



TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION USING BLENDED- DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Gladys A. Tampioc, MAEd-English

*Junior High School English Teacher, Abundio Agarpao Sr. Memorial High School,
Bayawan City, Negros Oriental, Philippines*

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11235210>

ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers in teaching reading comprehension amidst COVID-19. Six teachers from elementary and high schools in Bayawan city participated in the study. The data were collected through recorded interviews and were analysed using Colaizzi's Phenomenological Method. The interviews were transcribed and from the transcriptions, significant statements (SS) and formulated meanings (FM) were extracted. After thorough analysis of the transcripts, SS, and FM, the researcher arrived at these three (3) emergent themes capturing the teachers' lived experiences in teaching reading comprehension: 1) Adverse Experiences in Teaching Reading Comprehension; 2) Evolution of Teaching Dynamics; and 3) Influences on Learner's Academic Performance. In general, the participants perceived teaching reading comprehension under blended learning modality to be ineffective and burdensome. Specific concerns raised by the participants include: (a) issues on conducting assessment of pupils' reading proficiency; (b) limited personal interaction with pupils; (c) inaccuracy of assessments; and (d) time management. Participants have also highlighted personal issues pupils experience at home while learning remotely including: (a) lack of parental support; (b) academic dishonesty; and (c) pupil's indifference and demotivation towards blended distance learning. Recommendations were provided to improve the current teaching conditions of teachers and learning conditions of students under the blended learning modality.

Keywords: *reading comprehension, lived experience, English teachers, blended learning modality, Philippines, COVID-19 pandemic*

INTRODUCTION

Reading widens a person's horizons. It allows him to learn a variety of things and ideas that he can apply in his daily life and in understanding the world better (Putri, Masakawati, & Tantra, 2021). Apart from the acquisition and expansion of knowledge, 30 minutes of reading can also assist in lowering heart rate and blood pressure while also reducing psychological distress, according to a research published in the *Journal of College Teaching and Learning* (Chalukya, 2021). However, reading requires more than just plainly reading the text; it also entails comprehending what is being read.

McLaughlin (2012) asserts that reading keeps children's minds engaged and focused, which is actually good considering the difficulties the world currently faces due to the global health crisis, COVID-19. Moreover, McLaughlin theorized that reading not only stimulates children's intellectual curiosity but also helps them develop important skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and comprehension skills. The author then emphasized the vital role that teachers play in helping a child develop a positive attitude towards reading and improve his or her reading skills.

However, quite known to many, the global pandemic has caused so many challenges in terms of delivering instruction to learners because of the suspension of face-to-face classes. One can imagine the difficulties teachers must have faced in teaching practical subjects such as reading comprehension during the pandemic considering that children only learn from the comforts of their own home.

At the height of COVID-19, educational institutions had to adopt the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) as a viable means to uphold continuity of education amidst the pandemic (Tanhueco-Tumapon, 2020). Certainly, modular instruction and online learning platforms were introduced to the educational scene since face-to-face classes had to be replaced with distance learning.

Using Blended Learning in teaching reading comprehension is a topic that sparked a particular interest in the researcher, who is an English teacher. The researcher, as an educator herself, has observed that both teachers and students have had their share of struggles in the adoption of ADM. This observation is backed by Acala (2021) who recognized the difficulties teachers have encountered in terms of creating appropriate lessons while ensuring that the instruction is effectively delivered to the students and that the students have truly gained learning. In other words, teachers have to make sure that the quality of education is maintained despite the absence of face-to-face interaction with the learners.

However, studies and literature focusing on teachers' overall experiences in terms of teaching reading comprehension during the pandemic are scarce, especially in the local scene. Thus, the researcher felt motivated to pursue this phenomenological inquiry. Finding out how teachers—being the curriculum planners, implementers, and assessors—have handled their tasks, perceived challenges, recognized benefits, and

learned the process of adapting to and carrying out this new educational setting in teaching reading comprehension to students with the use of blended learning is valuable. Results of this investigation would be a good basis for creating interventions to enhance the delivery of instruction and for making more informed decisions regarding curriculum implementation.

Research Questions

This research is a phenomenological inquiry on the teachers' lived experiences during the pandemic as far as reading comprehension is concerned. Hence, the grand question this study intends to answer is: What are the English teachers' lived experiences in teaching reading comprehension using Blended Learning as an Alternative Learning Modality during the pandemic?

It also seeks to answer the following sub-questions:

- a.) How do you feel or think about teaching Reading Comprehension using the Blended Learning approach?
- b.) What challenges and opportunities have you encountered while teaching reading comprehension during the pandemic?
- c.) How do you cope, as a teacher, with teaching reading comprehension using Blended Learning?

METHODOLOGY

Research design. The study applied a phenomenological research design, a qualitative research method that is used to describe how humans experience a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This research design attempts to search for the essential meaning of the teachers' experiences and identify some congruent themes and underlying structure to the experiences (Maxwell, 2012). Sefcik and Bradway (2016) also added that phenomenology is characteristically exploratory and descriptive. It aims not to create generalization out of the findings but to understand the experiences of the study participants based on their perspectives.

In depth-interviews were utilized by the researcher, allowing herself to enter into the participants' world and gain access to their experiences.

Research participants and selection criteria. Participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied and are willing to describe it while using audio-recorder were selected purposively (Hirsch, 2015). The selection of the participants was based on the researcher's knowledge about the population.

Moreover, the participants were hand-picked using the purposive sampling or judgmental sampling technique wherein the researcher selected participants whom she believed are knowledgeable of the topic. A total of six participants have been identified once saturation has been met.

In this research, the participants were based on the following criteria: a) Elementary or High School English teacher presently connected with the DepEd-Bayawan City Division; b) male or female; c) aged 27-50 years old; d) have been teaching reading comprehension for 3-24 years; and e) bilingual speakers of English and Cebuano.

Research environment. This research was conducted in the respective homes of the participants or the mutually agreed place by both the study participants and researcher. The participants are presently teaching reading comprehension in the public elementary and secondary schools of the Division of Bayawan City. The Schools Division of Bayawan City is located 101 kilometers away from Dumaguete City, the capital city of Negros Oriental. Consistent with the DepEd vision, mission and core values, the Schools Division of Bayawan City has various programs and projects that especially cater to both the pupils and teachers.

Research instrument. Since the study is a phenomenological one, the interview was utilized to extract significant statements from the participants. The questions were open-ended and were worded in English. The interview was done face to face based on the preference and convenience of the interviewee. During the interview, safety health protocols were observed such as social distancing and wearing of face masks and an audio recorder was used to document the interview with each participant. The recorded materials were then transcribed for textual analysis, validity, and reliability of the instrument.

Ethical considerations. The researcher showed all the necessary ethical consideration on the entire duration of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Since humans were chosen as the study participants, confidentiality of information was observed. Ensuring the dignity and privacy of participants is also a must especially in phenomenology. Furthermore, the researcher made sure that potential risks to the participants were kept at a minimum.

Additionally, the researcher followed the ethical protocols stipulated in the Ethics Committee of Foundation University. To ensure that the research topic was evidently sound, significant and ethically correct consultation was also pursued. The researcher also displayed non-judgmental attitude during the entire interview to ensure that censure was avoided. Moreover, the participants signed a consent form along with the full understanding of the risk and benefits of the study being conducted.

Research procedure. The researcher integrated all the corrections and suggestions of the panel members after the design hearing. Afterwards, a letter of request to conduct the study was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bayawan City and District Supervisor (PSDS) upon the endorsement of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of Foundation University. Next, the signed and approved request was

presented to the Schools Division Superintendent and respective PSDS as well as School Heads of the teachers.

Before the conduct of the interview proper, the researcher did a bracketing. She identified and held in suspension her preconceived beliefs and opinions about the phenomenon being studied. The researcher also kept an up-to-date journal of these preconceived beliefs to check and evaluate from time to time to reassure that the gathered data were free from any form of biases and presumptions.

