners' struggles may be understood as outcomes of limited experiential engagement with texts, low personal connection, or insufficient scaffolding that supports meaningful interaction with reading materials. These conditions highlight how comprehension difficulties are not only cognitive but also experiential in nature, shaped by the quality of interaction between learners and texts within the classroom environment. In this regard, teachers play a critical role in facilitating the reading transaction by creating opportunities for learners to connect texts with their lived experiences, guided discussions, and contextualized instruction (De Ocampo et al., 2024; Laroya & Baga, 2025). This theoretical perspective aligns with the phenomenological emphasis on understanding how teachers experience and respond to these challenges in authentic instructional contexts.

Related studies grounded in the Transactional Theory of Reading further emphasize the importance of experiential and interactive reading practices. Findings show that learners demonstrate improved comprehension when they are given opportunities to respond personally to texts, engage in dialogue, and participate in guided reading strategies such as reciprocal teaching and metacognitive instruction (Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025; De Ocampo et al., 2024). These strategies reflect the lived classroom experiences of both teachers and learners as they co-construct meaning during reading activities. In the Philippine context, research highlights that contextualized and culturally relevant materials strengthen learner engagement and understanding, reinforcing the experiential nature of reading comprehension (Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025; Laroya & Baga, 2025). However, while these studies demonstrate effectiveness, they often fail to capture the lived experiences of teachers as they implement such strategies in actual classroom environments, which this study seeks to address.

Constructivist Learning Theory, proposed by Jean Piaget (1952), posits that learning is an active process in which individuals construct knowledge through interaction with their environment and through the integration of new experiences with prior cognitive structures. In relation to phenomenological inquiry, this theory highlights how learners and teachers make meaning through lived educational experiences, rather than through passive reception of information. Knowledge construction occurs through processes of assimilation and accommodation, where individuals continuously reinterpret experiences in light of existing understanding. This perspective aligns with the present study as it frames reading comprehension as an experiential and evolving process shaped by learners' engagement with texts and teachers' instructional practices (Sumalinab & Cancio, 2025).

From a phenomenological standpoint, Constructivist Learning Theory provides a foundation for understanding how teachers experience and respond to reading comprehension difficulties in the classroom. Teachers' lived experiences reveal that learners often struggle when they are not actively engaged in meaning-making processes or when opportunities for reflection, discussion, and connection to prior knowledge are limited. These experiences underscore the importance of learner-centered instruction, where teachers act as facilitators who guide learners in constructing meaning rather than merely transmitting information (Sumalinab & Cancio, 2025; De Ocampo et al., 2024). In this way, the theory helps interpret how teachers experience the challenges of implementing constructivist strategies in real classroom contexts, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

Related studies grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory emphasize that learners achieve deeper comprehension when they actively participate in discussions, collaborative tasks, and problem-based reading activities (Sumalinab & Cancio, 2025). These findings reflect the lived experiences of classroom instruction where meaning is co-constructed through interaction between teachers, learners, and learning materials. In the Philippine context, research indicates that contextualized and interactive reading strategies improve engagement and comprehension, reinforcing the importance of experiential learning approaches (Lagdaan & Sevilla, 2025; De Ocampo et al., 2024). However, similar to the transactional perspective, existing studies largely focus on learning outcomes rather than the lived experiences of teachers as they implement constructivist approaches, highlighting a gap that this phenomenological study seeks to address.

Together, the Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) provide a complementary theoretical foundation for this phenomenological study by emphasizing reading comprehension as an experiential, meaning-making process. Both theories align with the view that understanding emerges through interaction, engagement, and interpretation of lived experiences within educational contexts. Empirical studies support the effectiveness of interactive and learner-centered strategies in improving comprehension (systematic review of reading comprehension strategies; constructivist pedagogy research; teachers' practice studies), yet they often overlook the subjective experiences of teachers implementing these approaches. By integrating these theories, the study highlights the importance of scaffolding, contextualization, and experiential engagement in reading instruction while situating teachers' lived experiences at the center of understanding how reading comprehension difficulties are addressed in real classroom settings (De Ocampo et al., 2024; Laroya & Baga, 2025).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study comprises five emerging themes: managing emotional, psychological, and physical demands; creating supportive environments within challenging learning environments; balancing time constraints and instructional demands; building collaborative and supportive relationships; and utilizing adaptive instructional resources and strategies.

Managing Emotional, Psychological, and Physical Demands. Managing emotional, psychological, and physical demands is a critical aspect of teachers' experiences when working with learners with reading comprehension difficulties. Teachers often encounter emotional fluctuations such as concern, pressure, anxiety, and fulfillment while supporting struggling readers. Psychologically, they are required to engage in critical thinking, reflection, and instructional decision-making, while physically investing additional time and effort in lesson preparation, remediation, and learner support. Despite these demands, teachers demonstrate resilience by sustaining motivation and commitment to learner development. These findings highlight the complex nature of teaching work, where emotional labor and instructional responsibility intersect in daily practice (Gu & Day, 2024; Mansfield et al., 2023).

Related studies emphasize that teacher resilience is essential in managing emotional exhaustion and sustaining instructional effectiveness in challenging environments. Research shows that teachers who effectively regulate emotions and maintain professional purpose are better able to cope with workload pressures and classroom demands (Braun et al., 2023). The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) supports this theme by emphasizing that reading comprehension is shaped by the reader's emotional and cognitive engagement, reflecting the parallel influence of teacher emotions in instructional interactions. Additionally, Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) highlights that learning involves active cognitive processing and adaptation, reinforcing the psychological demands placed on teachers in facilitating meaningful comprehension.

Creating Supportive Learning Environments in Challenging Learning Contexts. Creating supportive learning environments in challenging contexts is essential for fostering learner engagement and improving reading comprehension. Teachers strive to establish safe, inclusive, and encouraging classrooms despite limited resources, large class sizes, and diverse learner needs. They promote positive relationships, emotional safety, and motivation, which help learners persist in reading tasks even when difficulties arise. Such environments enable students to feel valued and supported, increasing their willingness to participate in literacy activities.

These practices demonstrate the importance of teacher efforts in maintaining a nurturing learning climate under challenging conditions (Gillies, 2023; Johnson & Johnson, 2024).

Research indicates that supportive classroom environments significantly enhance student motivation, engagement, and academic achievement. Studies show that emotional safety and positive teacher–student relationships are strongly associated with improved reading comprehension outcomes and reduced learning anxiety (Hattie, 2023). The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) supports this finding by emphasizing that meaning-making is influenced by the reader’s interaction with text and context, including emotional support. Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) further reinforces that learners construct knowledge more effectively in environments that encourage interaction, exploration, and meaningful engagement.

Balancing Time Constraints and Instructional Demands. Balancing time constraints and instructional demands is a persistent challenge for teachers in delivering effective reading instruction. Teachers are required to cover curriculum objectives while simultaneously addressing learners’ varying reading abilities. This necessitates careful time management, prioritization of essential literacy skills, and the integration of remedial and differentiated instruction within limited classroom hours. Teachers also extend instructional time beyond regular schedules to prepare materials and design interventions, reflecting the heavy workload associated with reading instruction. These demands highlight the complexity of managing effective literacy teaching in constrained environments (Duke & Cartwright, 2024; Gibbs & Simpson, 2024).

Studies show that effective time management and structured instructional planning are key factors in improving literacy outcomes. Research emphasizes that differentiated instruction and guided reading strategies help teachers maximize instructional time while addressing diverse learner needs (Tomlinson, 2023; Fisher & Frey, 2024). Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) supports this theme by emphasizing active learning processes that require sufficient time for exploration and meaning-making. Similarly, the Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) underscores that comprehension develops through a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, requiring intentional instructional time and engagement.

Building Collaborative and Supportive Relationships. Building collaborative and supportive relationships is vital in addressing reading comprehension difficulties among learners. Teachers collaborate with colleagues, administrators, parents, and students to share strategies, monitor progress, and provide targeted interventions. These collaborative relationships promote shared responsibility for learning and enhance instructional effectiveness. Positive teacher–student relationships also foster trust, motivation, and engagement, enabling learners to actively participate in reading activities and persist through difficulties. Such collaboration strengthens both teaching practices and learner outcomes in literacy development (Epstein et al., 2024; Vescio et al., 2023).

Related literature highlights that collaboration among educators and stakeholders improves instructional quality and learner achievement. Studies show that professional collaboration supports effective strategy sharing and strengthens intervention planning for struggling readers (Hattie, 2023). Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and shared experiences, reinforcing the importance of collaborative learning environments. The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) also supports this theme by recognizing that meaning-making is influenced by interaction and shared interpretation of texts.

Utilizing Adaptive Instructional Resources and Strategies. Utilizing adaptive instructional resources and strategies is essential in supporting learners with reading comprehension difficulties. Teachers use a variety of instructional tools, such as printed materials, visual aids, digital resources, and scaffolding techniques, to address diverse learners’ needs. They also adapt instructional strategies based on student performance through differentiated instruction, remediation, and interactive reading activities. These adaptive approaches ensure that learners remain engaged and supported despite differences in reading ability and learning pace. This demonstrates the importance of flexibility and responsiveness in literacy instruction (Meyer et al., 2024; Tomlinson, 2023).

Research indicates that adaptive instructional practices significantly improve reading comprehension outcomes by addressing individual differences among learners. Studies show that multimodal resources, scaffolding strategies, and continuous assessment enhance learner engagement and understanding, especially among struggling readers (CAST, 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2024). Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) supports this theme by emphasizing that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with learning materials. The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) further reinforces that comprehension develops through meaningful interaction between the reader and the text, highlighting the importance of adaptive instructional approaches.

