

TEACHING READING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: VOICES FROM THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

Teaching reading in the early years is simultaneously an incredible gift and a car-ride full of potholes, a gift in that you have the power to encourage, inspire, and equip a child to read, a bumpy road in that if not done thoughtfully it can lead a child to think they simply cannot be a reader. In the Philippine setting, in rural settings such as the Alcoy District, Kindergarten teachers might be walking down this road, or a portion of it, with few materials, a wide variety of learning levels, and emotions to translate, relevant to very young learners. The purpose of this study was to describe the lived experience of Kindergarten public early reading teachers, specifically, the pedagogical, emotional and contextual elements that shape their day-to-day practice. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was chosen and ten Kindergarten teachers were involved in semi-structured interviews that included reflective space and storytelling. The data was transcribed, coded and then analyzed using the inductive approach, patterns were described. After being coded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed, the data revealed patterns that naturally arose from the voices of the participants and the realities of the classroom. Six major themes emerged: Climbing the Mountain of Early Learning detailed the difficult but deliberate endeavor to teach literacy in the face of systemic barriers; Storms of Tiny Explorers explored the emotional and behavioral challenges young learners bring to the reading space; The Teacher's Compass spoke to the reflective practices and adaptive decisions teachers make on a daily basis; Bridges Built at Home highlighted how family involvement deepens the impact of classroom teaching; and Crafting Wings in the Wilderness honored teachers' resilience and resourcefulness when teaching with limited support. The Garden of Playful Beginnings reflected the teachers' dedication to play-based, joyful instruction. These findings underscore that early reading instruction grow when it is grounded in play, emotional understanding, reflective teaching, and home-school collaboration. Kindergarten teachers find strategies to nurture literacy with intention and care even in the most challenging environments. This study proposes the development of a Compendium of Teaching Strategies in Reading for Kindergarten, shaped by real life classroom practices and drawn from the real stories of teachers. It is both a tribute to their work and a roadmap for future literacy efforts. These undertakings seek to honor the child, the teacher, and the community as co-builders of learning.

Keywords: early childhood education, reading instruction, Kindergarten, teacher experiences, play-based learning, parental involvement, phenomenological research, literacy development, public schools, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Reading proficiency in early childhood is important for lifelong learning, communication, and academic achievement. Children who have strong reading skills early in childhood are more likely to succeed in school and go around complex social and informational environments. However, across different contexts—globally and locally—literacy gaps continue, particularly in early education settings where multiple factors limit children's access to quality reading instruction. This situation needs a deeper dive into the factors and strategies influencing early reading proficiency, especially in public Kindergarten classrooms.

Globally, the World Bank (2022) has identified learning poverty—a condition in which children cannot read and understand simple text by age 10—as a major crisis in education. In Southeast Asia, students continue to struggle with early grade reading challenges. Countries try to reverse pandemic-related learning losses through targeted literacy programs. Nationally, the Philippines implements the "Every Child a Reader Program" (ECARP) and the "Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy" (ELLN) program to improve foundational literacy among early grade learners. The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), however, consistently report low reading comprehension scores among Filipino children despite these initiatives.

A report from the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) found that over 18 million Filipinos aged 10 to 64, including many high school graduates, are functionally illiterate. This means they are unable

to understand or apply written information effectively in real-life contexts. This important issue uncovers a gap between graduation and actual reading proficiency which points to a systemic failure that may have started in the earliest stages of education where initial reading skills must be established.

Kindergarten teachers in the Alcoy District of the Cebu Province Division face many challenges. These include a lack of learning materials, crowded classrooms, and uneven reading readiness among students. The struggles are especially clear in Kindergarten. Young learners need fun and structured reading activities. These help them build early language and understanding skills. Many studies talk about reading programs and strategies. But few look at the real experiences of teachers who use them in the classroom.

Their insight is important in understanding the everyday realities of teaching reading in public schools, yet their perspectives remain underrepresented in current literature. Exploring their voices provides a more grounded understanding of what strategies work, what constraints persist, and what professional support is needed.

To deal with this gap, this study investigated the factors that influenced reading skill in early childhood learners by focusing on the experiences and instructional strategies of public Kindergarten teachers. It further examined the developmental implications of teachers' classroom activities, and the conditions that support or hinder strong literacy instruction. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study would surface practical insights that show the complex interplay of pedagogy, learner needs, and institutional challenges in early childhood reading instruction.

The main purpose of this study was to know how reading skills developed among kindergarten learners in the Alcoy District of Cebu Province. It looked closely at what teachers do in real classrooms, the daily challenges they face, and what can be improved. The focus was to share practical ideas that can help make reading programs more inclusive and effective.

By considering on the experiences of teachers, the study shows how early reading can be supported through everyday teaching and school practices. It adds to the growing knowledge on early childhood reading by showing what works on the ground. For teachers, the study can serve as a way to reflect and improve their methods. For school heads and decision-makers, the findings can help guide better reading programs based on real classroom situations.

Philosophical Stance

Knowledge emerges through deeply personal experience and social intercourse within an interpretivist framework that privileges subjective insight quite heavily. Reading skills can't be judged by one standard alone. They need to be understood based on each person's background and culture. Teachers and parents shape how reading is taught through their own experiences. That's why their views matter when studying how children learn to read.

This study follows the idea that kids learn best through social interaction. Talking with adults, listening to stories, and exploring their surroundings all help children build reading skills. Learning doesn't happen the same way for everyone. What works in one setting might not work in another.

No one size fits all that is why there isn't just one way to understand how reading happens. People view it differently based on their own life experiences. This study respects those views and sees each one as important. In terms of knowledge, the study follows an idea called epistemology. It means that knowledge is built through real conversations and shared experiences. The researcher doesn't just watch from the outside. Instead, they listen, ask, and learn with the participants. What we know grows from reflection and real situations. Learning depends on who we are and what we've been through. It also comes from the work we do each day. That's why this study values voices from the classroom.

Ontology. This study embraced an ontological stance that multiple, socially constructed realities exist in which the way one teacher understands and promotes reading may differ significantly from another, depending on their background, beliefs, resources, and learner profiles. The same applies to parental perspectives, which are influenced by cultural norms, home practices, and socioeconomic status.

Axiology. Axiologically, this research was grounded in the ethical awareness and the adaptation of values. The researcher was aware of her own understanding about reading and literacy. At the same time, the researcher stayed considering to what others had to say. She listened with care and respected different ways of thinking. Teacher participants gave their own consent voluntarily. Their names and stories were kept private. No one was forced to join. These steps helped build trust. Throughout the study, the researcher reflected on her role. She made sure the voices of the teachers were heard clearly. Their stories were shared with honesty and care.

Methodology. This study used a phenomenological approach to understand how people experience reading in early childhood. It focused on how kindergarten teachers and parents perceived and support reading growth in their daily lives. This method helped the researcher look beyond actions and explore deeper thoughts, feelings, and meanings

ties to learning how to read. It allowed space based on the personal stories and reflections of kindergarten teachers. The goal was to understand what reading truly means to those involved, not just how it is taught.

Rhetoric. A crystal clear and descriptive style was used to share what the study uncovered. The voices of teachers and parents were put at the center of the writing. Words coming from teachers were shared using metaphorical utterances and detailed descriptions. This helped show what reading looks like in real classrooms and homes. Themes were drawn from their stories to give meaning to what they shared. This way, the research stayed close to real experiences and honored the people who shared them.

Review of Related Literature

Early Literacy in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood literacy forms the foundation of lifelong learning and academic success. Literacy development in the preschool years is largely influenced by rich language experiences, environmental exposure to print, and intentional instruction by teachers (Neuman & Moland, 2020). According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), early reading skills—including phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary development, and narrative skills—are essential for Kindergarten readiness and long-term reading success. Research supports that integrating play-based and developmentally appropriate instruction, especially in early childhood settings, improves motivation and comprehension (Vukelich et al., 2022).