During the interview, the researcher explained to the participants the purpose and importance of the research as well as the interview itself. The participants were also given assurance that their identity would be kept anonymous and whatever information they divulged would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

The role of the researcher in a phenomenological research is to have an understanding of what the participant is expressing about their experiences. Therefore, in this study, an unstructured interview using open-ended questions was done to attain a greater scope of the responses provided by the participants. This also allowed the participants to have the freedom to control the interview in relation to issues discussed and completely describe their experiences.

The interview began by greeting one another, setting of purpose and expectations, and making the participant aware that interview would be recorded using an audiotape recording device (cellular phone). Journaling was done by the researcher to ensure that other verbal and non-verbal cues of the participants were recorded as well. Significant demographic profile (i.e. age, sex, educational attainment, length of experience, and school) was also procured. The interview was within 10-15 minutes long depending on the extent of engagement of the study participants.

Data analysis procedure. Qualitative data are analysed systematically so that content could be derived from prominent themes and patterns among themes. Analysis usually involves breaking down of data into smaller units, coding and naming the units according to the content they represent, and grouping coded materials based on shared concepts (Mezmir,2020).

In this study, Colaizzi's method, which is deemed appropriate for content analysis, was employed. Beck and Watson, as cited by Kornhaber (2009), suggested that Colaizzi's method achieves objectivity in data analysis and considers its fidelity to phenomena. It is refusal to tell the phenomenon what it is, but a respectful listening to what the phenomenon speaks of itself.

Below are the steps followed by the researcher for data analysis:

First, the researcher recorded all interviews using a recording device (cellular phone) and transcribed them in verbatim. Sanders (2003) theorized that listening to the audiotapes is significant as this will create a sense of connection, and reading the transcripts over and over will make the researcher acquire a sense of meaning for each

of the transcripts. During the listening, reading and re-reading, the researcher continued to write in her diary a journal of personal thoughts to aid in bracketing and reflexive practice.

Second, significant statements or phrases were extracted from the participants' transcripts pertaining directly to the research phenomenon. Careful analysis of the statements in the transcript was employed to identify important statements that truly tell the lived experiences of the study participants. Sanders (2003) commented that manual transcription and analysis facilitate continuous immersion in the data. Thoughts and feelings that will be aroused during this stage will be incorporated into the reflexive diary and later will be utilized in describing some interpretative decisions.

Third, formulated meanings were constructed from the significant statements. Shosha (2012) stated that formulated meanings should faithfully reflect the intent of each statement. This will require comparison among the original transcripts, the significant statements and the formulated meanings generated from all the participants.

The third stage requires conscientious bracketing that acknowledges any presuppositions, as this will help in avoiding misinterpretation of the participants' views. According to Husserl and Colaizzi, as cited in Sanders (2003), bracketing through reflexive diary journaling is essential, since it is only once this has been accomplished that more specific investigations can begin. Bracketing will (a) enable the researcher to explore own assumptions and preconceptions, in order to set them aside rather than concealing them; (b) enable exploration of ideas, themes, thoughts and feelings throughout the data analysis process; and (c) enable researcher to focus the direction of thinking.

Fourth, formulated meanings were arranged into cluster themes which will evolve into emergent themes. These themes will undergo constant checking and refinement against the original transcripts to truly reflect the meaning of the experiences. This required several time counterchecking.

Fifth, incorporation of the results into a rich and exhaustive description of the lived experiences was done. This should provide a comprehensive insight into the lived experiences of the English teachers teaching reading comprehension using blended learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Denzin, as quoted in Kornhaber (2009), posited that an exhaustive description should do more than state what the person is doing, going beyond facts and appearances, presenting "detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationship that join persons to one another... the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard." Further, it is suggested that this should be counterchecked by the research adviser for feedback and validation.

Sixth, which is the most important stage, is to validate the exhaustive description to study participants involved in the research. The return to the participants for validation and possible further interviews will ensure that it will be analysed and will in turn represent their experiences. Their comments were also well-documented.

Lastly, the researcher incorporated any new or pertinent data obtained from participants' validation and used those to attain congruence with the lived experiences of the participants being studied.

The seven steps were soundly followed along with the constant review, verification and bracketing to procedure results that would accurately reveal the lived experiences of teachers amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULTS

After a thorough analysis of the transcripts, three emergent themes arise along with 10 clustered theme. The ten clustered themes are as follows:

Perception of Teachers on Distance Teaching. English teachers teaching reading comprehension amid the covid-19 pandemic has found the blended-distance learning setup to be ineffective and inconvenient as compared to face-to-face classes. A common narrative among the participants divulges that distance teaching/learning is difficult and troublesome to both teachers and pupils. The participants general expressed a call for the resumption of face-to-face classes was recorded.

Reading Proficiency Assessment Methods. The restrictions on close contact between students and learners have led teachers to devise methods to assess pupils' reading comprehension proficiency remotely. The following methods were performed by the participants to assess their students remotely: (a) parental inquiry, (b) video recordings; and (c) phone calls. There were also opportunities of face-to-face assessments through home visits and when the pupils are brought to school by the parents during module retrieval.

Challenges in Reading Proficiency Assessment. Reviewing pupils work exclusively through written module outputs have presented issues to teachers in terms of rating the pupil's reading readiness/proficiency effectively and accurately. Another challenge in determining the pupils' proficiency based solely on written modules is their illegible handwriting. Lastly, the inaccuracy of assessment through modular method is also a concern as there has been instances of inconsistency in written and oral assessments as divulged by the teachers.

Adverse Personal Challenges of Teachers. Participants have disclosed notable personal challenges while teaching amid the Covid-19 pandemic. They have mentioned issues on time management, work-personal life balance, and feeling of being underutilized as a teacher in the learning process of the pupils in the blended distance learning setup.

Teacher's Professional Coping Mechanisms. Participants have revealed their initiative to improve their skill set and teaching capabilities through (a) capacitating

themselves with modern information and communication technologies, (b) cross-referencing teaching techniques with authors and fellow teachers, and (c) application of distinct teaching strategies for pupils of different intellectual capacities.

Supplementary Learning Materials. Participants divulged the need for additional learning materials. Specifically, the pupils' need for more print outs containing selections and stories that can be used by pupils to practice their reading skills. Many participants narrated that they had to personally print the supplemental learning materials to help their pupils in the learning process.

Teacher's Compassion and Understanding. Participants expressed compassion and understanding towards underwhelming academic performance of pupils during the pandemic. Teachers also showed understanding towards parents who can't effectively help their children at home due to certain concerns relating to their livelihood. This also shows the great concern and involvement teachers have with the main stakeholders participating in the teaching-learning process amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Support from Parents/Guardians. Parents play a vital role in the teaching-learning process under distance education. As parents take the forefront in facilitating learning at home, they influence the academic motivation, performance, and outlook of their children during distance learning. Participants have raised issues concerning antagonistic influences of parents on certain pupil's participation in blended learning modality. This was surmised as a consequence of the participation of pupils in the livelihood of their families during these trying times of the pandemic.

Academic Dishonesty. Breaches of academic integrity were reported by majority of the participants. According to the teachers, cheating and deception are the two main practices of academic dishonesty displayed by the pupils. Modules were answered by the parents resulting in inaccurate assessment results. The main motivation of academic dishonesty in blended learning modality is the goal of ensuring good grades, which is the parent's response to their children's apathy towards their academic requirements. Academic dishonesty has also been seen to be a consequence of the learner's unpreparedness for distance learning and lack of reading comprehension skills.

State of Students' Learning. Participants were very vocal about how their pupils were not equipped for distance education. More so, the failure of blended learning modality to show positive results in terms of improving the reading comprehension skills of the pupils has been emphasized in the participants testimonies. Mainly, the learners are described to be apathetic, demotivated, and disinterested in the learning process amid the covid-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION

Exhaustive Description

English teachers teaching reading comprehension have similar and shared experiences while teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants from this study have described distinct events and ordeals that characterized their teaching circumstances in the blended-learning setup. Generally, the participants expressed their difficulty in the shift from face-to-face classes to blended distance learning. Specific concerns raised by the participants include (a) issues on conducting assessment of pupils' reading proficiency; (b) limited personal interaction with pupils; (c) inaccuracy of assessments; and (d) time management.

