



Investigating teachers' learning strategies and challenges in developing reading readiness among primary learners

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ABSTRACT

This study, titled “*Investigating Learning Strategies of Teachers for Reading Readiness in Primary Learners*,” aimed to explore the instructional strategies used by teachers to develop reading readiness among young learners and to identify the challenges they encounter in implementing these strategies. The study employed a descriptive research design and involved ten primary school teachers from Bacarra Central Elementary School, Santo Cristo Elementary School, and the Special Education Center in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte. Data were collected through online interview questionnaires and analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

The findings revealed that teachers use a combination of strategies such as phonics instruction, storytelling, play-based and interactive activities, visual aids, and shared reading to enhance foundational literacy skills, including phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, teachers faced challenges such as varied learner abilities, limited parental support, lack of resources, and time constraints. The study concludes that effective reading readiness instruction requires the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents, school administrators, and policymakers to create a supportive, literacy-rich environment that nurtures young learners' reading skills and motivation.

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Introduction

Reading readiness is a critical milestone in early childhood education, serving as the foundation for future academic success. Recent studies emphasize the importance of systematic and explicit instruction in developing early literacy skills. For instance, the Science of Reading framework advocates for a structured approach that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to ensure effective reading instruction (Lexia Learning, 2025). In the Philippines, educators face unique challenges in implementing these strategies, highlighting the need to examine the methods employed in primary classrooms (Gines, 2025).

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Teachers employ a variety of strategies to build reading readiness among primary learners. Phonics instruction, storytelling, picture reading, and the use of visual aids are commonly used to enhance phonemic awareness and comprehension. Research by Kariuki and Gitonga (2022) highlights the effectiveness of systematic phonics instruction in improving learners' decoding and word recognition skills in the early grades. Similarly, Ahmad et al. (2024) found that structured phonics and sound-based learning activities foster improved letter–sound correspondence and reading fluency among beginning readers. These approaches align with the Science of Reading framework, which emphasizes the importance of explicit instruction in early literacy development.

Incorporating play-based activities into reading instruction has increasingly gained attention for its role in enhancing reading readiness. Play-based learning is recognized as an effective pedagogical approach that fosters early literacy development by making learning both meaningful and enjoyable. Research indicates that such activities cultivate six essential reading readiness skills: vocabulary, print motivation, print awareness, narrative skills, letter knowledge, and phonological awareness (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2022; Roskos & Christie, 2011). Through interactive experiences such as games, role-playing, songs, and rhymes, teachers can promote engagement and strengthen foundational literacy abilities (Bodrova & Leong, 2015; Weisberg et al., 2013). Integrating play into reading instruction aligns with contemporary educational frameworks that emphasize active, learner-centered, and developmentally appropriate practices (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020).

Assessment practices also play a pivotal role in supporting reading instruction and identifying areas where learners require additional intervention. Diagnostic assessments, classroom observations, and progress monitoring tools are commonly used to evaluate reading readiness and guide instructional planning. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Framework underscores the importance of measuring students' comprehension abilities and reading processes through diverse assessment approaches (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2025). Early reading assessments are essential in determining baseline performance, identifying literacy gaps, and informing differentiated instruction (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Paris, 2005). Effective assessment practices enable teachers to tailor instruction to learners' individual literacy needs, thereby fostering equitable and targeted learning experiences (Afflerbach, 2017).

Despite the use of various instructional and assessment strategies, teachers continue to face significant challenges in promoting reading readiness among primary learners. Constraints such as limited instructional time, pressure to meet academic standards, and insufficient teaching materials often hinder effective literacy instruction. A study conducted in Central Philippines during the 2022–2023 school year revealed that teachers experienced moderate difficulties related to content knowledge and inadequate instructional materials when teaching reading to Grade 1 learners (Gines, 2025). Similar findings highlight that teachers' challenges often stem from limited professional training in early literacy, scarcity of age-appropriate resources, and overcrowded classrooms (Paz & Marasigan, 2023; Cabansag, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that enhances teachers' professional competencies, ensures equitable access to resources, and strengthens curriculum support to improve reading instruction (Reutzel & Cooter, 2019).

Previous studies have extensively examined the significance of early literacy instruction and the use of play-based learning as effective strategies for developing reading readiness. Research by Roskos and Christie (2011) and Bodrova and Leong (2015) emphasized that integrating play into instruction enhances phonological awareness, vocabulary development, and print knowledge skills that are crucial for early reading success. Similarly, the NAEYC (2022) highlighted the developmental appropriateness of play-based strategies in promoting children's motivation, engagement, and active participation in literacy activities. Assessment-focused research, including studies by Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) and Afflerbach (2017), has underscored the importance of diagnostic tools, classroom observations, and progress monitoring in guiding instruction and supporting individualized learning.