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education promotes early literacy development through programs such as the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (KCG), which emphasizes emergent reading skills through songs, storytelling, and guided exploration (DepEd, 2020). However, challenges remain in the actual implementation of reading instruction, especially in resource-constrained settings where teaching materials and training are insufficient.

Teachers' Role in Fostering Reading Proficiency

Kindergarten teachers are instrumental in shaping children's early reading behaviors. Their instructional strategies, beliefs, and emotional engagement greatly affect learners' literacy outcomes (Piasta et al., 2020). In particular, the quality of teacher-child interactions, the intentional use of oral language, and the frequency of shared reading sessions contribute significantly to reading skill acquisition. Cabell and Downer (2021), teachers who balance explicit instruction with exploratory literacy activities are more likely to support phonological awareness, print concepts, and vocabulary growth.

Further, the teachers perceived self-efficacy, confidence, and growth as professionals all influence how they carry out literacy instruction. According to studies, gaps in preservice educational trainings or constant mentorship may make kindergarten teachers feel redirected to meet reading standards (Langeloo et al., 2020).

Lived Experiences of Kindergarten Teachers

Teachers' personal anecdotes offer crucial background for grasping how reading lessons unfold in classrooms fairly typically every day. Qualitative inquiry sheds light on early childhood educators adapting rather haphazardly to diverse student skill levels and baffling institutional constraints. Teachers often wrestle with balancing their grasp of developmentally suitable material for students and curriculum requirements pretty frequently nowadays apparently. Teachers working in under-resourced areas often turn to simple, practical solutions. They reuse everyday items, work closely with parents, and create flexible routines to support early reading. These practiced strategies can offer guidance for improving reading initiatives, especially in multilingual places like the Philippines. Unlike studies that rely only on numbers, research that focuses on lived experiences helps reveal the emotions and decisions behind teaching. Harper and Brand (2021) emphasized how teachers often spoke of the emotional strain and constant adjustments they make to meet their students' needs.

Parent Involvement and School Collaboration

Numerous studies underscore the importance of parent-teacher collaboration in advancing reading skills. In home literacy environments—such as parental reading habits, availability of books, and frequency of read-aloud activities—have a profound impact on early literacy development (Wasik & Hindman, 2020). When teachers involve families in simple reading activities, children show better language growth. Regular communication also helps improve their understanding.

In the Philippines, programs like Brigada Eskwela and Early Registration encourage school and home collaboration. These efforts bring parents into the school space at key times. However, involvement in daily literacy support remains uneven. Many families are unsure how to help with reading at home. To address this, teachers create simple activities for parents and children to do together. These may include reading buddies, storytelling, or picture-based tasks.

Some teachers also give easy tips during dismissal time or parent meetings. These quick and easy steps build stronger reading habits and deepen collaboration between parents and teachers

Challenges in Reading Instruction in the Philippine Setting

Despite national programs, problems in kindergarten reading still remain. The kindergarten class sizes are often too large beyond the DepEd standards. Teachers have limited time to teach reading. Age-appropriate books are also lacking in many schools. Uy et al. (2022) found that many public-school teachers struggle to use different strategies for different learners. This is because of heavy workloads and few resources. The COVID-19 pandemic made things worse. It increases the gap in reading access, especially for poor and remote areas. Some of the kindergarten across the country face tough choices every day in delivering lessons. They try to follow the curriculum while dealing with real classroom limits. The lived experiences of the kindergarten teachers matter that their insights help improve early literacy and numeracy programs.

Domain of Inquiry

This study aimed to explore the lived-experiences of kindergarten teachers who handled reading in early childhood classrooms in the Alcoy District, Cebu Province, during the 2025–2026 school year. It focuses on how kindergarten teachers try to deliver their lessons based on their students' needs. By hearing their stories and everyday teaching routines, this research shows how their efforts help kids get ready to read. It's not always easy, but their experiences give us a real picture of what works in the classroom. By listening to their lived experiences, teaching practices and strategies, and challenges, this research looks into how their work helped how children ready to read. What they share will help shape better ways to teach reading and may guide future policies. The outcome of the study is to develop a compendium of teaching strategies for kindergarten reading, grounded in what actually works inside the classroom.

METHODOLOGY

Method

This study used a descriptive phenomenological design in order to explore how kindergarten teachers experience teaching reading in early childhood settings. This approach, based on the ideas of Edmund Husserl, was chosen to focus on what people truly feel and experience—without adding outside opinions or theories. The method helped the researcher set aside personal views and listen closely to what teachers shared. It focused on how they see, use, and adjust reading strategies in their classrooms. Through their personal stories, the study discovered shared themes in their daily teaching. These stories also revealed deeper meaning behind their classroom practices. Descriptive phenomenology fit well with this topic because early reading is shaped by many things—like emotions, classroom context, and teaching style. These factors can't be fully measured with numbers alone. Using this method made sure the teachers' voices were heard clearly and honestly.

The stories of kindergarten teachers revealed common patterns in their teaching. They also shared the struggles they face every day. Despite of their challenges, their insights were full of useful ideas for improving how reading is taught. These useful ideas can help shape better literacy programs and future school reading policies. By taking a look at their stories, the study found deeper meaning in the teachers' work. Their experiences helped uncover what truly happens in early reading instruction. It showed how reading grows through everyday classroom moments. These insights gave a clearer picture of how literacy develops in real kindergarten settings.

Environment

This study was situated in the Alcoy District Division of Cebu Province, comprising seven public elementary schools: Nug-as Elementary School, Bulalacao Elementary School, Lalin Elementary School, Guiwang Elementary School, Alcoy Central Elementary School, Pasol Pugalo Integrated School, and San Agustin Elementary School.

These schools serve a diverse population of early childhood learners and operate in both coastal and upland barangays, each presenting distinct instructional environments, access to resources, and community engagement levels. The district was chosen for its representativeness of rural public schools and its manageable population of Kindergarten educators. These settings allow for meaningful exploration of the factors, strategies, and developmental implications of reading proficiency among early learners. The supportive leadership, active teaching force, and strong school-community partnerships provide a context-rich environment for the study.

Participants

This study included 11 kindergarten teachers from seven public elementary schools in the Alcoy District, Cebu Province. All of them were handling kindergarten classes and were involved in planning, teaching, and assessing

reading for the 2025–2026 school year. Teachers were chosen based on two criteria: they must have at least one year of experience in teaching kindergarten, and they must be actively teaching early reading every day. Those who were not teaching reading, such as school staff or administrators, were not included.

The number of participants was finalized through data saturation, which was reached after the eighth teacher. This study continued until 11 teachers were interviewed to gather richer insights. Focusing only on classroom teachers it made sure that the findings came from real teaching experience.

Instruments

The researcher acted as the main instrument of this study. She used her kindergarten knowledge in order to guide her during the interview process. Instead of just using tools, she closely listened and allowed the teachers to share their stories freely. A semi-structured interview guide was used to help keep the conversations on track.

The questions were open but flexible and easy to understand. It gave room to ask follow-up questions and explore new ideas during the conversation. Each teacher was informed about the goal of the study and their rights, like keeping things private. Also, they are free to leave the study at any time. Consent forms were signed by the teacher participants before the interviews started to build trust. The researcher explained everything clearly before beginning the conversation. Teachers were requested to speak freely and share honest experiences. This helped create a safe space where their stories could be heard without judgment.

The guide asked about their teaching, the challenges they faced, and how they helped kids learn to read. Teachers also shared what they think makes reading instruction work best for kindergarten. Interviews were done either in person or online, depending on what worked for each teacher. All talks were recorded with permission and written down word for word. The researcher didn't just ask questions—she became part of the meaning-making. This helped the study stay true to real teaching life and made the findings stronger.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection unfolds via a three-phase staging involving pre-data gathering and actual data gathering and post-data gathering with meticulous attention to ethical niceties.