The relatively new mode of teaching has influenced the participants to move out from the comforts of the teaching methods and techniques they were used to in the past and had made initiatives to adapt to the current setup. Personal efforts shared by the participants to adjust to pandemic teaching include the following: (a) cross-referencing teaching techniques from books and fellow teachers; (b) familiarizing the ins and outs of information and communications technology; (c) sending of supplemental learning materials; and (d) giving compassion and understanding to pupils who experience learning difficulties. Despite the clear attempts of teachers to accommodate and effectively deliver learning amid the pandemic, many factors beyond the teacher's control hamper the academic success of many pupils.

In connection to this, the participants have also highlighted personal issues that their pupils experience at home while learning remotely. These concerns include (a) lack of parental support; (b) academic dishonesty; and (c) pupil's indifference and demotivation towards blended distance learning. All of these concerns influence the pupils' academic performance. Participants have also talked about distinct concerns related to child labor, discouragements from parents, and cheating. Given the many undesirable circumstances the pupils have experienced, their learning and reading proficiency is negatively affected resulting in low motivation and disinterest in education.

With this, the majority of the participants call for the resumption of face-to-face classes, which is a solution that they see fit to absolve both teachers and learners from the difficulties of distance education.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The data from the transcribed interviews were examined using Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method's seven (7) phases. To ensure correctness, consistency, and emotional congruence, Colaizzi's phenomenological approach was used. All the interviews were taped, transcribed, read, and re-read. Significant statements or phrases about the phenomenon were extracted from the transcripts of the participants.

The significant statements were then used to build meanings. The formulated meanings were grouped into themes and used to construct a comprehensive description.

Emergent Theme 1: Adverse Experiences in Teaching Reading Comprehension

The first emergent theme, adverse experiences in teaching reading comprehension, explores the pandemic's principal effects on the instructional process as described by the participants. The physical separation between learners and teachers is one of the fundamental differences between blended distance learning and regular classroom learning.

Emergent theme 1 has 4 themes under it, which includes the following: (1) perception of teachers on distance teaching, (2) reading proficiency assessment methods, (3) challenges on reading proficiency assessment, and (4) adverse personal challenges of teachers. Primarily, the four clustered themes manifest the major changes in the outlook of teachers towards teaching reading comprehension and the various strategies they employed to resolve challenges in assessing the pupil's progress with their reading and reading comprehension skills. This part will also look into the personal challenges the teachers experience in teaching during this time of the pandemic.

Theme 1: Perception of Teachers on Distance Teaching

One of the primary consequences of the pandemic is the shift of teaching modality from face-to-face classes to blended distance education. Theme 1, perception of teachers on distance teaching, tells how English teachers teaching reading comprehension amid the covid-19 pandemic perceive the effectivity and convenience of the mentioned learning setup.

A common narrative among the participants divulges that distance teaching is difficult and inconvenient to both teachers and pupils. Participant 6 when made to determine which period teaching English was easier, simply answered this way:

“In the pre-covid times I think.”

Participant 3 echoes the sentiment of Participant 6 as she states:

“Well, the teaching journey for us teachers especially in this pandemic time is never easy, it's a huge transition of the normal way of teaching to what we call the new normal way of delivering instructions, where all of us are really greatly affected.”

Participant 2 agrees and expounds on why face-to-face classes was more convenient for her:

“Ah mas easy ang kuan face to face so... while ah makapagusto man ka og unsa ang imong buhaton sa bata kay face to face man naa man sa school so whereas anang ahh kuan modular lisod maglisod gud ang teacher ah so unsa ray

mga intervention namo mahimo sa teacher ah like anang mga reading materials and mga follow-up questions so mao ra na cya.”

Trans: “Face-to-face classes were easier given the fact that you have the freedom to do what is necessary for the pupils. You are also at school unlike in the modular (blended learning) wherein it is more difficult for the teacher. We can only do limited interventions on the pupil’s learning process given the setup, this includes providing reading materials and giving activity questions.”

Participant 4 also supports this narrative of inconvenience given the fact that there is a feeling of uncertainty on the learning outcomes of the pupils because of limited interactions with them. She stated:

“para nako lahi gyud siya sa niagi no kay although naa sa balay usually kita mag stay apan still naa tay connection sa atong mga kabataan pero ang outcome niya lahi jud...”

Trans: “For me, it’s really different from my experience before. Although we were most of the times at home, we still had a connection with the pupils. The outcome in this setup is really different.”

Given these sentiments, Participant 4, gives a lasting impression on how the participants feel about the blended learning setup as she expresses her yearning for face-to-face classes to resume:

“I don’t know kung unsa jod ang output unya o outcome unya pag abot ana nila og high school, college murag mangambot ra jod ko og unsa jod so para nako ganahan jod unta ko mga mabalik ra gyud pod ang face to face para makatabang gyud pod ta sa mga bata direct gyud siya mas para pod nako mas lami gyud ang naay teacher in front of the students nga mo guide nila what to do kay looy gud sila...”

Trans: I don’t know what the outcome will be when they reach high school or College. I will simply act oblivious if this continues. For me, I would really like the resumption of face-to-face classes so that we could be of better help to our pupils since there would be a teacher in front of the pupils, able to guide them when they need it because I really feel sorry for them.”

Through these statements, the participants were clear of their doubt on the effectiveness of the blended distance learning setup on teaching reading comprehension. The distance between parents and teachers during the learning-teaching process has resulted to the difficulties experienced by the teachers in giving interventions, devising strategies, and enacting accurate assessment procedures. They are also no longer able to implement former teaching procedures and techniques that were deemed effective during face-to-face classes. This result is in correspondence with the findings of the study of Rahayu and Wirza (2020) who claimed that teachers deemed distance education as

ineffective and inconvenient because of the lack of communication and interaction with their students.

Saavedra (2020) confirmed this plight claiming that people amidst the global health crisis have not acquired the fundamental skills needed for life. Likewise, Tanhueco-Tumapon (2020) asserted that both teachers and students are challenged by the ADM platform since it introduces something new to them. As more children are forced to stay at home instead of attending school, the risk of pupils becoming disengaged from or completely deprived of their education is greater than ever. Furthermore, with COVID-19 affecting kids in both rich and developing countries, it is vital that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are given recognition and support.

Theme 2: Reading Proficiency Assessment Methods

Theme 2, reading proficiency assessment methods, focused on the ways the participant used to assess their pupils' reading comprehension proficiency. Participants shared their various means of assessing the level of reading ability their pupils possess.

Some of the participants revealed that they primarily ask the help of the pupil's parent to determine the reading comprehension capability of the pupils. Participant 5 shared:

"What we did was that we tried to communicate with the parents. We let them or we told them that every time we send them the modules, they will let their child or children read the modules either in the English or the Tagalog modules. After that, we will just ask them if their child can read or not."

The same method is used by Participant 2 to assess her pupils. She reveals:

"parents ra man gud, unlike blended na pwede namo silang, mao to, pero although gakuan man gihapon me sa ilaha naa man me mga kontak sa sa parents ang parents amoang pangutan-on og kabalo ba mobasa ilang bata then pag ingon nila nga dili sa dili makahibalo so that's the time nga amo nang e kuan ang bata."

Trans: "Only the parents, we contact the parents, and we ask them if their children can read. If they say their child can't, that's when we make our interventions."