Figure 1 presents the schematic diagram of the study.

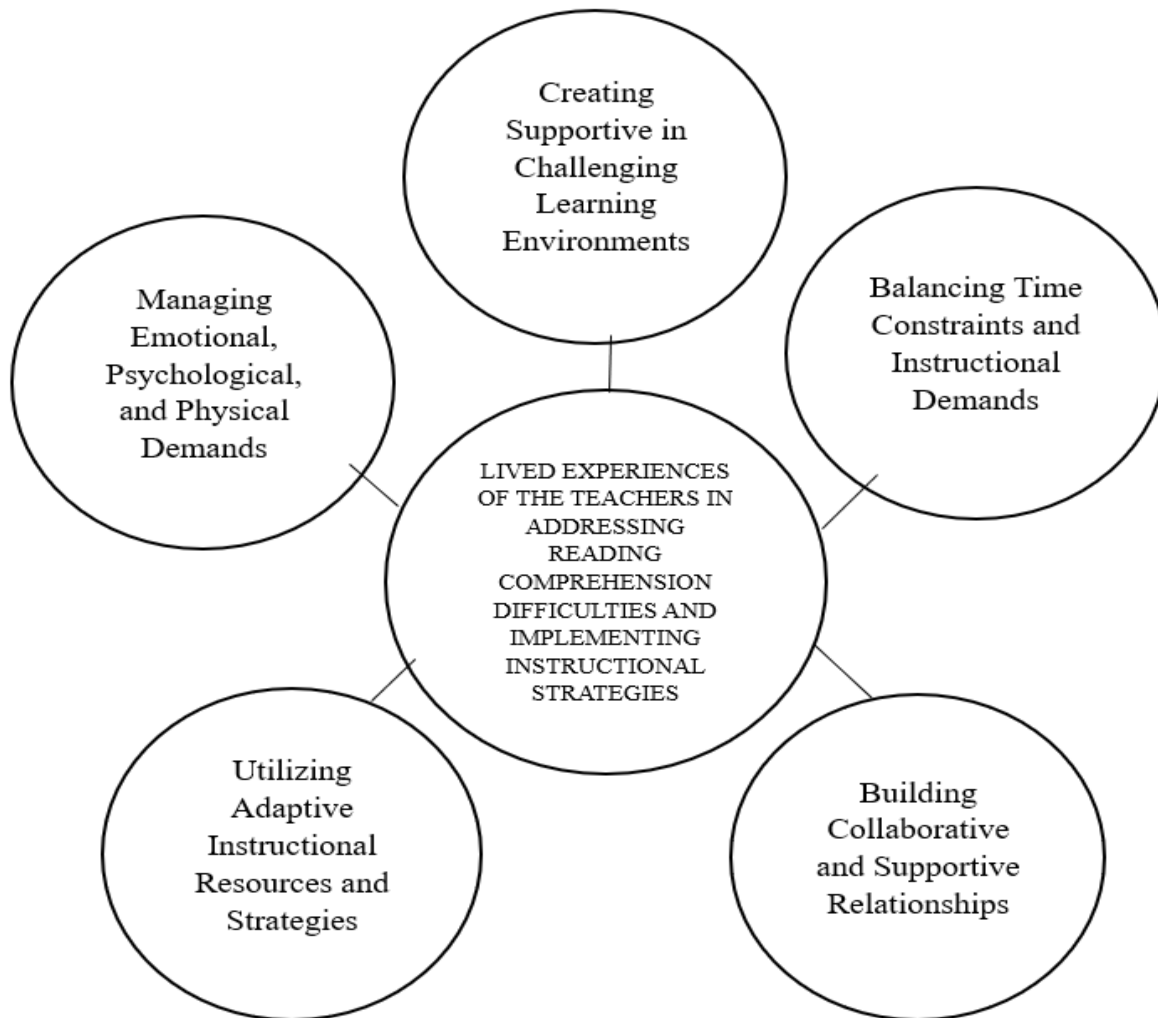


Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The study explored the lived experiences of the teachers in addressing reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies.

Specifically, the study answered the following research questions:

1. How do teachers describe their emotional, psychological, and physical experiences while addressing students' reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies? (*Lived Body*)
2. How do teachers experience and perceive their classroom and school environments as they address reading comprehension difficulties among learners? (*Lived Space*)
3. How do teachers experience the passage of time, changes in routines, and instructional demands while implementing strategies to improve students' reading comprehension? (*Lived Time*)

4. How do teachers experience their relationships and interactions with students, colleagues, school administrators, and parents while addressing reading comprehension difficulties? (*Lived Relation*)
5. How do teachers experience and utilize instructional materials, reading resources, and teaching tools in addressing reading comprehension difficulties and supporting learners' progress? (*Lived Thing*)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

The study employed a qualitative existential-phenomenological research design to explore teachers' lived experiences in addressing reading comprehension difficulties among learners and in implementing instructional strategies in the classroom. Grounded in Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological tradition and informed by existential philosophy, the design sought to understand how teachers make meaning of their experiences within real instructional contexts. This approach is appropriate for capturing the essence of lived experience, particularly how teachers perceive, interpret, and respond to cognitive, emotional, and environmental challenges in teaching reading comprehension.

Through in-depth exploration of participants' narratives, the study generated rich descriptions of classroom realities, including instructional decision-making, coping strategies, learner engagement practices, and professional reflections. The analysis followed Moustakas' phenomenological method, including Epoche, Horizontalization, Thematic Clustering, Textural Description, Structural Description, and Textural-Structural Synthesis, to uncover the essence of teachers' experiences. This design provided a holistic understanding of how teachers navigate reading instruction and how these experiences shape their professional identity and instructional practice.

Setting

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools within one district of the Misamis Occidental Division, Philippines. The focus was specifically on Grades 5 and 6 classrooms where reading comprehension difficulties are commonly observed and addressed. These schools were selected to provide a realistic and information-rich context for examining teachers' lived experiences in reading instruction.

The selected schools varied in terms of class size, availability of instructional materials, and literacy support systems. Some schools had reading coordinators and structured literacy programs, while others operated with limited resources such as insufficient reading materials and minimal intervention support. This district-based setting allowed the study to capture the diversity of instructional environments and how such contexts influence teachers' strategies, challenges, and experiences in addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties.

Participants

The study involved ten (10) elementary teachers from Grades 5 and 6 within selected schools in one district of the Misamis Occidental Division. The participants consisted of four (4) male teachers and six (6) female teachers, all of whom were actively engaged in teaching reading and addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. Inclusion criteria included: (1) currently teaching Grade 5 or Grade 6 learners; (2) directly involved in addressing reading comprehension difficulties; (3) with at least six (6) months of teaching experience in reading instruction or intervention; and (4) willing to participate in an in-depth interview. These criteria ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to classroom reading challenges and were able to provide rich, meaningful descriptions of their lived experiences, instructional practices, and coping strategies in addressing reading difficulties.

Instrument

A semi-structured interview protocol was used to gather data on teachers' lived experiences in addressing reading comprehension difficulties. The interview began with demographic questions such as age, sex, teaching position, grade level handled, and years of teaching experience.

The main questions focused on teachers' experiences in identifying reading comprehension difficulties, instructional strategies used, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms, and support systems available within the school. Follow-up questions were used to probe deeper into emotional experiences, classroom decision-making, and professional reflections related to reading instruction.

The interview protocol was designed to elicit rich, detailed narratives aligned with the study's phenomenological objectives, ensuring consistency in capturing both experiential and contextual dimensions of teaching reading comprehension.

Data-Gathering Procedure

The data-gathering process began with the researcher seeking approval from the Dean of the Graduate School and the Schools Division Superintendent of Misamis Occidental. Upon approval, formal communication was sent to the selected school heads to request permission to conduct the study.

After securing permissions, participants who met the inclusion criteria were identified and invited to participate voluntarily. The purpose of the study, procedures, and ethical considerations were clearly explained to them. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any stage.

In-depth interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the participants to avoid disruption of teaching duties. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and supplemented with field notes. Data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researcher. All identifying information was removed and replaced with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. The entire process complied with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012) and was subject to institutional ethical approval.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical research principles to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from the appropriate academic and institutional review bodies prior to data collection.

Participants were provided with an informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and voluntary nature of participation. They were assured that refusal or withdrawal would not result in any penalty or negative consequences.

Confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the study. All data were anonymized using pseudonyms, and identifying information was securely stored in password-protected devices. Interviews were scheduled based on participants' availability to minimize disruption to their work.

In accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), all personal data were handled with strict confidentiality and used solely for research purposes. These measures ensured respect for participants' privacy, comfort, and professional integrity throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Moustakas' (1994) existential-phenomenological analysis procedure to uncover the essence of teachers' lived experiences in addressing reading comprehension difficulties. The process followed six systematic stages: Epoche, Horizontalization, Thematic Clustering, Textural Description, Structural Description, and Textural-Structural Synthesis.

Epoche (Bracketing): The researcher set aside personal assumptions and biases regarding reading instruction to focus purely on participants' lived experiences.

Horizontalization: Significant statements from interview transcripts were identified and treated with equal value to capture all relevant meanings related to teachers' experiences.

Thematic Clustering: Similar statements were grouped into themes reflecting teachers' experiences, such as instructional strategies, emotional challenges, classroom management, learner difficulties, and professional resilience.