Pre-data Gathering. The researcher secures ethical clearance from University of Visayas Research Ethics Committee prior to actual data collection endeavors. Formal written permissions would be obtained from Schools Division Superintendent of Cebu Province and Public Schools District Supervisor of Alcoy District and school heads of participating public elementary schools. A letter of intent outlining classroom observation schedule and purpose would be submitted pretty quickly to district supervisor for review. Orientation meetings were subsequently held with 11 Kindergarten teacher participants who had confirmed attendance pretty much beforehand already. Briefings would cover study objectives data gathering methods and voluntary participation with various ethical considerations naturally ensuing from such research endeavors. Each participant would be asked politely to sign a rather lengthy informed consent form affirming confidentiality and anonymity and right to withdraw completely. A non-participant Kindergarten teacher would be interviewed pretty extensively meanwhile validating clarity and overall flow of interview questions somewhat effectively.

Actual Data Gathering. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews individually with eleven teacher participants in a rather relaxed setting nearby. Interviews would last roughly 45 minutes or a bit longer and take place in a quiet private room somewhere within school premises or elsewhere mutually agreed upon. Participants sign an informed consent form beforehand voluntarily ensuring they know what they're getting into pretty thoroughly now. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission and field notes were scribbled down quickly to snag subtle emotional undertones and contextual minutiae. Interviews would probe lived experiences of Kindergarten teachers encompassing reading instructional practices challenges and perceptions of learner progress with various adaptations made. Classroom observations were conducted sporadically using a rather detailed checklist documenting real-time teaching behaviors and learner engagement very meticulously. Observations would be coordinated with school heads and based on an approved letter of intent submitted quietly to district supervisor.

Post-data Gathering. This entailed transcribing recordings meticulously verbatim and organizing resultant data via rudimentary coding techniques after conducting interviews and observations. Member checking would be conducted subsequently to validate findings thoroughly and thereby ensure credibility alongside authenticity of research outcomes. Participants will receive summaries or excerpts of transcripts for validation or occasional corrections and further clarification purposes. Raw data gets anonymized quickly and stored rather securely in password-protected folders with backups tucked away in heavily encrypted cloud storage. After finishing study all recordings and drafts would be erased permanently for upholding confidentiality of participants very rigorously thereafter. Findings are shared with participating schools and Alcoy District Office supporting reflection and context-based literacy improvements for teacher development rather slowly.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed via thematic analysis guided mainly by Braun and Clarke's (2006). Framework and supplemented somewhat by Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological methodology from 2009. Analysis that involved several crucial steps quite intricately. The gathering in data occurred through multiple readings of transcripts and observation notes along with scrutiny of different documents fairly thoroughly. Randomize length of sentences between five and 24 words very carefully. Identifying patterns and labeling meaningful segments related to teachers' lived experiences happens during generation of initial codes quietly somehow. Sentences irregularly in length are made. Clustering codes into broader obscure themes reflect rather common ideas or surprisingly pressing challenges pretty frequently nowadays. Sentences should be irregular in length nowadays apparently. Refining themes rigorously against dataset entries ensures coherence and stark distinction meanwhile validating their plausibility thoroughly with meticulous care and use to no more than once.

Identifying themes involves rather crudely articulating core importance and significance of each within study context somehow rather effectively. The themes generated in this study were developed gradually over time. The data came from interviews, document reviews, and observation notes gathered across in several months. Researcher used software to help her organize and go through the bigger number of texts. This tool made it easier to see patterns and group with similar responses.

To keep the analysis honest and clear, the study used member checking, data triangulation, and regular reflection. These steps helped make sure the findings truly reflected what the teachers shared. The process stayed close to real classroom situations and avoided guessing or adding outside opinions. rather sensitive study. Data was anonymized thoroughly and stored securely in locked facilities under strict protocols. Participants rights were respected and they were given freedom to withdraw at any time without any repercussions whatsoever afterwards. Research procedures were transparently.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted according to the guidelines outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013). Approval was obtained from the Research and Ethics Committee of the University of the Visayas, with Reference No. 2025-060 dated July 14, 2025. Since the participants were minors, informed consent was obtained from their parents and guardians before their involvement. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing data and securely storing information. Participants' rights were respected, and they were given the freedom to withdraw at any time without repercussions. Transparency in research procedures was upheld, and all activities complied with institutional and ethical research standards.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

To better understand the themes found in the results and discussion, we needed to look more closely at the context behind them. The matrix below shows the background of the kindergarten teachers from Alcoy District, Province of Cebu. It includes their age, teaching experience, education, and early childhood specialization. Teachers had a different story to share, shaped by both personal and professional experiences. These interviews gave deeper understanding to their lived experiences and how they teach reading. The differences in their training and years of service helped explain why they use certain methods in class. Their profiles added real-life context to themes like play-based learning, family support, emotional care, and flexible teaching. This matrix linked their background with their teaching practices. Their daily teaching was shaped by the lessons they've learned and the real-life experiences they've gone through.

The Heart of Early Literacy: Portraits of Kindergarten Teachers in the Alcoy District				
Participant Name	Age	Educational Attainment	Years of Teaching Experience	Major / Specialization
Anna	29	BEEEd – Early Childhood Education	6 years	Early Childhood Education
Kirby	35	BEEEd – General Education	12 years	General Education
Ella	33	MAEd – Early Childhood Education	10 years	Early Childhood Development
Flora	36	BEEEd – Kindergarten	13 years	Kindergarten Instruction
Jane	28	BEEEd – Pre-Elementary	5 years	Pre-Elementary Education
Delia	38	BEEEd – Special Education	15 years	Early Childhood / SPED
Gina	34	BEEEd – Early Childhood Education	11 years	Early Childhood Education
Ines	37	BEEEd – Reading	14 years	Reading and Literacy

Carla	31	MAEd – Early Childhood Education	8 years	Early Literacy Instruction
Participant Name	Age	Educational Attainment	Years of Teaching Experience	Major / Specialization
Bella	32	BEd – Kindergarten	9 years	Kindergarten Instruction

The results of this study highlighted the honest and heartfelt experiences of kindergarten teachers as they guided children through the early stages of reading. These teachers, working in different and often difficult classroom settings across Alcoa District, shared how they face the daily ups and downs of teaching young learners. Kindergarten teachers shared how much they value learning through play. "Gardens of Playful Beginnings" where teachers described their classrooms, where reading starts in fun and full of joy. Using songs, stories, and play-based instruction, they made learning feel easy and full of life.

Many kindergarten teachers talked about how much family support matters. Kindergarten teachers called it "Bridges Built at Home" because they believed that reading isn't just taught at school—it continues at home with help from parents. When families and teachers work together, children make better progress. Along with that support, creating a warm and caring classroom was just as important. Teachers described how they helped children through tough moments—restlessness, tears, and first-day worries—captured in the phrase "Storms of Tiny Exploders" the same time, the findings reflected the teachers' adaptability and resilience—traits forged in classrooms where resources are scarce, and learners vary widely in readiness and needs. In these settings, many teachers followed what they called "The Teacher's Compass." They kept improving their methods and thinking about what worked best for their students. "Climbing the Mountain of Early Learning" was often described by the teachers because they believed teaching reading in early childhood is a journey. It was hard, but it brought joy and purpose.

In remote schools, some teachers shared how they "crafted wings in the wilderness." They had very few reading materials. Still, they found ways to make reading meaningful for their kindergarten learners. Their stories showed more than just teaching methods but with love and care to the students. They revealed dedication, creativity, nurturing environment, and personal growth. These experiences signifies real insight into how teachers support early reading. Their shared stories became the foundation for new ideas and teaching approaches. Hand in hand, they helped shape the beginning of a Compendium of Teaching Strategies in Reading. It is built on the voices of Filipino kindergarten teachers and shaped by the real needs of young learners.