Other participants also shared that they meet with the pupils occasionally to assess them. Participant 4 shares her approach:

"...still on the process pero ako na gud siyang gi do akong part oh, just like calling them and ako silang gi gina atubang dire binagsa nako sila then gahatag pod ko nila dire og mga reading materials mga ten sila kabook sometimes labaw pa sa ten dayon ako sila gina testing ana dayon gibinagsa nako sila pabasa orally ah lahi ra man jod sila" (laughing)

Trans: "Still on the process, but I have done my part. I call them and ask them to face me one by one, give them each a reading material. At times, I

accommodate 10 pupils, sometimes even more. Then, I test them individually. I ask them to read aloud. They're quite different." (laughing)

Participant 6 asserts that teaching reading comprehension amid the pandemic requires different techniques. She makes use of various strategies from home visitation to provision of printed selections for the pupil's use. She discloses when asked how she copes with the difficulties of blended learning modality:

"Provide them different interventions like ahm once I kuan I message one of my parents and then I ask her him nga mo visit ko nila at home so I can check the pupil gyud no? kanang personally para ma identify gyud nako ang bata, and then one thing also is that ahm aside sa nag provide ko og ah... kanang selections ah kanang mga print outs no? wherein selections are intact no?"

Trans: "Provide them (with) different interventions like messaging the parents for appointments for home visits, so that I can personally check and identify the pupil (non-reader or reader). Aside from that, I provide print outs of selections."

Follow-up assessment was also done through recorded videos of pupils reading their modules. Participant 6 continues:

"maglisod man pod ko og check nila whether nabasa ba to nila so, I ask them to send videos over phone dayon through phone call pod magpabasa ko nila mag dayon sa video pod akoang gina kuan nga wala ang parents gyud sa tapad para makita nako nga sila gyud mismo ang ni hatag..."

Trans: "I find it hard to make sure that that they've read the selections. So, I ask them to send videos over the phone and I also call them and read to them. Also, in the videos, I make sure to ask the parents to not be withing the proximity of the child to avoid coaching."

Given the circumstances of being in a pandemic, the participants have applied different techniques to assess their pupils in the blended learning setup. They used various avenues as well to communicate with the stakeholders. This just proves how significant teachers deem evaluation or assessment is in the teaching-learning process.

Bento et al. (2021) maintained that people are learning about the adaptability and resilience of educational systems, policymakers, instructors, students, and families and that due to the epidemic, two critical factors have transformed. First and foremost, pedagogical adjustments have shown to be critical, as typical in-person lecturing techniques do not translate well to a remote learning setting. Teachers must adjust their approaches and be innovative to keep students involved, regardless of the type of channel used (radio, TV, mobile, internet platforms, etc.). Every family has become a classroom—more often than not—without an environment.

Topping et al. (2022), there are ways to be employed in the distance learning paradigm to increase reading skills, notably reading comprehension skills. Teachers must offer students with the tools they need to comprehend the choices they are given. Topping et al. (2022) describes the strategies or methods used by teachers to assist pupils in reading the selection or instructional texts. First, teachers must provide students with the tools they require, including strategies to be employed in following tasks and throughout their life. Teachers must also make vocabulary available and tailor their digital texts to students' needs.

In addition, reading comprehension improves when teachers take time to connect the new knowledge to existing knowledge. Lastly and the most important strategy given by Topping et al. (2022) is to monitor students' progress in reading. Moreover, in distance learning, teachers can adopt many of strategies to promote reading skills. Also, distance learning often requires students to work more independently than they are used to; so as teachers, it is a need to adjust the ways to help the students read instructional texts.

Theme 3: Challenges on Reading Proficiency Assessment

The participants have shared the different methods they used to assess their pupil's reading proficiency level. In theme 3, challenges on reading proficiency assessment, the participants' concerns, and dilemmas with regards accuracy of their assessment is discussed.

Participant 5 clearly narrates how she struggles to assess her pupils exclusively based on their module outputs:

"...and in the teaching reading comprehension however using blended distance learning during this time pandemic, I find it so hard on my part to monitor learner in their reading capability to check their level of reading readiness whether they are independent; are they fast, average, slow or stammering, I believe that modules alone cannot guarantee that children will learn by just reading them..."

Participant 2 also shares her concerns on student's handwriting affecting her ability to correctly assess her pupils:

"like for example kanang mga bata nga dili gud amoa product from kinder to grade 3 so ako grade 4 ahh for example kanang mga trans-in from another division or another school other school... galisod jod ko og assess kay bisan sa writing sa iya penmanship ga lisod gud siya pod, so mao na siya ako problema ron nga bata unsaon nako siya pag kuan nga moadto na siya next year sa grade 5 nya karon grade 4 unsaon nako siya pag assess nga kabalo siya sa writing kabalo pod siya sa reading nga with comprehension."

Trans: "Like for example, transferee pupils from other schools who aren't a product of our school, I find it hard to assess them because even in writing they have difficulties, affecting their penmanship. So, that is my concern, when they

move next year to grade 5 from grade 4 and yet I can't correctly assess their ability to write, read, and comprehend."

On the other hand, participant 4, raises her concern on the unreliability of written outputs to assess reading comprehension and reading ability of pupils. Participant 4 shares her experience:

"lisod kay nganu imo expectation sa bata mao na pero dili diay mao no? kay pag actual na nimo siya nga ika ano just like ako, nag send ko nila og kanang usa ka selection with mga questions pod for as their kuan for their comprehension skill, okay man pero I'm not sure of their answers nga ila gyud to kay syempre naa sila sa balay ga expect gid pod ko nga somebody is coaching or teaching them pero sa ila na nga reading nakita jod nako nga makabasa man problema kaayo pero ga expect ka kay dagko sila og scores sa written nga gina submit nila sa mga outputs nila dagko sila og scores sa panahon na diay nga pabasahon sila perti diay silang hinaya halos dili ka irog..."

Trans: "It's quite difficult to have set expectations and then it does not coincide. Just for example, I send them selections to read with questions to assess their reading comprehension skills, the results are good. However, I can never be quite sure if the answers were really theirs given that they are at home. I presume that somebody guided them. In their reading, I can see that they can read but the problem is that you have this set expectations based on their written outputs. They really have big scores. And yet, when the instance comes when you make them read in front of you, they read dawdlingly to a point like they get stuck."

The participants have raised different issues in assessing their pupil's reading comprehension which includes the inadequacy and unreliability of printed module outputs as a basis for pupil performance, and the illegibility of student's handwriting. Moreso, it can be deduced that teachers have limited options of interventions in terms of ensuring the accuracy of assessment. It is clear, based on the participants' statements, that the blended learning setup has created challenges that teachers need to resolve to effectively teach pupils.

Saha et al. (2020) affirms the negative impact of distance education has on monitoring and evaluation of pupil's performance. Also, according to the results of the Covid-19 survey on student learning, nearly all instructors (98%) report that their students are behind where they should be in their curricular learning at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year. On average, teachers think that their students are three months behind. Meanwhile, over half of teachers (61%) believe the learning gap between disadvantaged students and their counterparts has expanded in the past year, with the remainder believing the 'disadvantaged learning gap' has remained the same (32%) or narrowed (seven percent). According to teacher estimations, the gap between disadvantaged students and their counterparts had grown by 46% on average. This estimate is subject to a lot of uncertainty, and it is likely to be an underestimate because variances between

schools may have also influenced changes in the disadvantaged learning gap (Saavedra, 2020).

Theme 4: Adverse Personal Challenges of Teachers

The fourth theme, adverse personal challenges of teachers, discloses the significant personal challenges teachers experience while teaching reading comprehension during the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants shared issues on time management and unfulfillment due to limited involvement in teaching.

Participant 6 shares her dilemma on balancing work responsibilities and home obligations:

“I find it so hard to manage my time especially in dealing both with my work schedule in school and in the fulfilment of my home and family responsibility so... I need to juggle my work and my home obligations.”

She continues with sharing how she feels with the limited role she plays in her pupil's education:

“since there is no face to face interaction and that everyone at home is helping each other to work on the modules and in the absence of classroom teacher, our own role as a teacher is to monitor the learners in their learning progress...”

“this time teacher can no longer deliver the lessons personally to pupils so therefore, thorough self-learning modules only. We are now used to supplement learners in the continuation of learning process, our functions are limited to that...”

