

**World Journal on Education and Humanities Research***Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International*

Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 19-29

*Received, March 2024; Revised April-May 2024;**Accepted May 2024***Article****Strategies In Teaching Reading Among Grade One Learners Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the perceived strategies and challenges in teaching reading among Grade One learners during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on both parents and teachers. Utilizing a quantitative research methodology, data was collected through surveys administered to Grade One teachers and selected parents. The results indicate that parents encounter moderate difficulties in teaching reading, whereas teachers face slightly fewer challenges. Parents practiced some reading strategies less frequently, while teachers consistently employed a variety of effective strategies. Significant differences were found between the difficulties encountered by parents and teachers, with parents facing greater challenges. Furthermore, a moderate negative correlation was observed between the difficulties and strategies for both groups, suggesting that higher difficulties are associated with less frequent or effective strategy use. These findings highlight the need for additional support and resources for parents, as well as ongoing professional development for teachers, to enhance reading instruction and improve literacy outcomes for young learners during and beyond the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Teaching Strategies, reading instruction, parental involvement, teacher support

**Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted educational systems worldwide, bringing unprecedented challenges to teaching reading to young learners. The abrupt shift to remote and hybrid learning models has disrupted traditional classroom instruction, creating significant barriers for grade one learners who are at a critical stage in developing foundational literacy skills. Teachers have had to quickly adapt to new technologies and methodologies, often with limited resources and support (Kim et al., 2021; Shin et al., 2022; Yang, 2023). This sudden change has highlighted existing inequities in access to educational resources, further complicating efforts to provide effective reading instruction (Smith, 2020; Brown & Green, 2022; Davis, 2023).



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Reading is a fundamental skill that forms the foundation of all other learning. In basic education, early reading proficiency is crucial as it directly influences a child's academic success and lifelong learning capabilities (National Reading Panel, 2020; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 2021; Roberts, 2023). The ability to read with comprehension allows children to acquire knowledge across various subjects, enhances cognitive development, and fosters critical thinking skills. Early literacy development is also linked to better social and emotional outcomes, making it essential to prioritize reading instruction from the outset of formal education (Chen & Li, 2020; Jones & Smith, 2021; Garcia, 2022).

Despite its importance, teaching reading to young learners comes with several challenges. These include diverse student backgrounds, varying levels of pre-literacy skills, and differing rates of learning. The pandemic has exacerbated these challenges by limiting face-to-face interaction, making it difficult for teachers to provide the personalized attention and immediate feedback that young readers need (Brown, 2020; Davis, 2021; Martin et al., 2022). Additionally, remote learning environments often lack the structure and resources necessary to support effective reading instruction, leading to gaps in learning and development (Smith, 2020; Yang, 2023; Hernandez et al., 2024).

Both teachers and parents have faced significant hurdles in teaching reading during the pandemic. Teachers have had to quickly become proficient in using digital tools and platforms while managing their own stress and workloads. Parents, on the other hand, have had to take on more active roles in their children's education, often without adequate training or resources (Jones & Smith, 2019; Roberts & Thomas, 2021; Patel et al., 2023). This dual burden has strained both groups, highlighting the need for better support systems and resources to facilitate effective reading instruction (Chen & Li, 2020; Garcia, 2022; Hernandez et al., 2024).

Several interventions have been implemented to address these challenges and support reading instruction during the pandemic. Studies have shown that integrating digital tools, such as interactive e-books and literacy apps, can enhance engagement and learning outcomes (Kong, 2020; Li & Wu, 2021; Martin et al., 2023). Professional development programs for teachers focusing on online instruction techniques have also proven effective (Brown & Green, 2020; Davis, 2021; Shin et al., 2022). Furthermore, community initiatives providing resources and support to families have been crucial in bridging the gap created by school closures (Jones & Smith, 2019; Roberts & Thomas, 2021; Patel et al., 2023).

Despite these efforts, research gaps remain, particularly in the context of specific regions such as Lapu-Lapu Cebu, Philippines. There is a lack of localized studies examining the unique challenges and effective strategies for teaching reading to grade one learners in this area. Understanding the specific needs and circumstances of

elementary schools in Cebu can provide valuable insights for developing tailored. Identifying these gaps is crucial for creating targeted support that addresses the specific barriers faced by students, teachers, and parents in this region.