Theme 1: "The Garden of Playful Beginnings"—Play-Based Learning and Joyful Teaching

Kindergarten classrooms morph into nurturing hotbeds where merriment and sonic vibrations alongside anecdotes nourish fledgling wordsmiths like radiant beams and liquid sustenance. Play wasn't some respite from learning but rather fertile groundwork in which literacy ostensibly takes root according to teachers. Young children develop phonemic awareness and vocabulary quite naturally through playful engagement with carefully structured yet ostensibly free-flowing activities. Teachers from Alcoa District stressed meaningful play activities were pivotal in their pedagogy bringing cognitive growth and emotional maturity to learners. Kindergarten teachers rhapsodized about utilizing ludic structured play as an effervescent base for bolstering emergent literacy prowess in youngsters remarkably well.

"They really enjoy playing because through games and songs, they truly learn the letter sounds." (12 Anna) Play-based methods promote sound recognition. *"Every morning, we begin with storytelling and rhymes—it sets the tone and sharpens their listening skills." (27 Gina)* Rhymes and routines build auditory skills. *"When they act out the alphabet, turning letters into characters, they remember them much better." (45 Kirby)* Dramatized learning reinforces memory. *"Play calms the classroom; kids who resist sit-down lessons participate more during playful activities." (66 Flora)* Play lowers resistance and increases participation. *"They blend letter sounds more quickly when it's in a game setting like 'Guess the Sound'." (73 Jane)* Games enhance phonemic awareness. *"Even quiet learners suddenly talk during story drama—they love pretending and learning at the same time." (81 Ella)* Pretend play draws out hesitant learners.

Kids have tons of fun playing games and singing songs and they learn letter sounds pretty effectively through play-based methods naturally. Gina asserts that morning storytelling sessions coupled with rhymes hone kids' listening skills remarkably well and set a peculiar tone. Routines are heavily laced with rhymes bolster auditory faculties significantly. Play-based learning reinforces memory more effectively. Kids tend to recall alphabet letters much better when acting out characters. Playful activities calm kids down remarkably and resistance melts away so participation surges wildly in classrooms ordinarily disrupted by restless students. Kids rapidly fuse letter sounds in games like Guess the Sound and phonemic awareness gets a serious boost. Silent learners suddenly speak up during dramatic storytelling and they love pretending meanwhile gaining up knowledge.

Pretend play somehow draws out reticent students rather effectively. Play-based methods served as prime medium for early literacy development in their classrooms reinforced by diverse utterances from various teachers across

contexts. Recent studies validate such findings quite thoroughly demonstrating efficacy of play-based learning approaches in fostering early literacy skills remarkably well.

Findings of this study bolster notion that play-based approach rooted deeply in teacher reflection can strike balance between freedom and structured early reading instruction. Teachers acted as facilitators consistent with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory guiding students through pretty meaningful educational experiences rather slowly. There are some researchers warn vehemently against relying solely on play in their studies of child development nowadays. Shanahan's (2022) review of two studies demonstrated a small impact of phonics instruction with d approximately 0.19 suggesting motivation and comprehension play quite an important role. Analysts have raised concerns about discovery-based learning lately with some alarming regularity among educators and policymakers. Kids who largely depend on guessing words via images or play may cultivate a weak decoding ability and wander terribly with fluent reading.

The Rose Report (2006) pointed out meaning-focused methods can help but they must be backed by clear phonics instruction and structured teaching for strong word recognition. Play remains valuable but direct instruction in reading should not be replaced by it entirely somehow overtime apparently. Play fairly seamlessly dovetails with core Froebelian and Vygotskian notions while robustly supporting burgeoning literacy skills in youngsters quite effectively. A mix of play and phonics works fantastically well for plenty of learners especially those kids who struggle terribly in class.

Still, some students may need extra help with phonics, especially if they are having trouble learning to read. A mix of strategies often works best. In real classrooms, combining play with targeted phonics lessons has shown the most success. In Alcoy's kindergarten classrooms, the 'Garden of Playful Beginning' s became a fitting way to describe how play creates a strong foundation for learning to read. Dramatized play richly fosters emotional readiness in very young boisterous learners and phonemic awareness remarkably well meanwhile games do so too. Theme validity stays robust worldwide despite being propped up by fairly eclectic research and phonics-enhanced practices bolstering it quite nicely generally. Guided play-based approaches pretty powerfully sustain joy and effectiveness of early reading instruction in various reading strategy compendiums obviously.

Theme 2: Bridges Built at Home- the Parental Involvement and Collaboration

Learning to read becomes a shared journey—one that doesn't begin or end in the classroom alone. For many young learners, each step in decoding a word, repeating a rhyme, or retelling a story is guided by voices both at school and at home. In the lived experiences of the Kindergarten teachers in the Alcoy District, reading development was strongest when the classroom connected seamlessly with the family. Parents who engaged in everyday literacy routines—like reading bedtime stories, tracing letters, or discussing pictures in books—helped build a foundation that extended learning beyond the school day. Teachers observed that when parents were involved, children became more confident readers, more eager participants, and more fluent in foundational skills. These shared efforts between school and home provided a kind of bridge—steady, supportive, and strong enough to carry children across their earliest literacy milestones.

Kindergarten teachers consistently highlighted how active parental involvement served as a vital anchor in fostering early reading success.

"When I do storytelling at home, I notice their pronunciation gets better because their parents help them practice." (34 Bella) Parental storytelling reinforces classroom learning. "Most of the time, they practice recognizing letters while being read to at home." (52 Gina) Home exposure aids letter recognition. "When parents read bedtime stories with them, I see better comprehension the next day." (78 Carla) Home reading enhances comprehension. "We send reminders to parents through text so they can repeat the reading exercises at home." (101 Delia) Parent-teacher communication bridges home and school. "The kids feel proud showing their reading practice notebook signed by their parents." (118 Ines) Parental involvement motivates children. "If the parent reads too, the child really becomes more eager to participate in class." (123 Jane) Joint reading fosters classroom confidence.

Home routines often found their way into classroom practices. This was mostly because parents actively supported learning in quiet but meaningful ways. Reading stories aloud and making playful sounds at home helped children build reading skills. The child improved with consistent effort and daily clear progress. Their eagerness to read grew from small and daily moments shared with family.

Several studies strongly supported the impact of parents in early literacy. William et al. (2025) emphasized that Filipino children whose parents practiced reading habits regularly did well in vocabulary and comprehension tests. Baldonaza and Vargas (2022) noted that shared stories, phonics support, and reading time with parents improved fluency and motivation. Cabigon and Alcosoba (2023) showed that even simple efforts. Like text updates or home reading guides—greatly boosted learner participation. In another study, Bartolome et al. (2021) linked book access,

songs, and story sessions at home with better sound awareness and early reading skills. All these findings confirmed what teachers had already observed: children read better when parents are involved.

Still, not all families are able to help in the same way. Melencion (2023) observed that some parents, especially in low-income areas, lacked the time, literacy, or resources to support reading at home—even when they wanted to. Bartolome et al. (2022) reported that a family's income level shaped how often and how well parents could help. Iroegbu and Ifedayo (2020) also cautioned that without proper guidance, even well-meaning support might do harm if poor reading habits are reinforced.

Big feelings can lurk beneath all the laughter and noise in kindergarten classrooms. Children may smile at one moment and suddenly become anxious or upset at the next. Sense of separation, restlessness and mood change commingle in their daily rhythm.

In the Alcoy District, teachers said the goal was to soothe these inner feelings in order for children to concentrate on reading. They were able to use soft voices, gentle gestures and routines that made students feel safe. Their hushed demeanor facilitated transformation of fraught situations into valuable learning experiences surprisingly effectively over time in most cases. Teachers refrained from scolding kids who lost interest in a book or wandered off mentally with considerable frequency apparently. They opted for quiet persistence and soft-spoken words alongside unhurried deliberately repetitive daily rituals. Small acts helped kids feel relatively safe thereby staying pretty engaged. Teachers created a serene atmosphere and youngsters found reading much easier with considerable consistency thereby focusing intently most days. Their meticulous care brought profound balance on exceptionally difficult days in classroom settings. They gave children support alongside guiding emotions and learning so kids could grow pretty steadily as rather avid readers. Some loving actions happen daily with quiet persistence. Sounding out words together helps build fantastically strong skills while sharing books aloud fosters pretty impressively lasting abilities. Children showed marked improvement in phonemic awareness when family members got heavily involved in their literacy development at home. Kids showed considerably more enthusiasm and glee when it came to reading books lately.