The main consequence of the pandemic on the teaching-learning process as stated by the participants is the limited or absence of face-to-face interaction. This constraint has led functions of teachers that is compromised and altered. Teachers also must take on additional work and functions that are related to their adjustments made to cater to the pupils in the blended learning setup which include what Participant 6 have mentioned on the use of self-learning modules. These additional work and changes in the teaching instruction have affected the work volume and time the teachers need to do and use up.

In the study conducted by Castroverde and Acala (2021) issues concerning lack of time for teaching preparations and tasks were identified. Khanal et al. (2021) has also found that one of the pandemic has made the work of teachers harder than necessary which has resulted to their demotivation.

Emergent Theme 2: Evolution of Teaching Dynamics

Emergent theme 2 focused on the evolution of teaching dynamics by English teachers because of the shift from face-to-face classes to blended distance learning. This emergent theme discusses the solution or adaptation made by the teachers to adjust to the changes brought by distance education.

This emergent theme has 4 has 3 clustered themes under it. The clustered themes are as follows: (a) teacher's professional coping mechanisms, (b) supplementary learning materials, and (c) teacher's compassion and understanding. Through the various initiatives of teachers to develop one's teaching skills and capabilities, extending extra help through provision of supplemental learning materials, and extending compassion and understanding to both parents and pupils given the circumstances of the pandemic, the dynamics in the teaching-learning process has evolved to adapt to the requirements of blended-distance learning.

Theme 5: Teacher's Professional Coping Mechanisms

Theme 5, teacher's professional coping mechanisms, sheds light on the different initiatives done by teachers to adapt to the current modality. It has become necessary for teachers to develop skills and learn new techniques to keep up with the changing times. Castroverde and Acala (2021) also recognizes this phenomenon of how the pandemic has influenced teachers to explore new techniques, teaching tools, and strategies that is in trend.

In the context of pandemic teaching, the participants have shared their own little ways to improve their service to the learners. Participant 3 affirms this:

"In my experience, which I know other teachers experiences also, we do a lot of adjustments, strategies and all since we don't know if our learners are really learning the lessons..."

Participant 1 also shares how it has become necessary for her to utilize various teaching strategies to accommodate all types of learners:

"As a teacher, my experience with every student is very fun because not all students have the same level of intellectual capacity, so as a teacher you should find different strategies and techniques that may suitable enough to every learner."

The participant's statements reveal how the individual differences in every pupil has affected the kind of teaching techniques used by teachers with their classes. This is in correspondence with the results in the study of Tarrayo et al. (2021), wherein flexible learning (FL), which includes blended learning, enriches teaching experience. They assert that this learning mode allows the teachers to respond to the various learning needs of pupils.

There have also been cases wherein teachers initiate professional development on their own by learning new skills and know-hows. This is the case for Participant 6 where she reveals this in her statements:

"I learn to adapt the use of information and communication technology, before I am not that so expert in all these uses but now I am slowly learning..."

“personally ako lang gyud e upgrade akong self like dapat mag cross referencing ko personally kay mag start man gyud dapat nako so mag cross referencing ko para naa pod koy makuha nga idea from other kuan kanang mga authors dayon e embrace nalang nimo kung unsa ang mga challenges...”

Trans: “Personally, I just find ways to improve myself like starting with cross-referencing strategies from other teachers and authors and embracing them as I face challenges...”

Participant 6 has revealed how learning ICT has been necessary while teaching in the pandemic. Also, the participant also highlights the need to consult with other teachers to be able to effectively address issues surrounding pandemic teaching. These behaviors of transitioning from certain teaching techniques and methods to another through reevaluating and redirecting the teachers to the core element of the curricula are key consequences of remote teaching (Van der Spoel, 2020).

Similarly, Rahman (2014) claimed that many learning delivery strategies in distance education relies heavily on information and communication technology (ICT) which allows teachers to create strategies to sustain pupil’s interest. Niemi and Kousa (2020) also established that many teachers have made creative adjustments to use technology and strategies to connect with pupils and cope with the demands of distance education.

Teachers' pedagogical and technological skills should be strengthened. Every learning institution must examine how successful online learning is in offering quality education and outcomes-based education to students as they move to the new normal, from the four corners of the classroom to the limits of virtual reality (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Furthermore, teachers are expected to come up with innovative ideas to help overcome the constraints of virtual teaching. On a local level, teachers are actively collaborating with one another to develop online teaching approaches. As instructors, parents, and children have similar experiences where there are unparalleled potential for collaboration, creative solutions, and openness to learn from others and try new techniques (Doucet et al., 2020)

Theme 6: Supplementary Learning Materials

The lack of learning materials is characterized in Theme 6, supplementary learning materials. In this cluster theme, the participants reveal a shared experience of having to provide additional learning materials to improve the facilitation of learning in the blended learning modality.

Participant 2 and 6 presents this reality in their statements. Participant 2 mentioned:

“magdistribute kog mga reading materials and then after how many days e-follow up,aside from that the parents magdownload og videos while nga gabasa ang bata”

Trans: “I distribute reading materials and then follow-up the learning progress after a few days by contacting the parents and asking for videos of their children reading.”

Similarly, Participant 6 manifest this reality as she states:

“we will also provide the pupils supplementary hand outs and also ensure constant communication to parents on our group chat sa messenger because, from there I can get support from them...”

Aside from supplemental reading materials produced by the teachers, participant 4 also mentions the distribution of books provided by the local academic institution:

“makaingon ko dili ra man pod siguro ko nagkulang kay daghan man kog books gipadala nila mga bag o nga books nga mga gipanghatod dire sa from the division ako pod gihatag nila...”

Trans: “I can say that I wasn’t inadequate in doing my tasks, I gave my pupils many books which were provided to the school by the division office.”

Teachers are clear on the need of additional learning resources for pupils learning at home. The additional learning materials used by teachers include printed stories and books. These findings are consistent with that of Tingson and Aquino (2021) wherein their interviews with English teachers also revealed the use of reinforcement activities through printed reading materials to improve the pupil’s reading comprehension skills. Asran (2021) suggests the use of alternative teaching strategies like the use of picture media to improve reading ability of pupils during the pandemic.

Quintos et al. (2020) also recognized the initiatives of the Department of Education (DepEd) to introduce online learning tools such as the DepEd Commons website, which has already attracted 8 million visitors. In addition, through the implementation of RA 8375, which allots 15% of total daily air time in a broadcast network to child-friendly material, TV and radio-based solutions will be implemented in remote locations with restricted access to the Internet.

Theme 7: Teacher’s Compassion and Understanding

The seventh theme, teacher’s compassion and understanding, discusses the relational nature of the job of teachers. This is made more vivid in the context of the pandemic where major issues that hamper learning are present and affecting all stakeholders in the teaching-learning process.

Participant 3 expresses how she can relate to the struggles of the pupils. She understands that great patience is needed in this time and circumstance. She narrates this lived experience on her statements:

But even if things flow like that, I will just always remind myself that as a teacher I will also experiences difficulties in coping these new ways of education, how much more my pupils? So, I adjust, understand and make some alternatives by providing reading materials with follow up questions below, just to practice their skills in reading comprehension and to provide quality education from my learners. It's a step by step process no need to rush things, never did I pressure them as long as they are getting it no matter how slow they are because I believe that success is one step at a time."

Another stakeholder that the participants identified as key players in distance education are the parents. Just like the pupils, the parents whose roles in their children's education has become more prominent than ever, needs to be shown compassion and understanding. Participant 6 conveys her deep consideration to parents as she stated:

"if I were to put myself on the shoes of the other parents mag unsa nalang pod kaha sila og kuan no? kanang handle pod sa ilang mga bata, pag manage sa ilahang time kay mangita pa sila og paagi to earn a living, unsa pa dayon, mo ganahan pa sila mutudlo then dili pa nila kaya bitaw kaya e guide ang mga bata nga sila sila lang, lisod gyud sya."

