



## Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Addressing the needs of Frustration Level Readers: A Case Study

Jedah J. Bacilio<sup>1</sup>, Rochelan Lumasag<sup>1</sup>, Grace G. Tizon<sup>1</sup>, Elsa B. Buenavidez<sup>2</sup>, Cynthia S. Superable<sup>2</sup>, Imelda O. Reyes<sup>2</sup>, Perlito D. Jomuad<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Misamis University, Oroquieta City, Philippines.

<sup>2</sup>Misamis University, Ozamiz City, Philippines.

### ABSTRACT

*Understanding the factors that hinder reading development is essential for improving literacy outcomes among struggling learners. This study investigated the challenges teachers face in addressing the needs of learners who are at the frustration level of readers. Employing a case study research design, the study focused on how teachers addressed the needs of readers at varying levels of frustration through their instructional strategies in multigrade classroom settings. Conducted at a selected higher education institution in Misamis Occidental that offers a basic education program, the research involved 10 teachers, five parents, and five learners. The findings revealed that teachers encountered multiple barriers in addressing the frustration levels of readers who needed adequate reading support, including limited home reinforcement, generalized instructional approaches, and persistent cognitive and emotional challenges. These results led to the conclusion that individualized, adaptive, and culturally responsive strategies are crucial in addressing both the cognitive and affective needs of these learners, particularly in multigrade settings where diverse reading levels coexist. The study recommends that educators implement differentiated, culturally meaningful reading strategies, leverage technology to support personalized learning, strengthen teacher-parent collaboration, and consider future research on technology-assisted, individualized reading interventions to further enhance support for readers at the frustration level.*

**KEYWORDS:** frustration-level readers, home-school collaboration, individualized and adaptive strategies, reading development challenges, literacy engagement and motivation.

### INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is an essential skill that supports the profession of schooling and lifelong learning (Ang, 2025; Apiles, 2025; Basabe, 2024). It enables learners to read, analyze, and utilize information efficiently across a wide range of topics. Despite its importance, many students experience reading comprehension difficulties, often accompanied by anxiety and frustration (Hermida, 2025; Jannah & Junardi, 2025; Solati et al., 2024). These affective limitations can impede a learner's ability to approach reading tasks and make real progress. Thus, teachers and academics are continually seeking ways to enhance reading strategies and remove obstacles that hinder comprehension (Awan & Anthony, 2024; Barends & Reddy, 2024; Judd, 2024).

Numerous studies have explored the complex interplay between reading comprehension and reading anxiety, examining how affective processing can interfere with cognitive processing (Alshehri, 2025; Barnes et al., 2024; David et al., 2024; Sümer Dodur & Ceylan, 2025). Vocabulary control, reading exposure, and classroom environment influence learner ease and confidence when reading (Elmaadaway et

al., 2025; Lin, 2025; Liu & Saad, 2025). Researchers have also found that anxiety can induce avoidance behavior, reduced motivation, and poorer academic performance (Rabbi & Islam, 2024; Shang & Ma, 2024). Such emotional obstacles are then targeted through interventions such as supportive classroom management and specific teaching strategies, which are critical for building positive reading experiences and improving comprehension achievement.

The recent study by Dawang et al. (2025) provides valuable insights into students' reading habits, anxiety levels, and understanding at an intermediate level in a Philippine elementary school. Their research indicates that though students reported high reading anxiety, especially towards new idioms and English-only education, this anxiety does not significantly impact their ability to understand. The findings show that students can still develop basic reading ability with adequate support even in high-anxiety situations. The study proposes specific interventions, such as exposure to media and reading practice, but also highlights the need for further research on other determinants of reading anxiety and comprehension (Dawang et al., 2025).

Following Dawang et al.'s (2025) study, it is also possible to investigate other aspects that could affect pupils' reading. The most promising avenue for further research is the role of teachers' beliefs, strategies, and classroom practices in tracking and mitigating reading anxiety. Teachers are front-line professionals in shaping students' attitudes toward reading, but relatively little empirical evidence exists about the impact of their methods on levels of anxiety and comprehension (Dixon, 2025). On the other hand, there are national initiatives like the Department of Education's Brigada Pagbasa (Memorandum OU-LAPP No. Q-267, s. 2021) and Catch-up Fridays (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, series 2024) and the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Service's Mental Health Lifeline system that sends contact information from various organizations to assist learners, teachers, and the public in times of mental and psychological distress, highlighting the broader educational and wellbeing environment associated with the attainment of SDG 4 on Quality Education (Ng et al., 2025; Prastikawati et al., 2024).

There is a knowledge gap in understanding how teachers' beliefs, strategies, and classroom practices influence the relationship between frustration level and comprehension among learners. While past research has examined the affective and cognitive aspects of reading, little is known about the instructional methods teachers use to reduce anxiety and enhance comprehension (Dixon, 2025). The study by Dawang et al. (2025) demonstrates that learners can still develop reading ability despite high anxiety. Yet, it does not explore the role of teachers as mediators in this process. Furthermore, although national initiatives such as Brigada Pagbasa and Catch-up Fridays aim to address literacy and learning recovery, there remains insufficient empirical evidence linking these policies to actual classroom experiences. This gap highlights the need for research that bridges existing policies with teacher-led practices to foster both literacy skills and learners' emotional well-being.

This study aimed to explore the challenges teachers face in addressing the needs of readers with varying levels of frustration. Specifically, the study examined how teachers take measures to adopt a proper reading atmosphere. This research aims to contribute to the design of holistic strategies that facilitate positive reading experiences and improve comprehension among child readers.