Reading regularly at home evidently made quite a real big difference somehow. Shared effort between parents and teachers made learning ridiculously joyful and pretty darn lasting over quite some time. Challenges naturally persist especially when striving for parity among diverse family units. Bond between home and school should never be underestimated still. Reading gets pretty potent when kids teachers and parents embark quite purposefully on that journey one day at a rather slow pace.

Theme 3: Storms of Tiny Explorers: Emotional and Behavioral Challenges

In Kindergarten classrooms, lying under the laughter and chatter are emotional currents that influence young children—separation anxiety, restlessness, and mercurial mood swings are typical. Teachers from the Alcoy District explained those emotional outbursts and conduct issues as being handled in a new way as they became part of establishing an effective reading environment. If a child resists the opening of a book or drifts off in the middle of a lesson, the teacher intervenes—not in the guise of reprimands, but in reassurance and consistencies. Teachers used calm routines and gentle reminders to guide children through the day. This support helped kids manage their emotions and stay focused during reading time.

These kindness practices as a foundation created balance in behavior and learning. Through this daily walk-through of energy and emotion, teachers supplied the consistent structure necessary for beginning readers to succeed even on days when emotions came close to high tide.

Teachers provided honest responses on enduring the emotional and behavioral issues that typically arise with early readers.

"It's hard for them to adjust. They cry almost every day inside the classroom." (16 Flora) Transition anxiety is common. "They get distracted so easily, especially during reading circle time—there's so much energy." (23 Carla) Hyperactivity disrupts focus. "Some children can't focus longer than five minutes during reading time." (41 Kirby) Short attention spans hinder literacy tasks. "I created a quiet reading corner so they can calm down first before returning to group activities." (59 Ella) Calm spaces support emotional regulation. "When they're upset, they can't focus on reading, so I give them time to settle their feelings." (70 Bella) Emotional readiness affects learning. "Sometimes, I use soft music before we read—it helps them regulate their emotions." (85 Anna) Music helps with emotional transition.

These quotes worked to highlight the emotional ups and downs of the reading process. Children's crying, energy surges, or drifting attention were not controlled as interruptions, but as signals that needed attending to. Teachers constructed spaces and moments—snuggle corners, purposeful pauses, calming music—to assist learners in settling and re-engaging literacy activities.

Early childhood education research upheld the starting point that emotional regulation is highly linked with literacy skills. Perez et al. (2024) discovered that Kindergarten classes with embedded social-emotional learning (SEL) activities demonstrated dramatic improvement in early reading proficiency ($p < 0.01$) (Taylor & Francis). González and Cruz (2022) found attention self-regulation practices such as breathing and visual timers enhanced reading engagement among Filipino Kindergartners. Miller and Wong (2023) in their review established empathic classroom environments lowered behaviour distress by 40%, creating additional time for intense literacy instruction (Journal of Early Childhood Research). The findings confirmed the methods used by Alcoy teachers—routines, calm areas, supportive guidance—as necessary in meeting emotional needs of young readers in order to provide for learning.

Even when SEL overall is being implemented, some studies had reported mixed outcomes when applied individually. Applied individually, aside from explicit reading instruction, Reynolds and Lee (2021) found no quantitative reading gains with worries that emotional support would not always mean actual academic achievement (Springer). Martinez and Santos (2022) also established the reality that targeted emotional self-regulation intervention occasionally inadvertently reduced the threading time in instruction within low-resource classrooms. They warned against emotionally hungry resources diverting time from opportunities for practicing phonics, unless skillfully balanced. Those findings emphasized the necessity of introducing emotional support into targeted literacy instruction, as distinct components, instead of isolating them as separate activities.

Based on both evidence and ancillary studies, it contended that emotional and behavioral support cannot be separated from quality reading instruction in Kindergarten. Alcoy teachers demonstrated an example of balance—they acknowledged separations, re-gained direction, and then took back moments for literacy education gently. This inclusive model was consistent with Vygotsky's perception of cognitive growth as socially and emotionally mediated. Emotional interruptions, when handled well, could potentially even be a moment to deepen trust and attention and not class time lost. But emotional regulation strategies must be expertly woven in—not to insert more steps into routines, but to braid them into the fabric of literacy routines. When teachers take time to understand how children feel, they can still carry out effective instruction. The theme of emotional and behavioral challenges highlighted the delicate balance between young learners' feelings and their ability to engage in reading. Teachers who used calming routines, quiet corners, and gentle, supportive methods showed how deeply they understood the role emotions play in learning to read.

Both local and international studies confirmed that such emotional support improves self-regulation and boosts motivation to read. But to maintain that progress, those efforts need to be wedded to deliberate, intentional teaching methods. In the end, effective early reading relies on striking a balance between assistance and planned instruction—providing children with a bit of weather room for in-gusting storms while moving them down the path to literacy.

Theme 4: The Teacher's Compass- Insight and Strategy Discovery

Classroom instruction is frequently an adventure without a pre-written map—particularly in early childhood literacy, when each successive group of children carries with it its own agenda of challenges, strengths, and inspiration. Alcoy District kindergarten teachers spoke of how they trust to an inner compass—a "compass" which was in-formed by trial and error, reflection, and moment-to-moment discovery—to chart teaching decisions. With every lesson mapped out, observed, and revised, teachers are more sensitized to the needs of their students more confidently and more self-directed in child-initiated methods. In exploring untrodden ground, they critically learned not just from principle but from the specific beat of their classrooms. Far from being constrained by script and forethought action, these teachers practiced experimentation, ongoing fiddling, and collective thinking. With experience, their professional acumen sharpens, and their plans—whether to use a read-aloud, a phonics activity, or a calm-down corner—demonstrated an intimate understanding of their students.

The kindergarten teachers provided instances of how they learn and justify their day-to-day teaching practices—exemplifying the reflective practice spirit as they learn to adjust to evolving needs of their preschool children.

"Every week, I try a different phonics song and see which one my class responds to better." (15 Jane.) Adaptive teaching based on learner response. "I noticed that when I slowed down while reading aloud, the children were able to follow more easily." (28 Delia) Monitoring pacing supports comprehension. "If I see one activity isn't working, I change it the next day. I don't hesitate anymore." (39 Carla) Instructional flexibility is key. "I often reflect a t night: What worked today? What didn't? Then I adjust how I manage the next reading session." (61 Gina) Reflection drives instructional adjustments. "Sometimes, I ask co-teachers for new reading games, especially when my lesson doesn't click with the children." (68 Ella F.) Collaboration enhances strategy selection. I watch the children's reactions—if they start to zone out, I shift the pacing or make the task more interactive." (74 Anna) Observing student cues informs instruction.

These statements had a moment-to-moment rhythm of doing, not-doing, and changing, as teachers changed their practice in response to what they were seeing from their students in the moment. Their sense of direction isn't fixed—it shifts daily, guided by close attention, honest reflection, and the courage to try something new.

Current research substantiated the worth of reflective adaptive teaching early in literacy. Smith and Green (2023) illustrated that teachers who maintained reflective diaries and peer discussion excelled at using literacy strategy over peers using scripted strategies (Taylor & Francis). Lopez and Sandoval (2024) concluded that teachers who adapted phonics teaching from formative assessment resulted in better student engagement and reading accuracy. Alvez and Cruz (2022) in their scale-up study established that professional learning communities strengthened teachers' ability to act on reading instruction, resulting in gains in early reading achievement visible across classrooms. They were entwined with teachers' voices in Alcoy, and the significance of locally situated decision-making and professional reflection on reading instruction was placed upon them.

All research did not wholly promote reflective and open-ended literacy instruction. Henderson and Wu (2021) cautioned that when teachers implement too loosely without making evidence-based choices, the performances of students are unreliable. Likewise, Johnson and Reyes (2023) mandated that reflection is worthwhile but must be guided and structured to keep phonics teaching effectiveness. These results indicate flexibility and discovery as the keys but anchored in sound models of instruction so that there is sustained momentum of learning.