Trans: "If I were to put myself on the shoes of the other parents, I would understand. They must handle their kids, manage their time given the fact that they also must earn a living. All these, plus the responsibility to teach their children and guide them on their own, it's very hard."

Additionally, Participant 4, raised the fact that the parents need to be given grace as they may not have enough patience and capacity to teach their children at home. This is her account of this:

"nya especially ginahalop ra pod sa mga parents nga sila nalang mag answer kay mas madali kay tamaran siguro sila magtudlo sa ilang bata nga ana basin gahi gid pod maka learn basin mas kusog pa sila mo ma masaktan pa nila ilang bata no? diba? Kay ano wala baya sila naanad nya wala silay intsakto nga pasensya unlike sa atoa nga teachers nga na use ta kay trabaho nato na kahibalo ta mo adjust sa atong mga bata kahibalo ta mo ulog ulog nila unsaon nato sila pag pahimutang nga motoo ra sila nato."

Trans: "Especially for parents who have to take care of all the burden of answering the modules of their children, it becomes burdensome for them to also teach their children. It may also be that their children have a hard time learning which may result to acts of violence. They may not be used to this type of task.

Unlike us teachers who know how to adapt to our pupils and know how to deal with the pupils to make them follow our instructions.”

The participants have manifested great sympathy and relational concern with their pupils and the parents of their pupils. They show great understanding to the struggles the pupils have in learning in the midst of the pandemic. At the same time, they also recognize the limitations of the kind and quality of help the parents can give their pupils given the limitations their educational background, freedom, and privilege they have.

With reference to the above claims, Funa and Talaue (2021) affirmed the need for compromise among teachers in terms of deadlines and provision of supplementary support channels in distance education.

Emergent Theme 3: Influences on Learner’s Performance

The third emergent theme, influences on learner’s performance, exposes the different factors- that the participants observed- that have been affecting the success of pupils in the blended distance modality.

Emergent theme 3 has 3 subthemes clustered under it. The kind and extent of support towards their education the pupils receive from their parents and people older than them at home, and the kind of culture and perspectives they have developed towards learning at a distance are the general narratives that is discussed in this emergent theme. The conditions, pressures, and preparedness of the pupils in terms of learning at home, alone or guided, are significant elements to the current state of their reading comprehension proficiency.

Theme 8: Support from Parents/Guardians

The eighth theme, support from parents/guardians, summarizes the vital role of parents in the learning modality. More so, the influence they have on their children have great impact on the motivation, drive, and outlook of the pupils on learning in general.

The active role of parents in the education of their children in the pandemic is far-reaching such that it not only affects the mind condition of learners but also the extent of academic success their children achieve. Participant 4 expresses her observation of this phenomenon in her account:

“pag abot na sa ilang mga output mas gagmay og scores ang mga bata nga mas bright nila tungod kay ang mga parents kumpanya parents sa mga bright gipasagdaan nila ang mga bata whereas ang sa mga minos minos nga mga bata gitabangan man og mga tita tito uncle mama papa so dagko- perfect.”

Trans: “When it comes to their outputs, brighter students get lower scores than those who are not academically gifted, which can be attributed to the parent’s laidback approach in helping their children while those the counterparts of those bright students, are guided and helped by their relatives. This results to big scores-at times, perfect.”

There are a lot of positive influences that a parent can give on their children’s outlook on education. However, there are also cases wherein the parents have become antagonists to the academic achievement of their children. Participant 4 also accounts these instances in her statements:

“maybe ang mga parents na ang ga answer o di maybe sila gyud ang ga answers it’s the parents gyud ang ga answer dayon ang mga bata murag wala na lang gyud nila ang uban nila akong nakita naa sa farm during school days naa sa farm dili na gani paanhion dire kung ganahan ta mo meet sa ilaha”

“karon kay murag napa himuslan sa mga parents imbis sila ra ang dapat mag work for their living giapa apil na nila ang mga bata sa pag ano nga magka income ang bata for additional kuan additional money for diba?”

Trans: “It seems that the parents are the ones answering, no, it’s definite that the parents are the ones answering while the students have become disinterested in their studies. Some, I see working in their family’s farms during school days. In certain cases, pupils are discouraged to report to school.”

“Now that the parents are benefiting from their children, instead of the parents having the sole responsibility of earning for their families, the pupils have become part in the livelihood of their families, resulting to additional earning for the family, right?”

The participants have highlighted the vital roles of parents in their children’s education in the blended learning setup. They have both positive and negative impacts on their children’s perceptions in learning. Negative impact include discouragement and demotivation of pupils towards learning as influenced by parent’s prioritization of livelihood over education. This is why, it is important that parents work together with teachers and commit to the goals teachers establish for their pupils.

Tingson and Aquino (2021) affirmed the need for collaboration and communication of teachers and parents to improve student’s progress in reading comprehension. The active role of parents, amid the coronavirus pandemic, in the completion of a student’s education has also been recognized by Tus (2021).

Also, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) provides suggestions on how parents might assist their children in learning. First, parents may establish a routine that incorporates time for online

and media-based studies and education while balancing it with other social and play activities that a child requires. Next, parents should maintain open lines of communication with their children, especially if they are connecting what they are learning, so that they may assist their children in processing what they are learning. Furthermore, parents can teach their children to be accountable for their own learning, particularly in responding to tasks/activities assigned to them. They can also monitor their children's progress in online and blended learning, as well as the resources they use. Finally, parents and instructors should interact with one another. Just as the teacher is now the one who generates the learning modules that the kids will utilize on a local level, parents should be aware of how to get the most out of these educational packages (Angara, 2020).

Theme 9: Academic Dishonesty

Theme 9, academic dishonesty, emphasizes the issue on cheating and deceit in the learning process given the limited ability of teachers to supervise the entire learning process which has created opportunities for this type of concern to escalate.

Majority of the participants have accounted to this phenomenon to occur among their advisories. Oftentimes, tolerated and facilitated by the parents themselves, academic dishonesty has become somewhat a norm in the context of distance learning. Participant 2 shares her experience:

“Mostly karon man gud dili man nato maka makita ang bata nga ga ga himo ba sila activity kay bisan sa mga modules pag balik ana gani dili man ahh kuan sa mga bata nang naka sulat sa module mga lagmi man kaayog agi so hahaha mokuan gud ko nga dili murag di ko ka kuan nga agi na sa bata although ako mga grade 4 grade 2 pana sa una so dili pod ko familiar sa ilang mga penmanship so... pero doubt ko nga kanang nag answer sa ilang module ang parents gud na (Ah so, dili sila?) Dili sila.”

Trans: “Majority of the time, we cannot really witness the pupils doing the activities on their own. Even in their accomplished works, we can observe that it is not the pupil's handwriting reflected on the modules. The answers are legibly written. I can really say that the penmanship is not of a child's. I may not be familiar with the handwriting of the pupils, but I can surmise that the ones answering their modules are the parents.”

Participant 3 claims that parents are motivated to answer the modules of their children to ensure good results and in effect ensuring good grades for their children. She asserts this claim through her statements:

“...because even if they would not say it, there are times where parents are the ones who responded their children's modules just to ensure that their children earning high grades and another reason is students cannot totally comprehend with activities.”

Participant 4 affirms this:

“as I have noticed most of the answers are the writings being reflected in their answer sheets or coming from not their own “hahaha” not their own “hahaha” ah so somebody is helping them, doing the job, doing the work for the child.”

These instances of academic deceit have led to problems in the accuracy of assessments done by the teachers. Participant 6 shared his experience:

“maglisod tag assess sa mga bata because, even sa kanang pagbasa nila sa module we know nga not all of them can do it by themselves, kay even sa penmanship ma check naman gani nimo nga dili sila ang naggama ila rang parents”

Trans: “We have difficulties assessing the child, because aside from the fact that we know that they can’t read the modules by themselves, the penmanship on the modules are not of the students but are of the parents.”