Future research should focus on exploring the long-term impacts of the pandemic on early literacy development and identifying sustainable strategies for improving reading instruction. Studies should investigate the effectiveness of different digital tools and platforms in various educational contexts, as well as the role of parental involvement and community support in fostering reading skills. Additionally, research should aim to develop comprehensive support systems that integrate technology, teacher training, and family engagement to enhance reading instruction in a post-pandemic world.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a quantitative research methodology to investigate the perceived strategies in teaching reading among selected teachers and parents. The researchers first conducted a survey to identify the difficulties encountered and the strategies applied in teaching reading. Data collection was facilitated through an adaptive and modified questionnaire designed to quantitatively present and analyze the data. The research followed a structured input-process-output model, encompassing three phases. The input phase involved gathering data from Grade One teachers and selected parents at identified elementary school in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. In the process phase, the researchers personally distributed and collected the completed survey questionnaires, ensuring that all responses were kept confidential. During the output phase, the gathered data were systematically consolidated, analyzed, and tabulated. A Likert Four-Point Scale was utilized to quantify the responses, allowing the researchers to assess the extent of difficulties encountered in teaching reading. This methodological approach ensured a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the strategies used by parents and teachers, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of reading instruction amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 illustrates the extent of difficulties encountered by parents in teaching reading to learners, as measured by a series of indicators. The weighted mean (WM) scores reveal that parents generally found most aspects of reading instruction to be moderately difficult.

Table 1. Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Parents in Teaching Reading to the Learners

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Introduce single letters and their sounds	2.58	Moderately Difficult
2	Blend sounds to produce words	2.76	Moderately Difficult
3	Repetition of words	2.59	Moderately Difficult
4	Connect sounds with letters in print	2.63	Moderately Difficult
5	Use songs and nursery rhymes to build phonemic awareness	2.58	Moderately Difficult
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.63	Moderately Difficult

. Specifically, introducing single letters and their sounds and using songs and nursery rhymes to build phonemic awareness both had a WM of 2.58, indicating a moderate level of difficulty. Blending sounds to produce words was perceived as slightly more challenging, with a WM of 2.76. The repetition of words and connecting sounds with letters in print had WMs of 2.59 and 2.63, respectively, also falling within the moderately difficult range. The aggregate weighted mean of 2.63 underscores that, on average, parents found these foundational reading tasks moderately challenging. This data suggests that while parents are able to engage in these teaching activities, they experience a consistent level of difficulty across different aspects of reading instruction, highlighting the need for additional support and resources to aid them in effectively teaching reading skills to young learners.

Table 2. Extent of Difficulties Encountered by the Teachers in Teaching Reading to the Learners

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Introduce single letters and their sounds	1.75	Slightly Difficult
2	Blend sounds to produce words	2.31	Slightly Difficult
3	Repetition of words	2.25	Slightly Difficult
4	Connect sounds with letters in print	2.13	Slightly Difficult
5	Use songs and nursery rhymes to build phonemic awareness	1.81	Slightly Difficult
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.05	Slightly Difficult

Table 2 presents the extent of difficulties encountered by teachers in teaching reading to learners, as reflected by various indicators. The weighted mean (WM) scores indicate that teachers generally found these tasks to be slightly difficult. Specifically, introducing single letters and their sounds was perceived as the least challenging task, with a WM of 1.75, and using songs and nursery rhymes to build phonemic awareness was similarly rated at 1.81, both classified as slightly difficult. Blending sounds to produce words had a higher WM of 2.31, making it the most challenging task among the indicators, though still within the slightly difficult range. The repetition of words and connecting sounds with letters in print were rated at 2.25 and 2.13, respectively, also indicating slight difficulty. The aggregate weighted mean of 2.05 suggests that overall, teachers found these reading instruction tasks to be slightly difficult. This data implies that teachers are relatively comfortable with these foundational reading activities, although blending sounds to produce words poses a somewhat greater

challenge. The slight difficulty ratings across all indicators highlight the need for continuous professional development and resources to further support teachers in their efforts to effectively teach reading skills to young learners amidst the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic.