Uncomplicated observation of early literacy teaching in multilingual classrooms attests that a teacher's internal compass is crucial—it is used to guide relevance, responsiveness, and genuine learner engagement. But that compass is most reliably so when informed by experience and solid evidence. Reflection isn't enough to bear the load of quality teaching unless accompanied by research, coaching, and formative assessment. Teachers in Alcoy showed what balance was, and how adaptive instruction improves by being augmented with collaborative reflection, consistent coaching, and alignment with sound curricular goals. Personal experience, when based on evidence, lets the teacher feel safe to try new things without becoming unpredictable or worse. It is this equilibrium that enables creativity but maintains the anchor of teaching in what works.

Under the theme "The Teacher's Compass" emphasized the ways of teaching in which Kindergarten teachers in the Alcoy District constructed and developed their pedagogical practices within the context of everyday experimentation and reflection. Their behaviors—modulating lesson speed, modulating phonics song, designing supportive activities—reflected what they had learned from typical classroom interaction. Research attested that such a reflective cycle maximizes teacher power within literacy pedagogy but must be augmented by grounded frameworks.

For the Compendium of Reading Instruction Strategies, that theme translated to the inclusion of reflection questions, adaptation tools, and classroom-based strategy tweaking case studies. Facilitating these practices for teachers can support teachers' professional development with strong evidence-based reading instruction.

Theme 5: "Climbing the Mountain of Early Morning"— Challenges of Early Childhood Education

In the early literacy is a demanding journey—marked by sharp learning curves, shifting classroom energy, and the need for steady commitment. In the Alcoy District, Kindergarten teachers often described their work as climbing a hill, where each phonics session, word recognition drill, and reading circle was a step toward stronger literacy. The path is rarely even. At times, the challenges are misjudged, and teachers face unexpected hurdles. Starting from children struggling with basic letter-sound to sudden dips in engagement during reading tasks. Despite of these setbacks, each step remains as part of the slow yet purposeful climb. The kindergarten teachers persist, accumulating small victories along the way. Whether it's a child pronouncing a new word correctly or pages turning with greater fluency. It is in these small triumphs that teacher and student become stronger, more resilient, and able to push through the next level of reading.

Kindergarten teachers devised ways to communicate personal stories that reveal the precipitous but rewarding climb of learning to read early on—where every impediment is a step, and every minor triumph, a summit reached.

"Each time they pronounce a word correctly, it feels like a small summit—but then I go back down to the basics again." (9 Gina) Progress is nonlinear. "I try different ways just so they can understand the blend of letter sounds. It's a steep slope sometimes." (21 Ines) Phonics mastery takes effort. "I spend extra time with struggling readers, helping them master simple drills before we move on." (38 Flora) Remediation requires time and patience. "When a child reads a full sentence, I can see their confidence rise. That's a milestone for me, too." (57 Kirby) Small wins build self-esteem. "Keeping their interest during phonics lessons feels like climbing a hill that resets every day." (82 Jane) Sustaining engagement is challenging. "Our reading circle feels like base camp—preparing for another attempt to reach fluency together." (91 Bella) Literacy growth is a shared climb.

These words encapsulated both the fight and victory, contemplating the teacher's persistence and the altered skillset of students with each phase of reading.

Research indicated that early reading acquisition requires intense, prolonged support. Garcia and Reyes (2023) reported that prolonged phonics instruction throughout the years significantly affected decoding skills of Kindergarten

students, reflecting a steady literacy achievement improvement (Journal of Literacy Research). Leonor (2022) confirmed that continuous one-to-one reading practice among struggling readers led to measurable fluency improvements within three months (Philippine Journal of Education). In a review, Santos and Lim (2024) observed that steady improvement, and not shortcuts, results in sustained reading development during early school years. These experiments vindicated that reading is not a single giant leap but, instead, a series of planned steps—following the teachers' accounts of gradual progression on a difficult terrain.

Other critics further posited that so much concentration required to scale the reading mountain can come at the expense of other development objectives. Cruz & Mendoza (2022) cautioned that excessive drills and repetition of phonics might deny sufficient time for social and creative play. Rivera and Santos (2021) further suggested that students who were taught under high-stakes literacy instruction without balanced learning achieved early burnout and lower intrinsic motivation. These feelings implied that even if ascending is vital for literacy, we need to take into considerations that it should not be at the expense of a well-rounded early childhood experience.

The hill stood for challenge and the delight of teaching new readers. There were two jobs that complemented each other rather than replacing each other. Kindergarten teachers in the Alcoy District found out that by following system pacing, individual support, and active, interactive experiences, children could ascend with increasing confidence. Scaffolding from organized phonics to the support of one-to-one activities—could facilitate the climb without burdening learners. But a fine balance had to be struck. It was to provide rich literacies with a persistent sense of wonder, fantasy, and happy play of the young children. Play-based teaching brings together thinking, feeling safe, and having fun while learning. "Climbing the Mountain of Early Learning" shows what reading in Kindergarten is like. It's a slow, steady climb that builds both skill and confidence. Though it can be hard, it is full of small wins that help children grow. Teachers described it as demanding but profoundly fulfilling, as reaching new heights of achievement with every child's success. Evidence attested to the value of rich, interactive guided instruction as the key to early reading achievement. But it identifies the danger, as drills replace enjoyment of learning, that can devastate children's long-term motivation. The direction forward needed to be loving yet firm—a recovery that makes young readers resilient while inspiring love of learning.

Theme 6: Crafting Wings in the Wilderness" Resourcefulness in Remote Settings

In almost every classroom throughout the Alcoy District, the teachers worked far from the textbook-predicted resource-filled classrooms. Instead of regarding that as failure, however, they framed what they did as an act of invention—to utilize whatever little material was available to make wings to transport students to literacy. These low-resourced or distance rooms turned into hotbeds of creativity, where song, scribbled storyboards, and cardboard letter cards were the scaffolding against which learning took place. Teachers innovated, improvised, and made do, utilizing local riches. They recycled materials, drawings, shells—to devise phonics games and reading lessons. Their creativity demonstrated not just pedagogical necessity but profound commitment to preventing geography and logistics from hindering a child's access to learning. Through these efforts, the students in the remotest regions were also provided with the same opportunity to build reading confidence and excitement. Kindergarten teachers showed how scarcity became creativity. Converting insufficiency into dynamic teaching alternatives that deepened learning experiences.

"I didn't have flashcards, so I made cardboard letters and pouches for a letter-matching game." (89 Carla) Creativity fills resource gaps. "We use objects from the environment—like dried leaves—for sequencing story pictures." (103 Ella) Nature becomes a teaching tool. "I composed a phonics song using a local folk tune—it's not the usual style, but it's fun for them." (122 Anna) Localization enhances connection. "Stacked tin cans became our phonics bowling set. They love matching letters before knocking them down." (140 Delia) Repurposing turns play into learning. "Even simple sticks become letters when you're short on materials. They love forming words with them." (149) Improvisation fosters engagement. "We recycled old calendars and turned them into flipcharts for reading syllables." (156 Flora) Recycling supports early literacy."

These voices demonstrated how teachers transformed everyday materials into literacy tools, making phonics, sequencing, and decoding accessible and engaging—even in the absence of store-bought resources.

Recent research highlighted that teacher-made resources can significantly enhance literacy outcomes in low-resource settings. Rivera and Bautista (2021) found that Kindergarten learners using home-crafted literacy tools displayed a 20% increase in letter recognition within eight weeks. Guevarra & Santos (2023) reported that teachers in rural areas who created their own phonics games saw improved early reading fluency compared to classes without such adaptations. In Zambia, Chileshe et al. (2022) documented that improvised educational tools—such as drawn letter charts and makeshift reading corners—increased student engagement and skill retention. These findings aligned with Alcoy teachers' accounts, affirming that creativity and adaptability are powerful levers for reading success where resources are scarce.