Textural Description: The researcher described what teachers experienced, focusing on their actual classroom practices, emotional responses, and instructional actions in addressing reading difficulties.

Structural Description: The researcher examined how teachers experienced these phenomena by analyzing contextual factors such as classroom environment, learner characteristics, school resources, and institutional support.

Textural-Structural Synthesis: The final stage integrated both what teachers experienced and how they experienced it, resulting in a composite description of the essence of their lived experiences.

This analytic process ensured a rigorous phenomenological interpretation of data, allowing the study to fully capture the complexity, meaning, and essence of teachers' experiences in addressing reading comprehension difficulties.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The participants in the study represent a diverse group of elementary teachers in terms of age, teaching experience, year of graduation, and grade level assignment, providing a broad perspective on the lived experiences of addressing reading comprehension difficulties. Their ages range from 23 to 58 years, with teaching experience ranging from less than 1 year to 34 years, reflecting both novice and highly experienced educators. Participants such as P7 (58 years old, 34 years in teaching) and P8 (45 years old, 23 years in teaching) are veteran teachers with extensive classroom experience, while P5 and P9 are beginning teachers with limited experience in the profession. Most participants graduated between 1986 and 2024, indicating generational differences in teacher preparation and instructional exposure. They are assigned across Grade 4, Grade 5, and Grade 6, with the majority teaching in Grades 5 and 6 where reading comprehension demands are more intensive. This variation in demographic and professional background enriches the study by capturing a wide range of perspectives on instructional strategies, classroom challenges, and adaptive practices in teaching reading comprehension.

The study is organized around five key themes: Managing Emotional, Psychological, and Physical Demands; Creating Supportive in Challenging Learning Environments; Balancing Time Constraints and Instructional Demands; Building Collaborative and Supportive Relationships; and Utilizing Adaptive Instructional Resources and Strategies, which collectively capture the lived experiences of teachers in addressing reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies.

Managing Emotional, Psychological, and Physical Demands

This theme encapsulates the lived experiences of teachers as they confront the emotional pressures, psychological challenges, and physical demands of addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties. Despite feelings of frustration, exhaustion, anxiety, and pressure, teachers remained committed to supporting struggling readers through patience, resilience, reflection, and adaptability. Their experiences also revealed that learner improvement became a major source of fulfillment, motivation, and professional growth.

Teachers described feelings of concern, frustration, overwhelm, anxiety, and pressure while helping learners with reading comprehension difficulties. These emotional struggles were often associated with slow progress among learners, classroom realities, and increasing instructional expectations. Participant 1 noted that they sometimes feel challenged and concerned when students show little progress despite interventions, while Participant 2 reported feeling pressured by higher expectations in Grade 6. Participant 3 described teaching struggling readers as challenging and tiring, reflecting the emotional strain of the task. Participant 5 shared feelings of overwhelm as they continue adjusting to classroom realities, and Participant 9 reported anxiety and

frustration when learner progress remains slow despite sustained efforts. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Emotionally, I sometimes feel challenged and concerned, especially when students show little progress despite interventions.” (Participant 1)

“I sometimes feel pressured due to higher expectations in Grade 6.” (Participant 2)

“Teaching struggling readers can be challenging and tiring.” (Participant 3)

“Emotionally, I sometimes feel overwhelmed because I am still adjusting to classroom realities.” (Participant 5)

“Emotionally, I often feel anxious and sometimes frustrated because I want my students to improve, but progress is slow.” (Participant 9)

Despite the challenges, teachers experienced happiness, fulfillment, and renewed motivation whenever they observed learners’ improvement, even though little progress and achievements. Participant 1 noted feeling fulfilled and motivated when they see improvements, even if progress is gradual, while Participant 4 expressed happiness when learners show improvement. Participant 6 shared that student progress motivates them to continue teaching effectively, and Participant 7 emphasized a deep sense of fulfillment when students improve. Meanwhile, Participant 9 highlighted that despite difficulties, they remain hopeful and motivated to enhance their teaching practices. Collectively, these responses show that even in the presence of instructional and emotional challenges, teachers are sustained by positive learner outcomes, which reinforce their commitment and dedication to supporting reading comprehension development. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“I also feel fulfilled and motivated when I see improvements, even small ones.” (Participant 1)

“I feel happy when I see improvement.” (Participant 4)

“Seeing student progress keeps me motivated.” (Participant 6)

“Emotionally, I feel deeply fulfilled when I see students improve.” (Participant 7)

“Despite this, I remain hopeful and motivated to improve my teaching.” (Participant 9)

Despite the challenges, teachers experienced happiness, fulfillment, and renewed motivation whenever they observed learners’ improvement, even in small steps and achievements. Participant 1 noted feeling fulfilled and motivated when they see improvements, even if progress is gradual, while Participant 4 expressed happiness when learners show improvement. Meanwhile, Participant 9 highlighted that despite difficulties, they remain hopeful and motivated to enhance their teaching practices. Collectively, these responses show that even in the presence of instructional and emotional challenges, teachers are sustained by positive learner outcomes, which reinforce their commitment and dedication to supporting reading comprehension development. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Psychologically, it requires patience, focus, and constant reflection on my teaching practices.” (Participant 1)

“It requires patience, critical thinking, and extra effort in planning lessons and interventions.” (Participant 2)

“Psychologically, I feel challenged but motivated to improve my teaching.” (Participant 5)

“Psychologically, I feel more confident now compared to when I was a beginning teacher.” (Participant 10)

Teachers experienced physical fatigue from preparing instructional materials, conducting remediation, managing large classes, and monitoring learners’ progress. However, they gradually learned to manage these

responsibilities through organization and experience. Participant 1 noted that it can be tiring, as they often prepare additional materials and spend extra time assisting struggling learners, while Participant 3 emphasized the extra effort required to prepare materials and provide support. Participant 8 pointed out that classroom responsibilities and mentoring duties make the work physically demanding, while Participant 10 emphasized that preparing materials and monitoring learners can be exhausting. Collectively, these responses illustrate that although teachers experience significant physical fatigue, they develop coping strategies over time that help them manage their workload and sustain instructional support for learners. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Physically, it can be tiring since I often prepare additional materials and spend extra time assisting struggling learners.” (Participant 1)

“It requires extra effort in preparing materials and giving support.” (Participant 3)

“Physically, it can be demanding due to classroom responsibilities and mentoring duties.” (Participant 8)

“Preparing materials and monitoring learners can be exhausting.” (Participant 10)

Managing Emotional, Psychological, and Physical Demands reflects the lived realities of teachers as they navigate the complex challenges of supporting learners with reading comprehension difficulties. The findings show that teachers frequently experience emotional strain, such as concern, frustration, anxiety, pressure, and overwhelm, due to slow learner progress, increasing instructional expectations, and demanding classroom conditions. At the same time, they demonstrate psychological endurance through patience, reflection, critical thinking, and continuous instructional adjustment to address learners' needs. Physically, teachers report fatigue from preparing instructional materials, conducting remediation, managing large classes, and monitoring learner progress, all of which further intensify their workload. Despite these difficulties, teachers consistently express fulfillment, motivation, and renewed commitment when learners show improvement, even in small gains, highlighting how positive learner outcomes serve as a strong source of professional encouragement and resilience (Gu & Day, 2024; Mansfield et al., 2023; Braun et al., 2023).

Related studies support these findings by emphasizing that teachers working in demanding instructional environments often experience emotional exhaustion and workload pressure, yet sustain their effectiveness through resilience, coping strategies, and professional commitment. Research indicates that teacher resilience is strengthened through reflective practice, emotional regulation, and a strong sense of purpose in teaching, particularly in challenging classroom contexts (Gu & Day, 2024; Mansfield et al., 2023). Furthermore, studies highlight that physical workload and emotional demands are interconnected, contributing to teacher stress, especially in contexts with large class sizes and limited instructional support (Braun et al., 2023). However, positive learner outcomes and meaningful teacher–student interactions help mitigate burnout and reinforce instructional motivation, aligning with findings that teachers derive fulfillment from student progress and achievement.

This theme is also strongly supported by the Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952). Rosenblatt's theory explains that meaning in reading emerges from the interaction between the reader and the text, shaped by emotion, experience, and engagement, which parallels how teachers' emotional states influence instructional responsiveness and learner support. Constructivist theory emphasizes that learning is an active process in which both teachers and learners engage in meaning-making through reflection, adaptation, and cognitive effort, thereby reinforcing the psychological demands placed on teachers as facilitators of learning. Together, these theories highlight that effective reading instruction requires both emotional engagement and cognitive effort, validating the emotional, psychological, and physical dimensions of teachers' experiences in supporting struggling readers (Rosenblatt, 1978; Piaget, 1952).

The implications of this theme suggest that educational institutions should prioritize strengthening teacher support systems to address emotional, psychological, and physical demands in the classroom. Providing structured professional development on stress management, reflective practice, and instructional adaptation can

help teachers better cope with emotional and cognitive challenges. Reducing workload pressures through improved resource allocation, manageable class sizes, and administrative support can also lessen physical fatigue and instructional strain. Additionally, fostering a school culture that recognizes teacher efforts and celebrates learner progress can enhance motivation and resilience. Ultimately, supporting teachers holistically is essential to sustaining effective reading instruction and improving learners' comprehension outcomes.