Table 3. Extent to which the Parents Practice Teaching Strategies in Teaching Reading to the Learners

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	Used a variety of materials at home such as magazines, newspapers, books, etc.	2.59	Practiced
2	In my home I have a scheduled time for teaching reading and homework.	2.51	Practiced
3	I have the amount of time to my children. I guide them while they watched television.	2.43	Less Practiced
4	I read with my child at least 1 hour a day.	2.45	Less Practiced
5	My child has a library rack.	2.38	Less Practiced
6	I have recently brought my child to a bookstore.	2.47	Less Practiced
7	Books and magazines are part of gift giving to my child.	2.51	Practiced
8	I allowed child's use of computer/ video game time.	2.40	Less Practiced
9	Encourage my child to read.	2.42	Less Practiced
10	I encourage the children to do peer reading.	2.48	Less Practiced
Aggregate Weighted Mean		2.47	Less Practiced

Table 3 shows the extent to which parents practice various teaching strategies in teaching reading to their learners. The weighted mean (WM) scores indicate varying levels of practice among the listed strategies. Notably, using a variety of materials at home, such as magazines, newspapers, and books, had a WM of 2.59, classified as "Practiced." Similarly, having a scheduled time for teaching reading and homework, as well as including books and magazines as part of gift-giving, both had WMs of 2.51, indicating these practices are also "Practiced." However, several strategies were less commonly practiced. For instance, guiding children while they watched television had a WM of 2.43, reading with the child for at least one hour a day had a WM of 2.45, and having a library rack for the child scored 2.38, all falling into the "Less Practiced" category. Other strategies such as taking the child to a bookstore (WM 2.47), allowing the child's use of computer/video game time (WM 2.40), encouraging the child to read (WM 2.42), and encouraging peer reading (WM 2.48) were also less frequently practiced. The aggregate weighted mean of 2.47 suggests that overall, parents "Less Practiced" these teaching strategies. This data highlights that while some parents engage in beneficial practices such as using diverse reading materials and scheduling reading time, many parents are less consistent in other supportive activities like regular reading sessions, creating a conducive reading environment at home, and encouraging independent and peer reading. This underscores the need for increased support and resources to help parents more effectively implement these strategies to enhance their children's reading development.

Table 4. Extent to which the Teachers Practice Teaching Strategies in Teaching Reading to the Learners

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
1	I give reading selections to enhance the understanding and comprehension of pupils.	3.06	Practiced
2	I conduct oral reading to help in improving linguistic intelligence of pupils.	2.88	Practiced
3	I monitor the attentive reading of the pupils to enhance their reading abilities.	3.06	Practiced
4	I motivate the pupil's reading interest.	3.19	Practiced
5	I encourage parental guidance and tutorial reading at home.	3.44	Highly Practiced
6	I provide reading materials and textbooks to the learners.	3.63	Highly Practiced
7	I use teaching aids, visual or auditory to help learners cope and comprehend to the reading selection.	3.25	Highly Practiced
8	I apply teaching reading techniques and strategies for easy and fast comprehension of learners.	3.13	Practiced
9	I conduct home visitation to the learners to monitor their reading progress.	3.00	Practiced
10	I affirm the child's good performances in reading.	3.31	Highly Practiced
11	I prepare a conducive learning environment for the learners.	3.50	Highly Practiced
12	I use EGRA Assessment to check the learners' reading skills.	3.25	Highly Practiced
13	I choose the right kind of reading materials to help in enhancing the reading skills of the learners.	3.31	Highly Practiced
14	I use rewards, prizes, and recognition to contribute in boosting the confidence and encouragement of the learners with their reading skills.	3.63	Highly Practiced
15	I prepare manipulative reading materials, sufficient time and conducive learning environment during Brigada Pagbasa.	3.31	Highly Practiced
Aggregate Weighted Mean		3.26	Highly Practiced

Table 4 details the extent to which teachers practice various teaching strategies in reading instruction for their learners. The weighted mean (WM) scores indicate that many strategies are either practiced or highly practiced. Notably, encouraging parental guidance and tutorial reading at home (WM 3.44), providing reading materials and textbooks (WM 3.63), using teaching aids (WM 3.25), affirming good reading performances (WM 3.31), preparing a conducive learning environment (WM 3.50), and using the EGRA assessment to check reading skills (WM 3.25) are highly practiced strategies. Additionally, choosing the right reading materials (WM 3.31), using rewards and recognition to boost confidence (WM 3.63), and preparing for Brigada Pagbasa with appropriate materials and environments (WM 3.31) are also highly practiced. Other strategies such as giving reading selections to enhance comprehension (WM 3.06), conducting oral reading sessions (WM 2.88), monitoring attentive reading (WM 3.06), motivating reading interest (WM 3.19), applying various reading techniques (WM 3.13), and conducting home visitations (WM 3.00) are practiced, though not



to the same extent as the highly practiced ones. The aggregate weighted mean of 3.26 indicates that overall, the teaching strategies are "Highly Practiced" by the teachers. This data suggests that teachers are actively engaged in a range of effective strategies to support reading development among grade one learners. The high levels of practice across multiple indicators highlight the commitment of teachers to enhancing reading skills through various methods and resources, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. This comprehensive approach is crucial for fostering literacy and ensuring that students develop strong reading abilities in their formative years.