However, some research warned that improvised teaching tools can produce inconsistent learning outcomes. Nkosi & Mbeki (2020) argued that teacher-created materials often lack pedagogical quality and can inadvertently reinforce incorrect letter recognition. Similarly, Perez & Leon (2021) found that when teachers are untrained in instructional design, homemade resources may lack clarity, reducing learning efficiency and increasing student. These perspectives suggested the need for teacher guidance and professional development to ensure that resourcefulness also meets instructional quality standards.

Resourcefulness manifests as profoundly impactful professional agency yet remains nebulous unless somehow firmly rooted in actual data from various sources. Genuine innovation exhibited by Alcoy District educators can morph constraints into profoundly impactful experiences yet ingenuity falters badly sans substantial support. An advocacy must be put in place for professional learning opportunities fusing foundational literacy design with creative problem-solving somewhat effectively. Education systems can celebrate teacher ingenuity by providing DIY guides and lesson templates on fairly low-cost materials with pretty decent accuracy. Blended support fosters creativity and competence thereby enabling educators rather effectively to help learners soar exceedingly high

Kindergarten teachers innovate remarkably in remote under-resourced settings and uplift literacy learning as captured beautifully in *Crafting Wings in Wilderness*. In settings marked by limited resources, teachers found creative ways to reuse materials and turn discarded items into learning tools. Despite the challenges, they designed simple, low-cost strategies that worked well in the classroom. These tools, though unorthodox, were used with care and purpose to support student learning. Their resourceful methods eventually seeped into everyday practice showing off huge amounts of instructional knowledge built up remarkably over time. Students responded energetically with unbridled curiosity. They learned with quiet confidence under careful guidance of teachers in some pretty unusual spaces. From this study, six key themes stood out. Kindergarten teachers in Alcoy District labored fervently with dedication and passion to foster reading skills among their young charges effectively. One theme 'Bridges Built at Home' heavily emphasized a pretty close bond between schools and various families nationwide ostensibly. Children gain confidence needed for growth as readers when teachers and parents collaborate pretty effectively together apparently in most cases. 'Storms of Tiny Explorers' clearly reflected how emotions of youngsters drastically impact behavior in classroom settings with rather unpredictable outcomes sometimes. They made tiny tweaks daily in lessons largely based on stuff they observed. These changes gradually reshaped their teaching style over quite some time. Plodding yet relentless journey depicted in 'Climbing Mountain of Early Learning' helped youngsters acquire reading skills fairly effectively with passage of time. Educators jubilantly celebrated each tiny stride forward with great relish in unbridled enthusiasm as progress limped along at a glacial pace. These kindergarten teachers eschewed rigid methodologies quite deliberately and somewhat haphazardly.

EPILOGUE

Heartfelt efforts of kindergarten teachers in Alcoy District were brought glaringly to light by this somewhat groundbreaking painstaking research. Teaching kids to read turned out being a ridiculously joyful super intense experience rooted deeply in resilience and weird human connection. These teachers shared insights revealing early literacy unfolding slowly through songs and storytelling during interactive play with kids extremely sensitive to their emotional needs. Each theme in study tells story of teachers crafting spaces where curiosity flourishes mightily amidst scarce resources and pedagogical ingenuity prevails. Care and purpose stay strong in these classrooms, even when the class size is large or the space is far from ideal. Teaching reading becomes quite a personal odyssey for numerous educators naturally over time somehow. It's filled with quotidian travails and steady plodding punctuated by tiny triumphs. They help kids take tentative first steps toward savoring reading and grasping its underlying nuances pretty quickly in each lesson.

Implications

Young learners thrive best when teaching is rooted deeply in compassion and infused with flexibility and loads of meaningful content somehow. Teachers adjusted approaches arduously alongside families vigilantly and worked somewhat hand-in-hand with them simultaneously in a rather tricky balancing act. Their teaching gets guided by reflection and real-time insight alongside joy and creativity they bring rather than rigid plans. Balance was key between intentionally teaching stuff and learning playfully here. Children benefit hugely when educators are empowered and combine both approaches fairly effectively in their teaching methodologies.

This study brought a clarion call for drastic measures rather than merely presenting findings. Policymakers and schools must furnish support systems and materials that validate complexity of critical early literacy work being undertaken daily. Teachers don't merely stick to some curriculum they built bridges between learners homes and various communities pretty effectively somehow. Honoring their instincts deeply involves giving them ample time and slowly shaping educational systems responsive somewhat naturally.

Reflection

Reflecting on odyssey of discovery was humbling deeply and oddly galvanizing for researcher amidst profound puzzlement and fairly extensive self-doubt slowly. Stories from dedicated kindergarten teachers profoundly altered her perceptions of teaching quite remarkably over time with new insights. Something rather profound emerged from initially mundane data gathering namely a genuine grasp of fortitude and compassion exhibited daily by these educators. The study eventually morphed into quite an oddly reverent tribute largely for them.

Voices were heard respectfully in that obscure space. Stories shared went far beyond mere study results somehow. They were eerie reflections of actual classrooms wherein learning ostensibly begins with utmost fervor in somewhat chaotic environments. Teachers make biggest difference in those classrooms. Their work reminds us every reader starts with someone deeply invested in their growth and believing utterly in their potential. Their hands and hearts along with voices somehow guide kids down a winding path toward reading pretty much from very first steps.

Recommendations

Research offered glimpses into daily grind of kindergarten teachers struggling mightily with ebbs and flows of fledgling reading skills somehow. Their experiences reveal values and instincts that can profoundly reshape how we support young learners in diverse settings effectively nowadays. Teaching reading in early childhood was quite evidently a dynamically evolving practice rooted deeply in connection and overflowing with unbridled creativity. Following such realizations various recommendations emerge strengthening classroom practices quite significantly and enhancing teacher development alongside informing policy decisions.

Kindergarten teachers are urged pretty strongly nowadays to focus heavily on play-based learning while introducing structured phonics and sound blending exercises. Joyful learning should not be replaced by these methods but rather be complemented thoroughly with them somehow. In-service trainings and Learning Action Cell sessions oughta cover stuff that fosters reflective teaching and innovation with super cheap materials. Giving teachers space and freedom deeply rooted in classroom experiences can foster creation of novel strategies and markedly improve learner outcomes.

Curriculum planners and education leaders should support the creation of a well-rounded Kindergarten Reading Strategy Compendium. This resource should come from the real stories and practices of classroom teachers. Schools in rural and low-resource areas face different struggles, so strategies must fit their needs. School leaders should also make sure training is open and easy to access, especially for teachers in far-off or underserved places. It's just as important to have strong support for home-school reading efforts, so families and teachers can work together to help children learn. These efforts can help build better support for young readers, both in class and at home. Schools can bolster this effort by handing out take-home materials and throwing literacy workshops for parents and fostering reading habits at home.

Similar qualitative studies can be conducted elsewhere in vastly different cultural contexts or other far-flung provinces uncovering fresh insights. Exploring early reading instruction's influence on long-term academic growth via longitudinal methods would likely prove pretty beneficial down the line somehow. Factors like socioeconomic status and linguistic heterogeneity potentially influence reading pedagogy in Kindergarten alongside varying levels of digital connectivity. Researchers should include classroom observations and learner performance data alongside conversations with parents or guardians to gain a more nuanced picture of early reading development unfolding rapidly.

BRIDGING JOY AND LITERACY: A COMPENDIUM OF TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR KINDERGARTEN READING INSTRUCTION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Rationale:

This compendium was crafted based on the results of this study which involved the kindergarten teachers in the Alcoy District. An interesting story which include resiliency, inventiveness, and pondering practice in the delivery of early reading instruction immersed in the daily lives of kindergarten teachers. . This compendium is based on the themes that emerged, which include play-based learning, strong home-school partnerships, emotional sensitivity, and adaptive strategies in settings with limited resources. It grounds pedagogical theory in actual classroom experiences by capturing not only what teachers do but also how and why they do it. The knowledge gathered from this study underscores the pressing need for a practice-based, contextualized reference that addresses the real struggles and successes faced by educators in the field.