Creating Supportive Environments in Challenging Learning Environments

This theme reflects how teachers experienced their classrooms and school environments as both supportive and challenging spaces while addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties. Teachers consistently described their classrooms as inclusive, safe, responsive, and learner-centered environments that foster reading development and encourage learner participation. However, they also encountered persistent challenges such as limited instructional resources, large class sizes, varying learner abilities, and increasing curriculum demands. Despite these constraints, teachers demonstrated adaptability, collaboration, and commitment to sustain meaningful learning experiences. Overall, the findings highlight how supportive relationships and instructional flexibility enabled teachers to continue delivering effective reading instruction despite environmental limitations.

Teachers described their classrooms as supportive, inclusive, and learner-centered spaces that promote reading engagement and confidence. Participant 3 noted that they maintain a supportive and inclusive classroom, while Participant 7 highlighted a structured yet caring environment that promotes growth and discipline. Participant 8 viewed the classroom as responsive to learners' needs, while Participant 10 emphasized efforts to create an inclusive and supportive environment for struggling readers. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I maintain a supportive and inclusive classroom." (Participant 3)

"I view my classroom as a place of growth and discipline where learners are guided with care." (Participant 7)

"I see the classroom as a responsive learning environment where instruction is guided by learners' needs." (Participant 8)

"I have learned to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for struggling readers." (Participant 10)

Despite these positive efforts, teachers also experienced significant challenges in implementing reading instruction due to limited resources, large class sizes, and diverse learner needs. Participant 1 noted that limited resources can sometimes be a challenge, while Participant 2 highlighted both limited resources and large class sizes as persistent difficulties. Participant 7 also identified large classes and limited materials as continuing issues, while Participant 9 explained that varying reading levels among learners make it difficult to address all needs simultaneously. Participant 10 similarly acknowledged continuing resource limitations. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"Limited resources can sometimes be a challenge." (Participant 1)

"Limited resources and large class sizes can be challenging." (Participant 2)

"Large classes and limited materials remain." (Participant 7)

"Many students come from different reading levels, so it is difficult to meet all their needs at once." (Participant 9)

"There are still limitations in resources." (Participant 10)

In response to these challenges, teachers adjusted their instructional practices by integrating reading activities into daily lessons and maximizing available instructional time. Participant 1 incorporated dedicated reading time and remediation sessions, while Participant 2 integrated comprehension skills across subjects to maximize

instruction. Participant 3 and Participant 4 both incorporated reading into daily routines and activities, while Participant 5 emphasized embedding reading activities into lessons to optimize time while Participant 10 embedded reading comprehension across subjects and routines. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I have adjusted my routines to include dedicated reading time and remediation sessions." (Participant 1)

"I adjust by integrating comprehension skills across subjects and maximizing instructional time." (Participant 2)

"I integrate reading activities into daily routines." (Participant 3)

"I integrate reading into other activities." (Participant 4)

"I try to integrate reading activities into daily lessons to maximize time." (Participant 5)

"I prioritize tasks and integrate reading strategies across lessons and grade levels." (Participant 8)

"I have learned to integrate reading comprehension across subjects and make it part of daily routines." (Participant 10)

Teachers also emphasized the importance of collaboration and professional relationships in addressing reading comprehension difficulties. Participant 1 noted that collaboration with colleagues helps share strategies and solutions, while Participant 5 described the school environment as supportive through guidance from experienced teachers. Participant 6 shared that collaboration improves teaching strategies, Participant 7 emphasized teamwork in addressing challenges, and Participant 8 highlighted a strong culture of shared responsibility for student learning. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"Collaboration with colleagues helps in sharing strategies and solutions." (Participant 1)

"The school environment is supportive, especially with experienced teachers guiding me." (Participant 5)

"Collaboration with colleagues helps me improve my strategies." (Participant 6)

"Teamwork among teachers helps address them." (Participant 7)

"There is a stronger culture of shared responsibility for student learning." (Participant 8)

Creating supportive environments in challenging learning contexts reflects the lived realities of teachers as they strive to balance inclusivity, instructional effectiveness, and environmental constraints. The findings reveal that teachers actively construct supportive, learner-centered classrooms despite resource limitations, large class sizes, and diverse learner needs. They consistently adapt instructional strategies by integrating reading activities into daily routines, maximizing instructional time, and adjusting teaching approaches to meet learner demands. Collaboration with colleagues and school support systems further strengthens their capacity to sustain effective reading instruction. Overall, the findings highlight that supportive environments are not defined by resources alone but are largely shaped by teacher commitment, adaptability, and collaborative practices.

Related studies emphasize that supportive and collaborative learning environments significantly enhance learner engagement, motivation, and academic achievement, particularly in literacy development contexts (Johnson & Johnson, 2024; Gillies, 2023). Research also shows that positive classroom climates and teacher collaboration improve instructional effectiveness and help mitigate the negative effects of resource limitations (Vangrieken et al., 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies highlight that shared responsibility among teachers, parents, and school leaders strengthens intervention strategies for struggling readers (Epstein et al., 2024). These findings align with the present study by demonstrating that collaboration and supportive environments play a critical role in sustaining effective instruction despite structural challenges.

The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) provide strong theoretical grounding for this theme. Rosenblatt's theory explains that meaning is created through the interaction between the reader, the text, and the context, emphasizing the importance of supportive environments that enhance engagement and comprehension. Constructivist theory further posits that learning is an active process shaped by social interaction, collaboration, and meaningful engagement with learning materials. Together, these theories highlight that supportive and collaborative environments are essential for facilitating meaningful reading experiences and strengthening learners' comprehension development.

The implications of this theme suggest that schools should strengthen resource allocation, improve classroom conditions, and enhance teacher support systems to sustain effective reading instruction. Encouraging collaborative teaching practices, professional learning communities, and shared instructional planning can further strengthen teachers' capacity to address diverse learner needs. Additionally, providing adequate instructional materials and reducing class sizes where possible can help improve instructional delivery. Ultimately, fostering a supportive and collaborative school environment is essential for improving learners' reading comprehension outcomes and sustaining teacher effectiveness in challenging educational contexts.

Balancing Time Constraints and Instructional Demands

Balancing time constraints and instructional demands reflects teachers' lived experiences as they navigate the competing pressures of curriculum coverage, lesson preparation, assessment tasks, and remediation activities while addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties. The findings reveal that teachers consistently experience limited instructional time due to extensive academic requirements and the need to support learners with diverse reading abilities. This often results in pressure to divide attention among multiple responsibilities, making focused reading instruction more challenging. Despite these constraints, teachers demonstrate adaptability by adjusting instructional routines, prioritizing essential literacy skills, and continuously seeking ways to maximize available teaching time. Overall, their experiences highlight resilience and commitment in ensuring that reading comprehension instruction remains integrated within daily classroom activities.

Teachers described how curriculum demands, lesson preparation, assessment tasks, and remediation responsibilities created pressure and limited the time available for focused reading comprehension instruction. Participant 1 explained that time is often a challenge because reading difficulties require consistent and extended practice, while Participant 2 emphasized that curriculum demands intensify time constraints. Participant 5 noted difficulty in balancing teaching, lesson preparation, and assessment tasks, and Participant 10 similarly reported experiencing pressure from limited instructional time. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"Time is often a challenge because addressing reading difficulties requires consistent and extended practice." (Participant 1)

"Time constraints are more evident due to curriculum demands." (Participant 2)

"Time feels very limited because I need to balance teaching, lesson preparation, and assessment." (Participant 5)

"I still feel the pressure of limited instructional time." (Participant 10)

In response to these challenges, teachers adapted their instructional routines by integrating reading comprehension activities into daily lessons, maximizing instructional opportunities, and providing additional interventions for struggling learners. Participant 1 incorporated dedicated reading time and remediation sessions, while Participant 2 integrated comprehension skills across subjects to optimize instruction. Participant 7 consistently integrated reading activities into lessons to enhance learning efficiency. Participant 8 prioritized tasks and applied reading strategies across grade levels, while Participant 10 embedded reading comprehension into daily routines and multiple subject areas. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I have adjusted my routines to include dedicated reading time and remediation sessions." (Participant 1)

"I adjust by integrating comprehension skills across subjects and maximizing instructional time." (Participant 2)

"I integrate reading activities into daily instruction to maximize learning time." (Participant 7)

"I prioritize tasks and integrate reading strategies across lessons and grade levels." (Participant 8)

"I have learned to integrate reading comprehension across subjects and make it part of daily routines." (Participant 10)

Teachers also reflected that experience played a significant role in improving their ability to manage time and instructional demands more effectively. Over time, they developed better organizational, planning, and instructional efficiency, which helped them cope with the pressures of teaching reading comprehension alongside other responsibilities. Some noted that experience made lesson delivery more manageable, while others emphasized improved confidence in handling time constraints. However, they also acknowledged that lesson planning and instructional preparation remain time-consuming tasks. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"Over the years, I have learned to manage my time more efficiently." (Participant 6)

"Experience has helped me manage lessons more efficiently." (Participant 7)

"Experience and planning make them manageable." (Participant 8)

"Planning lessons takes more time than I expected." (Participant 9)

"I have developed better time management skills." (Participant 10)

Balancing time constraints and instructional demands underscores the complex realities of teaching reading comprehension in resource- and time-limited contexts. Teachers continuously navigate competing academic responsibilities while ensuring that learners receive adequate support in developing reading skills. Their ability to integrate reading across subjects, adjust instructional routines, and improve time management through experience reflects adaptability and professional growth. These findings highlight that effective reading instruction depends not only on content knowledge but also on teachers' capacity to manage time strategically and respond flexibly to instructional demands.