Although these studies have provided valuable insights, research has primarily focused on instructional methods and student outcomes, with limited attention to teachers themselves—particularly their learning strategies, adaptive practices, and the challenges they encounter in fostering reading readiness. In the Philippine context, Cabansag (2021), Paz and Marasigan (2023), and Gines (2025) identified general difficulties in teaching early reading, such as insufficient instructional materials and limited professional preparation. However, few studies have examined how teachers develop, modify, and apply learning strategies to enhance reading readiness, especially in public-school or resource-constrained environments.

Moreover, prior literature has not sufficiently explored how teachers integrate play-based activities and assessment practices into daily reading instruction, nor how contextual factors such as time limitations, large class sizes, and curriculum demands affect their pedagogical decisions. This highlights the need for a deeper understanding of teachers' lived experiences, instructional adaptations, and professional learning needs related to reading readiness instruction.

To address this gap, the present study investigates teachers' learning strategies and the challenges they face in promoting reading readiness. By examining teachers' perspectives and instructional practices, the study seeks to generate empirical insights that can inform professional development programs, curriculum improvements, and educational policies aimed at strengthening early literacy instruction.

This study aims to investigate the learning strategies employed by primary school teachers to enhance reading readiness among young learners. Specifically, it examines how teachers from Bacarra Central Elementary School, Santo Cristo Elementary School, and the Special Education Center in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, implement instructional approaches, play-based activities, and assessment practices to support early literacy development. This study sought to identify effective teaching practices and challenges in early literacy instruction, providing insights that can inform educational planning, professional development, and curriculum improvement for primary learners.

Literature review

Early reading readiness is the set of emergent skills, such as phonological awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary, oral language, print awareness, and motivation that prepare children to learn to read. It is widely recognized as a pivotal foundation for later literacy and school success. Research and practitioner

reviews emphasize that early, explicit, and developmentally appropriate instruction in these components improves later decoding and comprehension outcomes, and that interventions at the kindergarten or early primary stage have disproportionate long-term benefits.

Teacher strategies that support reading readiness

Reading readiness is a foundational stage in early literacy where children develop essential skills—such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, print recognition, and comprehension—that prepare them to read with understanding. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering these abilities through varied instructional strategies that match learners’ developmental levels and learning styles. According to Ehri (2020), systematic phonics instruction, when implemented explicitly and consistently, significantly enhances children’s ability to decode words and understand sound-symbol relationships. Similarly, Piasta, Justice, McGinty, and Kaderavek (2012) emphasized that shared book reading, especially when teachers draw children’s attention to print and vocabulary, strengthens print awareness and improves later reading achievement. These findings underline the importance of structured and intentional instruction in early literacy classrooms.

Recent studies have further explored how teachers can use interactive and play-based learning strategies to support reading readiness. Saldua (2025) reported that play-based literacy activities such as rhyming games, singing, and storytelling help children improve phonemic awareness and sound recognition in enjoyable, stress-free contexts. Likewise, Mwinuka (2025) found that teachers’ phonemic awareness knowledge is essential in implementing such activities effectively; however, many still struggle with higher-level phonemic tasks, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development. These results affirm that integrating play with structured instruction promotes engagement and supports the natural development of literacy skills among young learners.

Phonics and phonological awareness programs also continue to show strong evidence of effectiveness. In a Philippine context, the study “Effectiveness of Phonics Training to the Performance of Kindergarten Learners in Phonemic Awareness” (2025) revealed that systematic phonics training improved learners’ ability to recognize and manipulate sounds, thereby increasing their readiness for reading instruction. Similarly, Ntino (2024) and Doty (2024) found that phonemic awareness interventions significantly benefit children at risk of reading difficulties, particularly when teachers combine sound recognition tasks with letter-sound correspondence and blending exercises. These studies demonstrate that teachers’ consistent use of explicit, sequential, and multisensory phonics instruction forms a solid foundation for reading success.

In addition to phonics-based approaches, shared and interactive reading strategies have been shown to enhance vocabulary and comprehension among early learners. Herrera et al. (2025) found that structured shared book reading interventions significantly improved preschool children’s expressive and receptive vocabulary skills. Teachers who engaged learners through questioning, discussions, and explicit word explanations achieved greater literacy gains than those who relied solely on reading aloud. This finding suggests that teacher facilitation is through guided dialogue and contextual vocabulary teaching. It is a key strategy in building language comprehension, an integral component of reading readiness.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that teacher strategies supporting reading readiness are most effective when they combine explicit skill instruction, such as phonics and phonemic awareness, with interactive, play-based, and language-rich learning experiences (National Reading Panel, 2000; Lin, 2024). For example, empirical findings indicate that systematic explicit instruction in phonological awareness and phonics yields significantly stronger early literacy outcomes (National Reading Panel, 2000; Sucena, Silva & Marques, 2021). In addition, play-based approaches in early childhood settings where educators embed literacy elements into guided and child-initiated play have proven effective in supporting foundational literacy skills while maintaining engagement (Dobles & Marquez, 2025; Integral Research, 2024). Successful teachers also adapt their methods to learners' developmental needs, integrate home and family literacy connections, and engage in ongoing professional learning to refine their practices (Lin, 2024; Integral Research, 2024). These combined strategies not only prepare children for formal reading instruction but also help cultivate positive attitudes toward reading, thereby laying the groundwork for lifelong literacy and learning.