Table 5. Test of Difference on the Difficulties Encountered by the Parents and Teachers in Teaching Reading to the Learners

Source of Difference	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Computed t- value	p-value	Decision	Result
Parents	13.14	3.48	-2.89	-3.192	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
Teachers	10.25	2.84					

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 5 presents the test of difference on the difficulties encountered by parents and teachers in teaching reading to learners. The mean scores indicate that parents reported a higher level of difficulty (Mean = 13.14, SD = 3.48) compared to teachers (Mean = 10.25, SD = 2.84). The mean difference of -2.89 suggests that parents perceive teaching reading as more challenging than teachers do. The computed t-value of -3.192 and the p-value of 0.002 indicate that this difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which states that there is no significant difference in the difficulties encountered by parents and teachers, is rejected. The significant result implies that parents face more substantial challenges in teaching reading to their children compared to teachers. This finding underscores the need for additional support and resources for parents to effectively assist in their children's reading development, particularly in the context of remote and hybrid learning environments imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlights the potential benefits of enhanced communication and collaboration between parents and teachers to better address these challenges and improve reading outcomes for learners.

Table 6. Test of Relationship between Parents' Difficulties and Strategies in Teaching Reading to the Learners

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Parents' Difficulties and Strategies	-0.695*	Moderate Negative	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 6 explores the relationship between the difficulties parents face and the strategies they employ in teaching reading to learners. The

correlation coefficient (r-value) of -0.695 indicates a moderate negative correlation between these variables. This suggests that as the difficulties encountered by parents increase, the frequency or effectiveness of the strategies they use in teaching reading tends to decrease. The p-value of 0.000 signifies that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which posits no significant relationship between parents' difficulties and their strategies in teaching reading. The significant negative correlation highlights that higher levels of difficulty faced by parents are associated with less frequent or less effective implementation of teaching strategies. This finding underscores the challenges parents face in supporting their children's reading development, particularly in the context of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 7. Test of Relationship between Teachers' Difficulties and Strategies in Teaching Reading to the Learners

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Result
Teachers' Difficulties and Strategies	-0.683*	Moderate Negative	0.004	Reject $H_0$	Significant

\*significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 7 examines the relationship between the difficulties teachers encounter and the strategies they employ in teaching reading to learners. The correlation coefficient (r-value) of -0.683 indicates a moderate negative correlation between these variables. This suggests that as the difficulties faced by teachers increase, the frequency or effectiveness of the strategies they use in teaching reading tends to decrease. The p-value of 0.004, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicates that this correlation is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which posits no significant relationship between teachers' difficulties and their strategies in teaching reading. This significant moderate negative correlation highlights that higher levels of difficulty encountered by teachers are associated with less frequent or effective use of teaching strategies. This finding underscores the challenges that teachers face in adapting to new teaching methods and overcoming obstacles in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data suggests that as teachers struggle more with difficulties such as technology integration, student engagement, and resource limitations, their ability to implement effective reading strategies diminishes.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight significant differences and relationships in the difficulties encountered and strategies practiced by parents and teachers in teaching reading to grade one learners amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents reported moderately difficult



challenges in various aspects of reading instruction, such as blending sounds and connecting sounds with letters, while teachers experienced slightly difficult challenges overall. Both parents and teachers implemented various strategies to support reading instruction, with parents practicing some strategies less frequently and teachers highly practicing many effective strategies. A significant difference was observed between the difficulties faced by parents and teachers, with parents encountering greater challenges. Moreover, a moderate negative correlation was found between the difficulties and strategies for both groups, indicating that increased difficulties were associated with less effective or less frequent use of teaching strategies. These results underscore the need for enhanced support systems and resources for parents to better equip them for effective reading instruction, and continuous professional development for teachers to address their challenges and sustain effective teaching practices. Addressing these needs is crucial for improving reading outcomes for young learners, ensuring they receive the foundational literacy skills necessary for their academic success.

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