Related studies emphasize that effective time management and instructional adaptation are essential for improving literacy outcomes in diverse classroom settings (Duke & Cartwright, 2024; Gibbs & Simpson, 2024). Research shows that integrating reading across subjects and using structured instructional routines helps maximize limited classroom time while addressing learner variability (Fisher & Frey, 2024; Tomlinson, 2023). Studies further highlight that teacher experience contributes to improved instructional efficiency and classroom management, enabling more effective delivery of reading interventions over time (Gibbs & Simpson, 2024). These findings align with the present study, showing that despite time constraints, teachers can enhance reading instruction through adaptive and strategic practices.

The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) provide theoretical support for this theme. Rosenblatt's theory emphasizes that reading comprehension emerges through active interaction between the reader and the text, requiring meaningful engagement that is supported by sufficient instructional time and opportunities for interaction. Constructivist theory highlights that learning is an active process of meaning-making that requires time, reflection, and engagement with learning experiences. Together, these theories reinforce the importance of allocating instructional time strategically to support meaningful reading development.

The implications of this theme suggest that schools should support teachers by improving the allocation of instructional time, reducing unnecessary workload, and promoting more efficient curriculum planning. Providing structured literacy programs, integrating reading across subjects, and offering training on time management

strategies can enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness. Additionally, reducing class sizes and administrative demands may help teachers focus more on reading instruction. Ultimately, strengthening time management systems and instructional support structures is essential for improving learners' reading comprehension outcomes and sustaining teacher effectiveness.

Building Collaborative and Supportive Relationships

This theme reflects how teachers experienced relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents as vital sources of support in addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties. The findings show that teachers place strong importance on building trust, communication, encouragement, and collaboration to strengthen learners' confidence and improve reading performance. Positive teacher–student relationships were consistently described as essential in motivating learners, fostering engagement, and developing reading confidence. At the same time, collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and parents provided instructional support, shared strategies, and reinforcement of learning beyond the classroom. However, teachers also encountered challenges such as inconsistent parental involvement, learner disengagement, and administrative pressures, which sometimes affected instructional implementation. Despite these challenges, teachers emphasized that reading instruction is a shared responsibility that thrives on cooperation and collective effort.

Teachers highlighted that positive relationships with students foster trust, encouragement, confidence, and motivation, which are essential in improving reading comprehension. Participant 1 emphasized that trust and encouragement help learners become more confident readers, while Participant 6 emphasized that relationships built on trust and encouragement are central to teaching, while Participant 7 described student relationships as the heart of teaching practice. Participant 8 focused on motivation and confidence-building interactions, and Participant 9 highlighted motivation gained from observing small improvements in learners' understanding. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“My relationship with students is very important, as trust and encouragement help them become more confident readers.” (Participant 1)

“My relationship with students is built on encouragement and trust.” (Participant 6)

“Strong relationships with students have always been the heart of my teaching.” (Participant 7)

“My interaction with students focuses on motivation and confidence-building.” (Participant 8)

“My students motivate me, especially when I see small improvements in their understanding.” (Participant 9)

Teachers also emphasized the importance of collaborating with colleagues, administrators, and school leaders to improve instructional practices and strengthen reading programs. Participant 1 shared that collaboration allows sharing of strategies and experiences, while Participant 2 highlighted that support from colleagues and administrators improves teaching practices. Participant 3 noted that administrative and parental support enhances learning outcomes, and Participant 9 also acknowledged the value of seeking advice from colleagues. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Collaboration with colleagues allows me to learn new strategies and share experiences.” (Participant 1)

“Collaboration with colleagues and support from administrators help improve teaching practices.” (Participant 2)

“Support from administrators and parental involvement help improve learning outcomes.” (Participant 3)

“My colleagues are helpful, and I often ask them for advice.” (Participant 9)

Teachers acknowledged that parental involvement plays a crucial role in reinforcing reading skills at home, although they also noted variability in parental engagement. Participant 1 emphasized that parental support reinforces classroom instruction, while Participant 2 and Participant 5 highlighted the importance of

communicating with parents to reinforce learning. Participant 6 emphasized the role of parents in supporting reading development while Participant 9 noted inconsistencies, with some parents highly supportive and others less engaged. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Engaging parents is also essential, as their support at home reinforces what is taught in school.” (Participant 1)

“Parent involvement strengthens learning at home.” (Participant 2)

“Parent communication helps reinforce student learning at home.” (Participant 5)

“Involvement of parents greatly help reinforce reading at home.” (Participant 6)

“Parents have varying levels of involvement—some are supportive, while others are not as engaged in their child’s reading development.” (Participant 9)

Teachers also experienced pressures from instructional expectations and learner disengagement, yet they consistently viewed reading instruction as a shared responsibility among teachers, administrators, and parents. Participant 9 noted pressure from school standards and challenges due to student disengagement, while Participant 1 emphasized the importance of administrative support in providing training and resources. Participant 5 acknowledged encouragement from administrators, and Participant 8 highlighted the role of coaching and support in teacher development. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“School administrators expect us to meet standards, which adds pressure.” (Participant 9)

“Some students easily lose interest, which makes teaching more difficult.” (Participant 9)

“Support from school administrators, especially in providing training and resources, is valuable.” (Participant 1)

“Administrators encourage us.” (Participant 5)

“My role with teachers involves coaching and support.” (Participant 8)

Building collaborative and supportive relationships demonstrates that effective reading instruction is not an individual effort but a shared responsibility among teachers, learners, parents, and school leaders. Strong relationships with students enhance motivation and confidence, while collaboration among educators strengthens instructional practices and resource sharing. Parental involvement further reinforces learning at home, although its inconsistency remains a challenge. Despite pressures from standards and learner disengagement, teachers consistently rely on collaboration and supportive relationships to sustain effective reading instruction and improve learner outcomes.

Related studies emphasize that collaborative relationships among teachers, parents, and school leaders significantly enhance instructional effectiveness and learner achievement, particularly in literacy development (Epstein et al., 2024; Vescio et al., 2023). Research also shows that positive teacher–student relationships increase motivation, engagement, and reading comprehension outcomes by fostering emotional safety and trust (Hattie, 2023). Additionally, collaborative professional practices among educators support instructional improvement through shared strategies and collective problem-solving (Johnson & Johnson, 2024). These findings align with the present study, which shows that collaboration and supportive relationships are essential for addressing reading comprehension difficulties.

The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) provide strong theoretical grounding for this theme. Rosenblatt’s theory emphasizes that meaning is constructed through interaction between the reader, the text, and the context, highlighting the importance of social and relational dimensions in learning. Constructivist theory further explains that knowledge is built through interaction, collaboration, and shared experiences, reinforcing the role of relationships in learning development.

Together, these theories underscore that reading comprehension is strengthened through meaningful interaction and collaborative engagement.

The implications of this theme suggest that schools should strengthen collaboration among teachers, parents, and administrators to enhance reading instruction and learner support. Programs that promote parental engagement, professional learning communities, and teacher collaboration should be sustained and expanded. Schools should also prioritize building strong teacher–student relationships to enhance motivation and engagement in reading. Ultimately, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and collaboration is essential for improving learners’ reading comprehension outcomes and sustaining effective instructional practices.

Utilizing Adaptive Instructional Resources and Strategies

This theme reflects how teachers utilized a range of instructional resources and teaching strategies to address learners’ reading comprehension difficulties. The findings show that teachers consistently employed evidence-based strategies, including guided reading, differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, questioning techniques, and explicit comprehension instruction, to enhance learners’ understanding and engagement. In addition, they integrated visual aids, contextualized materials, digital tools, storybooks, and multimedia resources to make reading instruction more meaningful and accessible. Teachers also demonstrated continuous adaptation by designing their own materials, modifying lessons based on learners’ reading levels, and using formative assessments to monitor progress and guide instruction. Despite challenges such as limited resources and varying levels of experience, teachers remained committed to improving reading outcomes through creativity, reflection, collaboration, and ongoing professional growth.

Teachers described using a variety of instructional strategies to improve learners’ comprehension, engagement, and participation in reading activities. Participant 1 reported using guided reading, peer tutoring, and differentiated instruction, while Participant 5 relied on guided reading and vocabulary support, and Participant 8 applied a wide range of strategies, including reciprocal teaching, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction. Participant 10 incorporated storytelling, collaborative learning, and reading–writing integration to strengthen comprehension. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“I have used strategies such as guided reading, peer tutoring, and differentiated instruction.” (Participant 1)

“I rely on basic but effective strategies such as guided reading, questioning techniques, and vocabulary support.” (Participant 5)

“I use a wide range of evidence-based strategies such as guided reading, reciprocal teaching, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction.” (Participant 8)

“I have also found success in using storytelling, collaborative learning, and integrating reading with writing activities.” (Participant 10)

Teachers also emphasized the importance of using visual aids, contextualized materials, digital tools, and multimedia resources to support reading comprehension. Participant 1 highlighted the use of leveled reading materials and multimedia presentations, while Participant 3 used multimedia resources alongside reading journals and logs, and Participant 4 incorporated culturally and age-appropriate stories. Participant 5 and Participant 9 noted the use of modern teaching aids, storybooks, worksheets, and videos. Participant 8 further contributed by developing leveled readers, modules, and assessment tools to support instruction. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

“Using leveled reading materials and incorporating multimedia resources, such as videos and interactive presentations, has also been effective.” (Participant 1)