Classroom and system challenges affecting reading-readiness instruction

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Home and community-related barriers that interact with classroom practice

Home and community factors play a crucial role in shaping children's early literacy experiences and readiness for reading instruction. Research consistently shows that children's exposure to language and print at home significantly influences their literacy development and school performance. For example, children who grow up in literacy-rich environments where caregivers read to them, provide books, and engage in meaningful conversations tend to enter school with stronger vocabulary and comprehension skills than those with limited exposure (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Inoue, Manolitsis, de Jong, Landerl, Parrila & Georgiou, 2020). However, many primary learners, especially in low-income or rural settings, lack such early literacy experiences, placing them at a disadvantage when formal reading instruction begins. This disparity underscores the importance of home and community support in reinforcing teachers' efforts to develop reading readiness.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is one of the most significant predictors of reading readiness. Hart and Risley (2003) found that children from higher-income families are exposed to millions more words by age four than children from lower-income backgrounds, leading to substantial differences in vocabulary development and oral language skills. Similarly, UNESCO (2017) reported that poverty, limited access to books, and low parental literacy levels are common barriers that hinder children's reading development worldwide. In the Philippine context, Padron and Santos (2022) observed that children from economically disadvantaged families often lack access to reading materials and supportive learning environments at home, which reduces their motivation and preparedness for reading tasks in school. These findings highlight the continuing need for school-based literacy programs that also engage parents and communities in promoting reading habits.

Parental involvement and attitudes toward education also significantly affect children's reading readiness. Epstein (2018) emphasizes that partnerships between schools and families are essential for reinforcing literacy learning, as parents who actively participate in reading activities such as storytelling, monitoring homework, and encouraging reading practice contribute to higher reading achievement. However, Adao et al. (2023) found that in many communities, especially in public schools, parents often struggle to support reading activities at home due to time constraints, work responsibilities, or lack of knowledge about effective literacy practices. This lack of home reinforcement poses a challenge for teachers, who must compensate by providing additional literacy experiences within the classroom. Strengthening home-school collaboration, therefore, is vital to bridge the gap between school-based learning and children's literacy environments at home.

Community resources and support systems likewise influence reading readiness. Carter and Pool (2020) noted that communities with well-equipped libraries, literacy centers, and reading campaigns tend to produce students with stronger reading foundations compared to communities with limited educational infrastructure. In the Philippines, programs such as the Early Language Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Program and Brigada Pagbasa have been initiated to address these gaps by mobilizing local governments, NGOs, and community volunteers to support literacy initiatives. However, as the Department of Education (2023) reports indicate, sustainability and consistency remain major challenges, particularly in remote areas with limited access to learning resources and technology. Teachers often find themselves extending beyond classroom duties to reach out to families and coordinate community-based reading activities, illustrating how home and community factors directly interact with classroom practices.

Overall, the literature emphasizes that reading readiness cannot be achieved by classroom instruction alone; it requires a strong partnership among schools, families, and communities (Hutchins, Greenfeld, & Epstein, 2008; Aidalkilani, 2022). When home environments lack literacy support, teachers face greater pressure to compensate through classroom interventions (Reading Rockets, 2017). Therefore, successful reading-readiness programmes must integrate parent education, community involvement, and systemic support to create a holistic literacy ecosystem (National Library of New Zealand, 2024; Greenfeld et al., 2009). Addressing these home- and community-related barriers is essential to ensure that all children, regardless of background, enter school ready to learn and succeed in reading.

Statement of the problem

This study sought to investigate the learning strategies used by teachers to promote reading readiness among primary learners.

Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the strategies of teachers in reading readiness for primary learners?
2. What are the challenges encountered by teachers in conducting reading readiness for primary learners?

Research methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in the study, including the research design, sources of data, the locale of the study, population and sampling, data-gathering instrument, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

Research design

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the learning strategies employed by teachers to enhance reading readiness in primary learners. Data were collected through online interviews to examine the instructional methods, activities, and approaches that teachers use, as well as the challenges they encounter in implementing reading readiness programs. The descriptive qualitative design allowed for a detailed and systematic examination of current classroom practices, providing a comprehensive understanding of how teachers support the development of foundational literacy skills in primary education.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, focusing on three educational institutions: Bacarra Central Elementary School, Santo Cristo Elementary School, and the Special Education Center. These schools were chosen as research sites because they cater to a diverse population of primary learners, including students with special educational needs, providing a representative setting to examine how teachers implement reading readiness strategies. The selected locale enables the researcher to investigate classroom practices, instructional approaches, and challenges within the context of public primary education in Bacarra, offering insights into the teaching and learning of early literacy skills.