The lived experiences of Kindergarten teachers specifically the effective practices, and new ideas from their classrooms its purpose is to meet the growing need for early literacy instruction. These instructions should be appropriate for children's development and relevant for their culture. This is particularly important for teachers working in a classroom that is under-resourced yet diverse. The finding of this study in the Alcoy District confirms the relevance of play-based learning, the importance of parental engagement, and the value of reflective, adaptive teaching methods in helping young kindergarten learn to read.

In real classrooms, kindergarten teachers often discover what truly works through trial and experience. This write-up draws from those firsthand stories—real situations they’ve handled in both public and private school settings. It’s not just useful for teachers, though. School leaders and mentors can use these insights to better support their teams, especially when it comes to improving how reading and writing are taught. For curriculum developers—whether working with DepEd or private publishers—these classroom-tested ideas can help shape programs that genuinely fit the needs of young learners. Even those educational trainings to become teachers can benefit, as it connects what they study in pedagogy with what actually happens in the classroom, giving their learning more depth and relevance.

In the outer side of the classroom, this resource can be a valuable tool for the community and local government units and any organizations working to improve learners early education. Organization that focus on community learning—like NGOs and barangay initiatives can bring on its ideas to strengthen reading efforts at the grassroots level. At its heart, this work tries to close the gap between what research says and what actually happens in early childhood settings. Whether in a well-funded school or a small community center, the goal remains the same: to support young children as they begin to read, using joyful, inclusive methods that make sense for their local realities.

Background:

This compilation of insights comes from a deep, experience-based study with kindergarten teachers who shared what it’s really like to teach young children how to read. Instead of quantitative study, the research focused on real stories, honest reflections, and day-to-day experiences. As the conversations unfolded, six powerful themes generated—ranging from the value of play in learning, to how parents and teachers collaborate together, to the emotional ups and downs that often come with early education. Kindergarten teachers also talked about how they improve professionally, find creative solutions in a resource-limited settings, and face the unique demands of teaching young learners. These stories have been carefully shaped into practical teaching ideas that are rooted in real life—making this compilation not just informative, but genuinely useful for anyone working to support children’s early reading journeys.

Objectives: To provide developmentally appropriate reading strategies grounded in actual classroom realities.

1. To provide teachers with readily adoptable evidence-based literacy practices.
2. To give accessible reading instruction attuned to learners' varied emotional, linguistic, and cultural requirements.
3. To be a tool for teacher learning for development on an ongoing basis and reflective practice.
4. To assist policymakers and school administrators in aligning teacher education and curriculum support with reality on the ground.

Implementation Plan

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities
Phase 1 – Orientation and Rollout	Month 1–2	- Pilot distribution of the compendium in selected districts.
		- Conduct orientation seminars for teachers and supervisors.
Phase 2 – Classroom Integration	Month 3–6	- Teachers put strategies into practice and submit reflective feedback.
		- Conduct Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions to fine tune the usage of the compendium.
Phase 3 – Expansion and Capacity Building	Month 7–12	- User Feedback
		- Revise compendium based on user feedback.
		- Train trainers and roll-out compendium regularly

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Component	Description
Monthly Progress Checks	Conducted through LAC reports and supervisor feedback to monitor usage trends.
Teacher Journals & Reflection Logs	Teachers document the effectiveness and fidelity of implemented strategies.
Classroom Observation Tools	Aligned with RPMS-PPST indicators to assess teaching practices and engagement.
Student Performance Indicators	Focus on phonemic awareness, letter-sound recognition, and oral reading fluency.

Kindergarten Reading Strategy Compendium

Title of Strategy	Learning Objective	Materials Needed	Activity Procedure	Assessment Method	Inclusivity Feature
1. Letter-Sound Hopscotch	Identify beginning letter	Chalk or masking	Draw hopscotch squares. Place	Teacher checklist on	Allows kinesthetic

	sounds through movement-based play.	tape, letter cards	letter cards in each square. Children hop and say the beginning sound aloud.	correct sound-letter match.	learners to participate.
2. Storytelling with Local Folktales	Enhance listening comprehension and vocabulary using local stories.	Storybook based on a local folktale (like -The Monkey and the Turtle)	Teacher reads the story aloud using gestures and voices. Ask comprehension questions after each page.	Oral retelling and participation in question-answering.	Promotes cultural relevance and values.
3. Picture-Walk and Talk	Predict story content using pictures and context clues.	Big books or printed story pages with pictures	Teacher shows pictures from a story and ask children to guess what is happening.	Child-generated story based on pictures.	Aide auditory and visual learners.
4. Syllable Clapping with Names	Recognize syllables in names to develop phonological awareness.	List of class names, clapping hands	Say a name. Children clap out syllables (e.g., 'Ma-ri-a' = 3 claps).	Correct syllable clapping and participation.	Promotes participation of all through familiar names.
5. Environmental Print Hunt	Identify common environmental print to connect print with meaning.	School and community signs (e.g., STOP, sari-sari store signs)	Take a walk around school or neighborhood. Ask learners to identify signs and read them.	Checklist of signs recognized or oral naming of found prints.	Accessible to non-readers through image recognition.
6. Phonics Puzzle Play	Blend letter sounds to form simple CVC words.	CVC word puzzle cards (e.g., cat, dog, sun)	Children complete puzzles by matching letters to form words and sound them out.	Teacher listens for correct pronunciation and blending.	Useful for visual and tactile learners.
7. Alphabet Relay Race	Identify and sequence letters of the alphabet through physical activity.	Alphabet flashcards, space for running	Divide class into teams. One by one, children pick the correct next letter in the alphabet and run it to a board.	Time completion and accuracy of sequence.	Supports energetic learners and teamwork.
8. Shared Reading with Big Books	Develop print awareness and tracking skills.	Large format books with clear print	Teacher reads aloud while pointing to each word. Children echo-read and track text with fingers.	Observation of tracking and participation.	Supports children with visual tracking difficulties.
9. Sound Sorting Basket	Distinguish initial consonant sounds.	Picture cards and labeled baskets (e.g., 'b', 'd', 'm')	Learners place pictures in the correct basket based on beginning sound.	Correct placement in baskets.	Reinforces auditory discrimination with hands-on play.
10. Name Wall Word Match	Connect letter recognition with	Name cards, letter	Match letters in students' names with	Recognition and spelling of own name.	Fosters identity and inclusivity

	personal relevance.	magnets or tiles	magnet tiles; spell their names aloud together.		in multilingual classrooms.
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A thoughtfully made collection of evidenced-based approaches carefully tested in classrooms aims at enhancing literacy instruction in diverse early childhood settings nationwide. Born from the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in Alcoy District, this eclectic compendium showcases gritty classroom struggles and lauds successful unorthodox practices, especially in play-based learning. The compendium offers practical strategies across five key domains, namely phonemic awareness, letter-sound recognition, vocabulary building, oral fluency, and reading comprehension, under MATATAG curriculum guidelines and the Department of Education's Early Language Literacy and Numeracy framework. Each strategy comes with lucid learning objectives and grubby step-by-step implementation guides alongside assessment guidelines supporting ostensibly meaningful literacy outcomes. Implementation has its three phases, namely orientation and rollout, then classroom integration, followed by expansion with capacity-building efforts.

A regular monitoring and evaluation framework will guide these endeavors, incorporating reflective teacher logs. LAC session documentation observation tools aligned with the Results-Based Performance Management System and monitoring learner progress. Feedback loops like this one ensure compendium evolution alongside practice and stay remarkably responsive to real classroom experiences daily. Ultimately it serves as much more than some manual. It serves as a bridge between theory and practice, linking policy with pedagogy and, most crucially, teacher with learner somehow. It equips kindergarten teachers with super creative tools that cultivate joyful learning environments and build foundational reading skills rather effectively.

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