“I also incorporate multimedia resources and promote daily reading habits through journals and logs.” (Participant 3)

“Using stories that are appropriate to the learners’ age and local context also helps improve comprehension.” (Participant 4)

"I also use visual aids, short reading passages, and interactive activities." (Participant 5)

"I develop and recommend instructional materials such as leveled readers, reading modules, and assessment tools." (Participant 8)

"I have used storybooks, worksheets, visual aids, and videos to support reading comprehension." (Participant 9)

Teachers further emphasized adapting instructional materials and strategies based on learners' reading levels, needs, and progress through continuous assessment and reflection. Participant 1 highlighted the use of formative assessments to guide instruction and adjust strategies, while Participant 2 emphasized designing materials suited to learners' levels and monitoring progress. Participant 8 emphasized the importance of continuous assessment and data analysis, and Participant 10 noted the regular adaptation of materials to match learners' abilities. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I also use formative assessments to monitor progress and adjust my strategies." (Participant 1)

"I also design my own materials suited to students' levels and regularly monitor their progress." (Participant 2)

"Continuous monitoring and data analysis help improve instruction and learner outcomes." (Participant 8)

"I often adapt materials to suit my learners' levels." (Participant 10)

Teachers also described how continuous learning, collaboration, creativity, and experience shaped their ability to maximize instructional resources despite limitations. Participant 1 noted participation in literacy trainings and workshops, while Participant 7 highlighted the development of more interactive strategies over time. Participant 1 emphasized creativity and adaptability in resource-limited contexts, while Participant 9 expressed a need for further experience and strategy development. Participant 10 noted the accumulation of varied instructional strategies over the years. These are evident in the responses of the participants:

"I have attended several trainings and workshops focused on literacy instruction." (Participant 1)

"Over time, I incorporated more interactive strategies." (Participant 7)

"However, I feel that I still lack enough strategies and experience." (Participant 9)

"Over the years, I have used a variety of instructional strategies." (Participant 10)

Utilizing adaptive instructional resources and strategies demonstrates that teachers are not passive users of teaching materials but active designers of learning experiences. They continuously adjust instructional approaches, integrate multiple resources, and apply assessment data to meet learners' diverse reading needs. The findings highlight that effective reading instruction is strengthened through flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness to learner differences, even in contexts with limited resources and instructional constraints.

Related studies support these findings by emphasizing that differentiated instruction, multimedia integration, and formative assessment significantly improve reading comprehension outcomes (Tomlinson, 2023; Duke & Cartwright, 2024). Research also shows that the use of scaffolding tools such as graphic organizers, guided reading, and vocabulary supports enhances learners' ability to process complex texts (Afflerbach, 2023). Additionally, studies highlight that technology integration and contextualized materials increase engagement and comprehension, particularly for struggling readers (Meyer et al., 2024). These findings align with the present study by demonstrating the effectiveness of adaptive instructional practices in literacy development.

The Transactional Theory of Reading (Rosenblatt, 1978) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952) provide a strong theoretical foundation for this theme. Rosenblatt's theory explains that meaning is constructed through the interaction between reader and text, emphasizing the importance of instructional strategies that promote engagement, interpretation, and personal response. Constructivist theory further supports the idea that

learners actively construct knowledge through interactions with materials, experiences, and social contexts, highlighting the role of adaptive, learner-centered instruction. Together, these theories reinforce the importance of flexible and responsive teaching strategies in developing reading comprehension.

The implications of this theme suggest that schools should strengthen support for teacher training on adaptive instructional strategies, resource development, and technology integration. Providing adequate instructional materials and access to digital tools can further enhance reading instruction. Schools should also encourage continuous professional development and collaborative sharing of best practices among teachers. Ultimately, supporting teachers in adapting instructional resources effectively is essential for improving learners' reading comprehension and fostering inclusive, learner-centered classrooms.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study explored the lived experiences of teachers in addressing learners' reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies in the classroom. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions: (1) How do teachers describe their emotional, psychological, and physical experiences while addressing students' reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies (Lived Body)? (2) How do teachers experience and perceive their classroom and school environments in addressing reading comprehension difficulties among learners (Lived Space)? (3) How do teachers experience the passage of time, changes in routines, and instructional demands while implementing strategies to improve students' reading comprehension (Lived Time)? (4) How do teachers experience their relationships and interactions with students, colleagues, school administrators, and parents while addressing reading comprehension difficulties (Lived Relation)? and (5) How do teachers experience and utilize instructional materials, reading resources, and teaching tools in supporting learners' reading comprehension development (Lived Thing)?

This study employed an existential-phenomenological research design grounded in Moustakas' (1994) tradition to explore teachers' lived experiences in addressing reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies. It was conducted in selected public elementary schools within one district of the Misamis Occidental Division, Philippines. The participants were ten (10) Grade 5 and Grade 6 teachers, consisting of four (4) males and six (6) females, selected through purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria and data saturation. Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview protocol designed to elicit teachers' experiential accounts of instructional, emotional, and contextual challenges. Data collection followed strict ethical procedures, including securing permissions, obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and complying with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Data were analyzed using Moustakas' Existential Analysis, which involved epoche, horizontalization, thematic clustering, and the development of textural, structural, and composite descriptions to capture the essence of teachers' lived experiences.

Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

1. **Managing Emotional, Psychological, and Physical Demands.** Teachers showed resilience and commitment in managing emotional, psychological, and physical demands while coping with stress, workload, and instructional pressures in supporting learners' reading comprehension.
2. **Creating Supportive Environments in Challenging Learning Environments.** Teachers created supportive learning environments by fostering inclusive, responsive, and encouraging classroom spaces despite challenges in resources, class size, and learner diversity.
3. **Balancing Time Constraints and Instructional Demands.** Teachers balanced time constraints and instructional demands by adapting routines, integrating reading activities across lessons, and developing efficient strategies to meet curriculum requirements.
4. **Building Collaborative and Supportive Relationships.** Teachers built collaborative and supportive relationships with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents that strengthened instructional practices and enhanced learners' reading development.

5. Utilizing Adaptive Instructional Resources and Strategies. Teachers utilized adaptive instructional resources and strategies by employing varied teaching tools, contextualized materials, and flexible approaches to improve learners' reading comprehension.

Conclusions

The following are the conclusions of the study:

1. Teachers were able to sustain effective instruction in reading comprehension by managing emotional, psychological, and physical demands through resilience, motivation, and professional commitment.
2. A supportive learning environment, despite existing challenges, significantly contributed to maintaining student engagement and promoting reading development.
3. Effective adaptation of time management and instructional strategies enabled teachers to meet curriculum demands while still addressing learners' reading comprehension needs.
4. Strong collaborative and supportive relationships were essential in enhancing instructional effectiveness and improving learners' reading comprehension outcomes.
5. The adaptive use of instructional resources and strategies played a crucial role in improving reading comprehension by making instruction more responsive, flexible, and learner-centered.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study based on the findings and conclusions:

1. School administrators strengthen teacher resilience and well-being by providing structured stress management programs, wellness support systems, and workload balancing initiatives through regular training sessions, mentoring programs, and policy adjustments that promote sustainable teaching conditions.
2. School leaders and teachers enhance supportive learning environments by fostering inclusive classroom practices, improving learner engagement strategies, and ensuring access to basic instructional resources through classroom support programs, student-centered policies, and continuous monitoring of classroom conditions.
3. Teachers and curriculum planners improve time management and instructional effectiveness by integrating reading comprehension activities across subjects, streamlining lesson planning processes, and adopting flexible instructional scheduling through coordinated planning, curriculum alignment, and efficient use of instructional time.
4. Teachers, parents, and school administrators strengthen collaborative and supportive relationships by improving communication, promoting shared responsibility in learner development, and establishing structured partnership programs through regular conferences, professional learning communities, and home-school engagement activities.
5. Teachers and education stakeholders enhance the use of adaptive instructional resources and strategies by providing access to diverse learning materials, supporting training on instructional innovation, and encouraging the development of contextualized teaching resources through workshops, resource-sharing systems, and continuous professional development.
6. Future researchers may conduct similar phenomenological studies in different educational contexts or grade levels and include additional variables such as teacher preparedness, learner motivation, parental involvement, and school support systems to further deepen the understanding of how teachers address reading comprehension difficulties and implement effective instructional strategies.

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis entitled "**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN HANDLING LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES**," prepared and submitted by **Lyrazon Lambaco Paguirigan** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management**, has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for Oral Examination.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

Before the interview begins, participants will be informed of the following:

- The interview will be digitally recorded to ensure accuracy.
- Their identity will remain confidential throughout the study and in the final report.
- Participation is voluntary, and they can choose to discontinue their involvement at any time without any consequences.

Demographic Profile Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What year did you complete your teacher education program?
3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
4. What grade level or subject do you currently teach?

Opening Questions:

1. Tell me a little about yourself, your background, and your journey as a teacher addressing reading comprehension difficulties in your classroom.
2. Describe any prior experiences, instructional strategies, or teaching resources that have helped you support learners and improve their reading comprehension skills.

Core Questions:

1. Can you describe your emotional, psychological, and physical experiences while addressing students' reading comprehension difficulties and implementing instructional strategies in your classroom?
2. How do you experience and perceive your classroom and school environments as you teach and support learners with reading comprehension challenges?
3. How do you experience the passage of time, changes in your routines, and instructional demands while implementing strategies to improve your students' reading comprehension?