This study is significant as it provides empirical insights into how teachers' beliefs, strategies, and classroom practices shape reading environments that address learners' frustration and support comprehension development. The findings will benefit teachers by offering practical, evidence-based approaches to creating supportive reading atmospheres that reduce anxiety and improve instructional effectiveness. School leaders and policymakers, including the Department of Education, may use the results to strengthen literacy programs such as Brigada Pagbasa and Catch-up Fridays by aligning policies with classroom realities and teacher-led interventions. Learners, particularly those experiencing

high levels of reading frustration, will benefit from more responsive and emotionally supportive reading instruction that fosters confidence and comprehension. Parents and communities may also gain awareness of how emotional and instructional factors influence reading development, encouraging greater collaboration in supporting children's literacy. Finally, the study will contribute to the academic and research community by addressing gaps in the literature on teacher-mediated strategies for managing reading anxiety, thereby informing future research and the development of holistic, learner-centered literacy frameworks.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative case study research design to examine how teachers address the needs of readers at the frustration level within the context of Department of Education curriculum reforms in multigrade classroom settings. Conducted at a selected higher education institution in Misamis Occidental offering a basic education program, the study involved purposively selected participants: 10 teachers, 5 parents, and 5 identified frustration-level learners. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews tailored to each group to capture in-depth perspectives on reading challenges, instructional strategies, home support, and learners' emotional experiences. Ethical clearance and institutional permissions were secured, with informed consent, confidentiality, and data privacy strictly observed in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Data were analyzed following Yin's (2009) six-phase case study procedure—planning, designing, preparing, collecting, analyzing, and sharing—using thematic analysis, triangulation, and member checking to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. This approach enabled a holistic, context-based understanding of teacher practices, parental involvement, and learner experiences in addressing reading frustration and comprehension challenges.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

There are three emerging themes in the study: barriers to adequate reading support, individualized and adaptive strategies for supporting readers with varying levels of frustration, and persistent challenges in reading development. These themes are presented and discussed in this section.

### **Theme 1: Barriers to Effective Reading Support**

The findings indicate that teachers face substantial challenges in supporting frustration-level readers due to learner disengagement, weak foundational reading skills, inconsistent attendance, and limited reinforcement at home. Learners' difficulties with focus, decoding, and comprehension disrupt instructional flow and constrain reading progress, while parents and learners report persistent struggles with long and unfamiliar vocabulary across subjects and insufficient home practice. These interconnected school- and home-based barriers contribute to sustained frustration and diminished motivation, aligning with prior research that links disengagement, skill deficits, and limited home literacy

support to slower reading development (Kim et al., 2022; Silinskas et al., 2022; Wanzek et al., 2023).

## **Theme 2: Individualized and Adaptive Strategies for Supporting Frustration-Level Readers**

Despite these constraints, teachers implemented individualized and adaptive strategies, such as one-on-one tutoring, repeated and guided reading, scaffolded instruction, and engaging materials, to address learners' cognitive and emotional needs. Emphasizing patience, flexibility, and targeted follow-up, teachers sought to strengthen foundational skills and sustain engagement, with parental collaboration reinforcing gains through home practice and monitoring. These practices reflect evidence supporting differentiated, scaffolded instruction and shared responsibility in literacy development, particularly for struggling readers (Swanson & Hoskyn, 2022; Connor et al., 2023; Pane et al., 2023).

## **Theme 3: Persistent Challenges in Reading Development**

The study further shows that reading difficulties persist when home support is inconsistent and instructional programs remain generalized. Although incremental improvement was observed, learners continued to struggle with complex vocabulary and comprehension, underscoring the need for sustained, individualized interventions. Learners' accounts of ongoing frustration reinforce theoretical perspectives that emphasize the role of affect in meaning-making and self-regulation, in which anxiety and limited autonomy impede comprehension and persistence (Rosenblatt, 2018; Zimmerman, 2002; Efklides & Schwartz, 2024). Overall, the findings highlight that adequate support for readers with frustration levels requires targeted instruction, strong home-school partnerships, and emotionally supportive learning environments (Nguyen & Lee, 2023; Johnson & Torres, 2024).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Supporting readers at the frustration level is most effective when teachers address both classroom and home-related challenges through individualized, adaptive strategies that strengthen reading skills while nurturing learners' emotional confidence. The findings indicate that scaffolded and flexible instructional approaches, which respond to learners' cognitive and emotional needs, are most beneficial when reinforced through active collaboration between teachers and parents to enhance engagement and reading confidence. However, persistent reading difficulties highlight the limitations of generic programs and insufficient parental involvement, underscoring the need for targeted instruction and strengthened home-school partnerships to sustain learners' progress, motivation, and confidence.

## **Recommendations**

Teachers may implement individualized, scaffolded, and adaptive reading strategies, including differentiated activities

and one-on-one support, to address learners' specific cognitive and emotional needs while enhancing engagement, comprehension, and reading confidence. School heads may strengthen literacy instruction by providing professional development, adequate resources, and supportive policies that enable teachers to tailor instruction and create inclusive, trauma-informed reading environments. Parents play a vital role by actively reinforcing reading at home through consistent practice, guidance, and encouragement, using teacher-provided materials to sustain learners' motivation and confidence. Beyond the school and home, community stakeholders such as LGUs and NGOs may support reading development through community-based literacy initiatives, including mobile libraries, reading camps, and enrichment programs. Finally, future researchers may explore the effectiveness of technology-assisted and individualized reading interventions in multigrade settings, particularly those that integrate digital tools and actively involve parents in home-based literacy support.

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