Parents have become instrumental in the prevalence of academic dishonesty among the participant’s pupils. As the parents have become the main facilitators of learning at home, dishonesty and deceit has also seeped into the teaching-learning process in the hopes of a secured academic success for their children. This has consequently resulted to inaccurate assessment of pupils and ineffective interventions, or lack thereof made by the teachers.

Something must be done to do away with these unethical practices. Due to academic dishonesty, the quality and reliability of the assessments are compromised as such practices devalue academic integrity. Academic dishonesty has been identified by various studies to be present in different institutions given conditions of distance learning (Elsalem et al., 2021; Guiamalon et al., 2021).

Guiamalon *et al.* (2021) pinpointed the possible proliferation of academic dishonesty as a consequence of the “no fail policy” among schools.

Theme 10: State of Students’ Learning

Different aspects of distance learning have been addressed by the participants. In theme 10, state of student’s learning, characterization of the pupil’s learning capabilities and capacity to learn as presented by the participants will be discussed. The many struggles and constraints that come with distance education, learners have been negatively impacted and consequently, changed their attitudes towards learning.

First, participant 3 characterized the learners as having inadequate skills in reading comprehension despite the sufficient capacity to read words. She reveals this experience through her statements:

“There are difficulties when it comes to the student’s reading comprehension amidst the use of modular distance learning approach. It’s

because as what I have observed most of my learners when ask to read, they can pronounce, they can utter the words correctly but when ask some follow up questions with regard to what they've read they are having a hard time to formulate ideas it's where comprehension is really lacking."

Second, the participants also described the pupils as passive and disinterested in the learning process in the context of blended distance setup. Participant 4 confirms this:

"sa reading comprehension pod nila ako pong nakita nga very passive na gyud wala wala wala na gud sila, especially ang grade five ni grade six dayon ang nisunod pa jud kay wala man akong na akong nakita nga they are not reading the modules."

"I am sending them through GC kuan kanang different stories or selections with matching questions for them to answer and then of course I let them practice at home always reading but akong nakita nga wala sila ga practice kay hinay ra man gihapon ilang reading level."

Trans: "In terms of reading comprehension, I can see that they have become very passive. I observe no improvement, especially the grade five students who are now in grade 6, they are not reading their modules."

"I am sending them, through the group chat, different stories or selections with matching question for them to answer and then of course, I let them practice reading at home. However, I can see that they haven't been practicing since they are still very slow readers."

Participant 5 asserts that the blended distance learning has not been effective in facilitation reading comprehension education among her pupils. Many of the learners remain non-readers. She claims this through the following statements she made:

"siguro if e range nako 50 50 lang siguro ang akong pupils ang nakakuha gyud sa sa reading nga kanang ka "read gyud and ka comprehend dili lang read maka comprehend gyud siya so lisod ang among experiences is maka ingon gyud me nga lahi ra gyud it's different from face to face compare sa karon nga naay pandemic.."

Trans: "Probably, if I give a percentage, only half of my pupils can truly read. Truly read meaning that they can comprehend what they read. So, for us, we can really say that face-to-face classes delivered different results compared to the learning setup now during the pandemic."

Participant 6's statement also coincides with the statements of participant 5. She also claims that most of her pupils are still considered non-readers as most of them still cannot comprehend what they read.

“Oo, kay kung mo follow gyud ta sa kato bitaw tong reference guide sa sa Phil IRI, bisan pag kabalo ang mga bata mo basa even if kunu ang learners can read without ilang comprehension he is still considered non-reader so lisod gyud siya, kay bisag nakabasa na siya og kuan syllable syllable slowly no? syllable by syllable dayon nakabasa pod sya straight pero without comprehension considered man gyapon sya nga non-reader...”

Trans: “If we refer to the standards of Phil-IRI, even if the pupil can read but without comprehension, they are still considered a non-reader. So, it’s really difficult because even if a pupil can read syllable by syllable and they can do this in a continuous fashion and yet without comprehension, they are still considered as non-reader. “

According to the participants, many of the pupils have not transitioned well into the blended learning setup. This is manifested through low skills development in reading comprehension, lack of motivation, and disinterest in learning. This delay and stagnancy among learners in terms of reading comprehension was deemed concerning by the teachers as these pupils move up higher in grade level.

Alvarez (2022) has claimed that pupils, due to the circumstances they are in during the pandemic, have been experiencing socio-emotional disturbances and interruptions, which has made them lose focus on learning and getting passing marks on their subjects. They have prioritized safety and security. Moreso, Budao (2022) has also claimed that major factors resulting to pupil’s negative attitudes toward learning and lack of enthusiasm to engage in reading activities that are beneficial to their literacy development are low self-efficacy and low parental motivation. Niemi and Kousa (2020) also affirm this by stating that learning during the pandemic requires a great effort and high level of self-management among pupils which has resulted to motivation problems, difficulty in concentrating, fatigue, and difficulty in asking for help.

Conclusions

In the light of obtained findings, this study concludes that:

First, the participants perceive blended learning modality, in the context of teaching reading comprehension among public elementary and secondary pupils, to be troublesome and inconvenient. They prefer face-to-face classes over distance learning setup.

Second, assessment of pupil’s reading proficiency was done through various methods with the use of parental inquiry, video recordings, home visits, and face-to-face oral assessment. The challenges faced by teachers in assessing their pupils include the inaccuracy of reading comprehension assessment results based on printed modules and its inconsistency with assessment results done through personal assessments.

Third, teachers have made initiatives to cope with the challenges brought by teaching remotely. These initiatives include self-capacitation with ICT, cross referencing of teaching strategies and techniques with other teachers, and provision of supplemental learning materials to pupils.

Fourth, parents have a great influence on the motivation and attitude of pupils towards learning during the pandemic. Lastly, the participants claimed that blended distance learning is ineffective when applied to teaching reading comprehension because of many factors including pupil's disinterest, demotivation, and apathy towards their academic requirements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research study, the following are recommended:

1. Encourage the government to strengthen the implementation of Covid-19 health protocol in schools and reconsider resumption of limited face-to-face classes particularly for practical subjects like reading comprehension.
2. Encourage Education Program Supervisors, particularly in English, to lead the development of new techniques and strategies in teaching reading comprehension in blended learning modality.
3. Incite support from the Department of Education to provide English teachers more learning resources (i.e. story books and other printed selections) specifically intended for reading comprehension skills development.
4. Strengthen the ties and communication with stakeholders, specifically the parents, to improve their involvement in their children's education.
5. Encourage school heads to conduct an analysis of the immediate needs of the teachers and address issues on academic dishonesty prevalent among learners.
6. Encourage teachers to join seminars and trainings to better capacitate themselves as facilitators of the blended learning modality.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher showed all the necessary ethical consideration on the entire duration of the study. Since humans were chosen as the study participants, confidentiality of information was observed. Ensuring the dignity and privacy of participants is also a must especially in phenomenology. Furthermore, the researcher made sure that potential risks to the participants were kept at a minimum.

Additionally, the researcher followed the ethical protocols stipulated in the Ethics Committee of Foundation University. To ensure that the research topic was evidently sound, significant and ethically correct consultation was also pursued. The researcher also displayed non-judgmental attitude during the entire interview to ensure that censure was avoided. Moreover, the participants signed a consent form along with the full understanding of the risk and benefits of the study being conducted.

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to express her immeasurable appreciation and deepest gratitude to the following persons who in one way or another have contributed to the completion of this study:

Ms. Angela Gabrielle B. Bacang, the researcher's adviser, for her kindness, understanding, and guidance, and for sharing her expertise in the field of phenomenology that pushes the researcher to come up with a good research output;

Dr. Roullette P. Cordevilla, Dr. John Robert General, Dr. Jessa Christine E. Umbac, the panel members, for furnishing the researcher with intelligent suggestions and constructive feedback regarding the study;

Dr. Maria Chona Z. Futralan, for sharing her expertise and for recommending a list of valuable reading materials necessary for the development of the research;

Benigna A. Tampioc, the researcher's parent, for her moral support, unconditional love, and unceasing prayers throughout the years;

Hanilyn, Flitz, and Roselyn, the researcher's friends, for their pieces of advice, encouragement, and support;

Carly Phil, for the love and emotional support since day one; and

Above all, the **Almighty God**, the true source of life, strength, wisdom, and hope.