4. How do your relationships and interactions with students, colleagues, school administrators, and parents influence or shape your experiences in addressing reading comprehension difficulties?
5. Can you describe your experiences in using instructional materials, reading resources, teaching tools, or other strategies to support learners' reading comprehension and progress?

Closing Questions:

1. Looking back, what do you feel has been the most significant factor in helping you address reading comprehension difficulties in your classroom?
2. What advice or recommendations would you give to other teachers who are facing similar challenges in supporting learners' reading comprehension?

Transcript Of Interview

Participant 1 (34, years old; Graduated 2011; 12 years in teaching; Teaching Grade 5)

I started my teaching career in a public elementary school where I immediately noticed that many learners struggled with reading comprehension. Over the years, I have handled diverse groups of students with varying reading levels. This challenge pushed me to become more patient, creative, and resourceful. I have attended several trainings and workshops focused on literacy instruction, which helped me better understand how to support struggling readers. My journey has been both challenging and fulfilling, as I have seen gradual improvements in my students' abilities. I have used strategies such as guided reading, peer tutoring, and differentiated instruction. I also integrate graphic organizers, story mapping, and questioning techniques to help students understand texts better. Using leveled reading materials and incorporating multimedia resources, such as videos and interactive presentations, has also been effective. Additionally, encouraging daily reading habits through reading logs and journals has helped improve comprehension over time. Emotionally, I sometimes feel challenged and concerned, especially when students show little progress despite interventions. However, I also feel fulfilled and motivated when I see improvements, even small ones. Psychologically, it requires patience, focus, and constant reflection on my teaching practices. Physically, it can be tiring since I often prepare additional materials and spend extra time assisting struggling learners, but I consider it part of my responsibility as a teacher. I view my classroom as a supportive and inclusive environment where learners feel safe to express themselves and make mistakes. I try to create a reading-friendly atmosphere with accessible materials and engaging activities. The school environment is generally supportive, although limited resources can sometimes be a challenge. Collaboration with colleagues helps in sharing strategies and solutions. Time is often a challenge because addressing reading difficulties requires consistent and extended practice. I have adjusted my routines to include dedicated reading time and remediation sessions. Instructional demands have increased, but I have learned to manage my time better by integrating reading comprehension activities into other subjects. My relationship with students is very important, as trust and encouragement help them become more confident readers. Collaboration with colleagues allows me to learn new strategies and share experiences. Support from school administrators, especially in providing training and resources, is valuable. Engaging parents is also essential, as their support at home reinforces what is taught in school. I use a variety of materials, including textbooks, storybooks, digital resources, and self-made instructional materials. Visual aids and graphic organizers help students understand texts better. I also use formative assessments to monitor progress and adjust my strategies. While resources are sometimes limited, creativity and adaptability help me maximize what is available. The most significant factor has been consistent practice combined with patience and differentiated instruction. Understanding each learner's needs and providing appropriate support has made a big difference in their progress. I would advise teachers to be patient and flexible in their approaches. Use a variety of strategies to meet different learning needs, and continuously assess students' progress. Building a strong reading culture in the classroom and involving parents can also greatly support learners. Most importantly, never lose hope, as improvement takes time and consistent effort.

Participant 2 (41 years old, Graduated 2007, 17 years in teaching, teaching Grade 6)

I have been teaching for many years, mostly in upper elementary levels. I have encountered learners who can read but struggle to understand texts deeply. Over time, I developed strategies and attended trainings to better support comprehension skills, especially for more complex Grade 6 materials. I use explicit comprehension

instruction, such as predicting, summarizing, and inferencing. I also apply group discussions, questioning techniques, and contextualized reading materials. Integrating real-life texts and technology has helped engage learners. I sometimes feel pressured due to higher expectations in Grade 6, but I remain motivated to help learners succeed. It requires patience, critical thinking, and extra effort in planning lessons and interventions. I see my classroom as a structured yet supportive space. The school environment is cooperative, though limited resources and large class sizes can be challenging. Time constraints are more evident due to curriculum demands. I adjust by integrating comprehension skills across subjects and maximizing instructional time. Strong communication with students builds confidence in reading. Collaboration with colleagues and support from administrators help improve teaching practices. Parent involvement strengthens learning at home. I use textbooks, supplementary reading materials, online resources, and assessment tools. I also design my own materials suited to students' levels and regularly monitor their progress. Effective strategy instruction combined with consistent practice and learner engagement. Focus on teaching comprehension skills explicitly, be adaptable, and use meaningful texts. Encourage collaboration and involve parents to reinforce learning.

Participant 3 (35 years old; Graduated 2012; 12 years in teaching; teaching Grade 5)

I have been teaching for over a decade in a public school, where I encountered many learners with reading comprehension difficulties. Through experience and trainings, I became more patient and developed effective strategies to support struggling readers. I use guided reading, differentiated instruction, peer tutoring, and graphic organizers. I also incorporate multimedia resources and promote daily reading habits through journals and logs. Teaching struggling readers can be challenging and tiring, but also fulfilling. It requires patience, focus, and extra effort in preparing materials and giving support. I maintain a supportive and inclusive classroom. While resources may be limited, collaboration with colleagues helps address challenges. Time is a challenge, so I integrate reading activities into daily routines and provide additional practice when needed. Positive relationships with students, colleagues, and parents are essential. Support from administrators and parental involvement help improve learning outcomes. I use books, visual aids, digital tools, and self-made materials. I also assess regularly to monitor progress and adjust instruction. Consistent practice, patience, and differentiated instruction. Be patient, flexible, and use varied strategies. Encourage reading habits and involve parents to support learners' progress.

Participant 4 (29 years old; Graduated 2016; 7 years in teaching; teaching Grade 4)

As a Filipino teacher, I noticed that many learners have difficulty understanding what they read, especially when it involves deeper vocabulary and concepts. Over time, I learned to use different strategies to make learning easier for them. I use oral reading, class discussions, and asking questions before, during, and after reading. Using stories that are appropriate to the learners' age and local context also helps improve comprehension. I feel concerned when students struggle, but I also feel happy when I see improvement. It requires patience, understanding, and extra time in preparing activities. I strive to create a fun and safe classroom where learners are encouraged to read. Although there is a lack of materials, teachers work together to find solutions. Time is sometimes limited, so I integrate reading into other activities. I also provide remediation time for struggling learners. Building positive relationships with students helps boost their confidence. I also communicate with parents so they can support reading at home. I use books, pictures, charts, and self-made materials. Simple strategies like story mapping and summarizing help improve comprehension. Continuous reading practice and the use of appropriate strategies for each learner. Be patient and creative in teaching. Use varied strategies and encourage learners to develop a love for reading. Collaborate with parents for better results.

Participant 5 (23 years old; Graduated 2024; 1 year in teaching; teaching Grade 6)

I am a newly licensed teacher who recently started teaching Grade 6. During my practicum, I already observed that many learners struggle with reading comprehension, especially when texts are longer and more complex. As a new teacher, I am still learning and adjusting, but I am committed to helping my students improve through consistent practice and support. As a beginner, I rely on basic but effective strategies such as guided reading, questioning techniques, and vocabulary support. I also use visual aids, short reading passages, and interactive activities. I learn a lot from my senior teachers and try to adapt their strategies in my classroom. Emotionally, I sometimes feel overwhelmed because I am still adjusting to classroom realities. Psychologically, I feel challenged but motivated to improve my teaching. Physically, it can be tiring especially when preparing materials

and managing a large class, but I am learning to manage my time better. I see my classroom as a learning space that is still developing. The school environment is supportive, especially with experienced teachers guiding me. However, I am still adjusting to classroom management and student needs. Time feels very limited because I need to balance teaching, lesson preparation, and assessment. I try to integrate reading activities into daily lessons to maximize time. Adjusting to the workload is still part of my learning process. My students motivate me to improve every day. My colleagues and master teachers provide guidance and support, which is very helpful. Administrators encourage us, and parent communication helps reinforce student learning at home. I use textbooks, printed reading materials, and simple visual aids. I also create worksheets and short comprehension exercises. I am still learning how to maximize digital tools and more advanced teaching resources. Support from experienced teachers and continuous practice in applying reading strategies. Be patient and open to learning. Do not be afraid to ask for help from experienced colleagues. Consistency, encouragement, and simple strategies can already make a big difference in improving learners' reading comprehension.

Participant 6 (30 years old; Graduated 2017; 5 years in teaching; teaching Grade 5)

I have been teaching Grade 5 for five years, and during that time I have handled many learners with reading comprehension difficulties. I started as a new teacher who also struggled with managing diverse reading levels, but through experience and training, I learned how to better support my students. My journey has helped me become more confident in using different strategies to improve comprehension skills. I commonly use guided reading, questioning techniques, summarizing activities, and vocabulary development exercises. I also integrate graphic organizers, short stories, and contextualized materials. Over time, I have learned to adapt lessons based on my students' reading levels and needs. Emotionally, I feel both challenged and fulfilled when working with struggling readers. Psychologically, it requires patience, creativity, and continuous reflection on my teaching practices. Physically, it can be tiring due to lesson preparation and additional remediation, but seeing student progress keeps me motivated. I see my classroom as a dynamic learning space where learners are encouraged to improve at their own pace. The school environment is generally supportive, and collaboration with colleagues helps me improve my strategies. However, challenges such as limited resources and time constraints still exist. Managing time is still a challenge, especially with curriculum requirements and reading interventions. I address this by integrating reading comprehension into daily lessons and providing extra support sessions when needed. Over the years, I have learned to manage my time more efficiently. My relationship with students is built on encouragement and trust, which helps them become more confident readers. I also collaborate with colleagues to share strategies and materials. Support from administrators and involvement of parents greatly help reinforce reading at home. I use textbooks, storybooks, worksheets, and teacher-made materials. I also incorporate visual aids and sometimes digital resources when available. Regular assessments help me track student progress and adjust instruction accordingly. Consistent use of effective reading strategies combined with patience and understanding of learners' individual needs. Be patient and flexible in teaching reading comprehension. Use varied strategies and always consider the learners' level. Collaboration with colleagues and parents is also very important in helping students improve.

Participant 7 (58 years old; Graduated 1986; 34 year in teaching; teaching Grade 5)

I have been teaching for more than three decades, most of them in the elementary level. Over the years, I have witnessed many changes in education, especially in how reading is taught. Dealing with learners who struggle in reading comprehension has always been part of my journey, and I have continuously adapted my methods to meet their needs. In my earlier years, I relied mainly on traditional methods such as oral reading, repetition, and teacher-led discussion. Over time, I incorporated more interactive strategies like group work, questioning techniques, graphic organizers, and contextualized materials. I also learned to use modern teaching aids and technology to support learning. Emotionally, I feel deeply fulfilled when I see students improve, especially those who once struggled greatly. However, I also feel tired at times due to the demands of teaching. Psychologically, teaching requires patience, consistency, and resilience, which I have developed over the years. I view my classroom as a place of growth and discipline where learners are guided with care. The school environment has evolved over time and has become more collaborative. While challenges such as large classes and limited materials remain, teamwork among teachers helps address them. Time management has always been a challenge throughout my career. In recent years, curriculum demands have increased, but experience has helped me manage lessons more efficiently. I integrate reading activities into daily instruction to maximize learning time. Strong

relationships with students have always been the heart of my teaching. I also value collaboration with fellow teachers and support from school leaders. Parental involvement has improved over the years and plays an important role in student progress. I have used a wide range of materials throughout my career—from traditional textbooks and flashcards to digital resources. I also create my own instructional materials based on students' needs. Continuous assessment helps me adjust my teaching strategies effectively. Experience has been the most significant factor, especially in understanding learners' needs and applying appropriate strategies with patience and consistency. Be patient, committed, and adaptable. Teaching reading comprehension requires time and dedication. Always focus on the learners' needs, continue learning new strategies, and never underestimate the impact of simple but consistent support.

Participant 8 (45 years old; Graduated 2000; 23 year in teaching; teaching Grade 5)

As a Master Teacher, I have spent more than two decades in the classroom focusing on literacy development. Throughout my career, I have worked closely with learners who struggle in reading comprehension. I also mentor younger teachers, helping them apply effective strategies to improve learners' reading skills. My journey has been shaped by continuous learning, classroom experience, and instructional leadership. I use a wide range of evidence-based strategies such as guided reading, reciprocal teaching, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction. I also emphasize the use of formative assessment to guide instruction. In addition, I develop instructional materials and support teachers in adapting texts to learners' levels. Emotionally, I feel fulfilled when both students and teachers I mentor show improvement. Psychologically, the role requires critical thinking, reflection, and instructional decision-making. Physically, it can be demanding due to classroom responsibilities and mentoring duties, but it is manageable with experience and organization. I see the classroom as a responsive learning environment where instruction is guided by learners' needs. The school environment is more collaborative at this level, as I often work with teachers to improve literacy programs. There is a stronger culture of shared responsibility for student learning. Time management is crucial due to both teaching and mentoring responsibilities. I prioritize tasks and integrate reading strategies across lessons and grade levels. Instructional demands are high, but experience and planning make them manageable. Strong professional relationships are essential in my role. I collaborate closely with teachers, school leaders, and parents to strengthen reading programs. My interaction with students focuses on motivation and confidence-building, while my role with teachers involves coaching and support. I develop and recommend instructional materials such as leveled readers, reading modules, and assessment tools. I also guide teachers in using digital resources and interactive strategies. Continuous monitoring and data analysis help improve instruction and learner outcomes. The most significant factor is effective instructional leadership combined with consistent, research-based reading strategies and collaboration among teachers. Focus on understanding learners' reading levels and apply differentiated instruction consistently. Collaborate with colleagues, use data to guide teaching, and continuously improve instructional practices. Most importantly, build a strong reading culture in the classroom and school.

Participant 9 (23 years old; Graduated 2004; less than a year in teaching; teaching Grade 5)

I am a new teacher who recently started teaching Grade 5. During my internship, I already noticed that many learners struggled with reading comprehension, but I did not fully realize how challenging it would be until I handled my own class. My students can read words, but many of them have difficulty understanding the meaning of what they read. This has been overwhelming for me because I want to help them improve, but I am still learning how to do it effectively. During my practice teaching, I used strategies like guided reading, asking comprehension questions, and using graphic organizers such as story maps. I also tried using pictures and real-life examples to help students understand texts better. Some resources that helped me include short stories with visuals, vocabulary lists, and simple questioning techniques like "who, what, where, when, and why." However, I feel that I still lack enough strategies and experience. Emotionally, I often feel anxious and sometimes frustrated because I want my students to improve, but progress is slow. Psychologically, I feel pressured to meet learning competencies while also adjusting my teaching strategies. Physically, I get tired from preparing materials, checking students' work, and trying different approaches in class. Despite this, I remain hopeful and motivated to improve my teaching. I perceive my classroom as a challenging but meaningful environment. Many students come from different reading levels, so it is difficult to meet all their needs at once. My school is supportive, but I sometimes feel that I need more guidance and resources specifically for reading instruction. Time feels very fast, and I often feel that there is not enough time to focus deeply on reading comprehension because of other

subjects and tasks. My routine constantly changes as I try new strategies to help my students. Planning lessons takes more time than I expected, especially when I try to adjust activities to suit different learners. My students motivate me, especially when I see small improvements in their understanding. However, some students easily lose interest, which makes teaching more difficult. My colleagues are helpful, and I often ask them for advice. School administrators expect us to meet standards, which adds pressure. Parents have varying levels of involvement—some are supportive, while others are not as engaged in their child's reading development. I have used storybooks, worksheets, visual aids, and videos to support reading comprehension. I also try strategies like group reading, peer assistance, and asking students to retell stories in their own words. While these tools help, I sometimes struggle to choose the most effective materials for different learners. The most significant factor that has helped me is being patient and continuously trying different strategies. I have learned that improvement takes time, and even small progress is meaningful. Support from more experienced teachers has also been very helpful. I would advise other teachers to be patient and not be discouraged by slow progress. It is important to understand the learners' needs, use varied strategies, and seek help from colleagues. Also, make reading engaging and relatable to students' lives. Continuous learning and reflection are very important in addressing reading comprehension difficulties.

Participant 10 (45 years old; Graduated 2008; 17 years in teaching; teaching Grade 6)

I have been in the teaching profession for more than 15 years, and throughout my career, I have handled different grade levels. Over time, I have consistently encountered learners who struggle with reading comprehension. Early in my career, I thought decoding was the main issue, but I later realized that comprehension is a deeper challenge involving vocabulary, background knowledge, and critical thinking. My journey has involved continuous learning, attending trainings, and adjusting my teaching practices to better support diverse learners. Over the years, I have used a variety of instructional strategies such as differentiated instruction, guided reading, explicit teaching of comprehension strategies (like predicting, inferring, and summarizing), and the use of contextualized materials. I have also found success in using storytelling, collaborative learning, and integrating reading with writing activities. Resources such as leveled reading materials, graphic organizers, and formative assessments have been very helpful in tracking students' progress. Emotionally, I have learned to manage my frustrations and remain patient, understanding that reading comprehension development takes time. Psychologically, I feel more confident now compared to when I was a beginning teacher, although I still experience concern when students lag behind. Physically, the demands are still present—preparing materials and monitoring learners can be exhausting—but I have developed routines that help me manage my workload more efficiently. I view my classroom as a dynamic learning space where students have varying abilities and needs. Over the years, I have learned to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for struggling readers. My school environment has also improved, with more access to reading materials and professional development opportunities, although there are still limitations in resources. With experience, I have developed better time management skills. I have learned to integrate reading comprehension across subjects and make it part of daily routines rather than treating it as a separate skill. However, I still feel the pressure of limited instructional time, especially when balancing curriculum demands and remediation needs. My relationships with students have become one of my greatest strengths. I understand their needs better and can motivate them more effectively. Collaboration with colleagues has also been essential—I often share strategies and learn from others' experiences. Support from school administrators plays a role in providing resources and encouragement. Parents, when actively involved, greatly contribute to improving their children's reading skills, although not all parents are equally engaged. I have extensive experience using various instructional materials such as textbooks, supplementary readers, digital resources, and teacher-made materials. I often adapt materials to suit my learners' levels. I also use strategies like reading conferences, peer tutoring, and comprehension monitoring techniques. Over time, I have learned that no single material is sufficient; it is the combination of strategies and consistency that leads to improvement. The most significant factor in addressing reading comprehension difficulties has been my experience and willingness to adapt. Continuous professional development and reflection on my teaching practices have allowed me to refine my strategies and better meet my students' needs. My advice to other teachers is to remain patient and committed. Use a variety of strategies, assess your students regularly, and do not hesitate to seek support from colleagues. Most importantly, build strong relationships with your learners and make reading meaningful and engaging. Experience will teach you that progress may be slow, but it is always possible with consistent effort.