REFERENCES

- Agarwal, S., & Kaushik, J. S. (2020). Student's perception of online learning during COVID pandemic. *The Indian Journal of Pediatrics*, 87(7), 554-554. doi: s12098-020-03327-7 T
- Alvarez, A. Jr. (2020). The phenomenon of learning at a distance through emergency remote teaching amidst the pandemic crisis. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1), 127-143.
- Asran, A. (2021). Improving Students' Reading Ability Through Picture Media a During The Pandemic Period. *Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran)*, 5(3), 741-746. DOI: doi.org/10.33578/pjr.v5i3.8401
- Basilaia, G., & Kvavadze, D. (2020). Transition to online education in schools during a SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Georgia. *Pedagogical Research*, 5(4). doi: 10.1186/s12889-018-5302-3
- Bento, F., Giglio Bottino, A., Cerchiaro Pereira, F., Forastieri de Almeida, J., & Gomes Rodrigues, F. (2021). Resilience in higher education: a complex perspective to lecturers' adaptive processes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Education Sciences*, 11(9), 492.
- Budao, D. V. (2021). Parenting Amidst the Pandemic: The Case of Parental Involvement in Adolescents' Reading Engagement and Modular Distance Learning. *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal (IIMRJ)*, 3(3).
- Castroverde F. & Acala M. (2021). Modular distance learning modality: Challenges of teachers in teaching amid the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 10(8), 7-15. doi: 10.5861/ijrse.2021.602
- Chalukya, B. V. (2021). Importance of Reading Habits. *Indian Journal of Library and Information Science*, 15(2).
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). Steps in conducting a scholarly mixed methods study.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. sage.
- Elsalem, L., Al-Azzam, N., Jum'ah, A. A., & Obeidat, N. (2021). Remote E-exams during Covid-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study of students' preferences and academic dishonesty in faculties of medical sciences. *Annals of Medicine and Surgery*, 62, 326-333.
- Funa A. & Talaue F. (2021). Constructivist Learning Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Investigating Students' Perceptions of Biology Self-Learning Modules. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 20(3), 250-264. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.20.3.15>
- Kanik, M., & Hadizadeh, A. (2022). An exploration of EFL Teachers' Challenges and strategies during the pandemic: A case of emergency blended Synchronous Education. *Register Journal*, 15(1), 1-19.
- Khanal, L. P., Bidari, S., & Nadif, B. (2021). Teachers' (De)Motivation During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study from Nepal. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(6), 82–88. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.6.10>
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in nursing & health*, 40(1), 23-42.

- Jhoana, L. P. E. M. S., Lunesto, P., Malaca, J. A. M. M. J., & Tus, J. (2021). Mag-Aralay Di 'Biro: A Phenomenological Study on the Lived Experiences of the Students on Blended Learning Amidst COVID-19.
- Kasi, Y. E. M., Suparno, S., & Asib, A. (2021). Parents' Perception: Roles and Involvement in Distance Learning Amid the Covid-19 Pandemic. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 13(3), 1877-1887.
- Kennedy, K., Nowak, S., Raghuraman, R., Thomas, J., & Davis, S. F. (2000). Academic dishonesty and distance learning: Student and faculty views. *College Student Journal*, 34(2).
- Kornhaber, R. A. (2009). The lived experience of nursing severe burns injury patients: a phenomenological inquiry (Doctoral dissertation).
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage publications.
- Mezmir, E. A. (2020). Qualitative data analysis: An overview of data reduction, data display, and interpretation. *Research on humanities and social sciences*, 10(21), 15-27.
- McLaughlin, M., & DeVoogd, G. (2017). Reading comprehension, critical understanding: Research-based practice. In *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 85-109). Routledge.
- Niemi, H. M., & Kousa, P. (2020). A case study of students' and teachers' perceptions in a Finnish high school during the COVID pandemic. *International journal of technology in education and science*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijtes.v4i4.167>
- Onuoha, A. Qualitative Research Study.
- Praveena, K. R., & Sasikumar, S. (2021). Application of Colaizzi's method of data analysis in phenomenological research. *Med Leg Updat*, 21(2), 914-8.
- Putri, K. I. M., Masakawati, N. P. E., & Tantra, D. K. (2021). EFL Students' Interest and Their Reasons towards Recreational Reading Activity. *Lingua Scientia*, 28(1), 1-7.
- Quental, K. N., Leite, A. L., Feitosa, A. D. N. A., de Oliveira, Z. N. P., de Sousa Tavares, L. V., de Sousa Tavares, W. G., ... & Silva, J. B. N. F. (2021). SARS-CoV-2 co-infection with dengue virus in Brazil: A potential case of viral transmission by a health care provider to household members. *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*, 40, 101975.
- Quintos, C. A., Caballes, D. G., Gapad, E. M., & Valdez, M. R. (2020). Perceptions of teachers on the different strains of online modalities of learning: an adoption to new normal. *integration*, 3, 4.
- Rahayu, R. P., & Wirza, Y. (2020). Teachers' perception of online learning during pandemic covid-19. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan*, 20(3), 392-406. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17509/jpp.v20i3.29226>
- Rahman, H. (2014). The role of ICT in open and distance education. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 15(4), 162-169. Doi: 10.17718/tojde.47700
- Reimers, F., Schleicher, A., Saavedra, J., & Tuominen, S. (2020). Supporting the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Oecd*, 1(1), 1-38.
- Sanders, C. (2003). Application of Colaizzi's method: Interpretation of an auditable

- decision trail by a novice researcher. *Contemporary nurse*, 14(3), 292-302.
- Shosha, G. A. (2012). Employment of Colaizzi's strategy in descriptive phenomenology: A reflection of a researcher. *European Scientific Journal*, 8(27).
- Smith, J. A. (2024). Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods.
- Tanhueco-Tumapon, T. (2020). Health Devolution: Response to COVID-19. *Philippine Institute of Development Studies*, 27, 242-273.
- Tarrayo, V. N., Paz, R. M. O., & Gepila, E. C. (2021). The shift to flexible learning amidst the pandemic: the case of English language teachers in a Philippine state university. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1–14.
doi:10.1080/17501229.2021.1944163
- Tingson, J., & Aquino, J. (2021). Addressing Reading Comprehension Difficulties in Printed Modular Distance Learning: A Case Study. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 3(10), 01–06. doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2021.3.10.1
- Topping, K. J., Douglas, W., Robertson, D., & Ferguson, N. (2022). Effectiveness of online and blended learning from schools: A systematic review. *Review of Education*, 10(2), e3353.
- Toquero, C. M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for higher education amid the COVID-19 pandemic: The Philippine context. *Pedagogical Research*, 5(4).
doi:10.29333/pr/7947
- Tus, J. (2021). Amidst the Online Learning in the Philippines: The Parental Involvement and Its Relationship to the Student's Academic Performance. *International Engineering Journal for Research & Development*, 6(3), 1-15.
- Van der Spoel, I., Noroozi, O., Schuurink, E., & van Ginkel, S. (2020). Teachers' online teaching expectations and experiences during the Covid19-pandemic in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 623–638.
doi:10.1080/02619768.2020.1821185
- Verity, R., Okell, L. C., Dorigatti, I., Winskill, P., Whittaker, C., Imai, N., ... & Ferguson, N. M. (2020). Estimates of the severity of coronavirus disease 2019: a model-based analysis. *The Lancet infectious diseases*, 20(6), 669-677.
-

APA citation:

Tampioc, G. A. (2024). TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION USING BLENDED- DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC. *Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(5), 1878–1908.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11235210>

Corresponding author: gladys.tampioc@deped.gov.ph