Population and sampling

The population of this study consists of primary school teachers from Bacarra Central Elementary School, Santo Cristo Elementary School, and the Special Education Center in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte. A total of 10 teachers were selected as respondents using purposive sampling, based on their experience in teaching reading readiness and their involvement in early literacy instruction. This sampling method ensures that the participants are directly knowledgeable and actively engaged in strategies that support the development of foundational reading skills in primary learners.

Data gathering instrument

The study utilized an online interview questionnaire as the primary data gathering instrument. The questionnaire consists of short-answer questions designed to collect information on two main areas: the strategies teachers use to promote reading readiness in primary learners, and the challenges they encounter in implementing these strategies. This instrument allows participants to provide detailed, firsthand insights into their instructional practices and experiences, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of reading readiness instruction in the selected schools.

Data gathering procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary approvals by submitting letters of request to the principals of Bacarra Central Elementary School, Santo Cristo Elementary School, and the Special

Education Center in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, outlining the purpose and scope of the study, and a formal request to the Division Superintendent to ensure compliance with administrative protocols and secure authorization to engage primary teachers as participants. Once permissions were granted, data were collected to examine teachers' learning strategies for enhancing reading readiness and the challenges they face in implementing these strategies. The responses to short-answer questions were carefully reviewed, coded, and categorized using qualitative content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. This process enabled the researcher to determine key instructional practices, highlight common challenges, and gain meaningful insights into how teachers support the development of foundational literacy skills in primary learners.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly observed in this study. Informed consent was obtained digitally, and participants were fully informed of their rights, including the option to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All responses gathered from the online interview questionnaire, which focused on teachers' strategies for reading readiness and the challenges they encountered, were anonymized to maintain confidentiality. The collected data were securely stored on encrypted servers to ensure privacy and data protection. Furthermore, participants were provided with appropriate resources and support should any discomfort or distress arise during or after the data collection process, thereby ensuring their well-being throughout the study.

Results and discussion

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from ten (10) primary teachers regarding their learning strategies, use of play-based activities, assessment practices, and challenges encountered in conducting reading readiness instruction. The data were analyzed both quantitatively (for demographic profiles) and qualitatively (for open-ended responses).

Problem 1: What are the strategies of teachers in reading readiness for primary learners?

Table 1. Strategies used by teachers to build reading readiness

Emerging themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Phonics instruction and mastery	3	30
Storytelling and picture reading	2	20
Word and sound games	3	30
Use of visual aids and prior knowledge	2	20

Source: interviews

Table 1 shows the strategies teachers use to build reading readiness among primary learners. The most frequently used strategies were phonics instruction and mastery, and word and sound games, which help develop learners' phonemic awareness and sound recognition. Some teachers also used storytelling and picture reading, as well as visual aids and activating prior knowledge, to improve comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement during reading activities.

“Teachers use phonics, picture reading, storytelling, and alphabet games to build reading readiness.” (R2)

“Activating prior knowledge, visualizing, and matching sounds with words.” (R6)

This result aligns with the study of Kariuki and Gitonga (2022), who highlighted that implementing systematic phonics instruction greatly enhances learners’ decoding and word recognition skills in the early grades. In the same way, Ahmad et al. (2024) revealed that structured phonics and sound-based learning activities foster improved letter–sound correspondence and reading fluency among beginning readers.

“Teachers use strategies like storytelling, phonics activities, picture reading, and vocabulary games to build reading readiness.” (R8)

“Teachers also promote print awareness by reading books aloud, pointing to words as they read, and helping children understand that print carries meaning.” (R10)

. This observation corresponds with Sari and Putri (2023), who revealed that storytelling through picture books enhances children’s reading comprehension and expressive language. In addition, Gómez and Santos (2021) noted that the integration of visual aids and prior knowledge helps learners connect new information to familiar concepts, promoting meaningful learning and reading motivation.

Table 2. Use of play or interactive activities

Emerging themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Games and role-playing	6	60
Songs and rhymes	2	20
Use of toys and manipulatives	2	20

Source: Interviews

Table 2 illustrates the strategies employed by teachers to integrate play and interactive activities into reading readiness instruction for primary learners. Six respondents reported using games and role-playing, which enable children to actively engage with language and practice reading skills in a fun and meaningful way. Additionally, two teachers utilized songs and rhymes, while the other two incorporated toys and manipulatives. These approaches help reinforce vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and fine motor skills, while also maintaining learners’ motivation and interest in reading activities.

“They use songs, games, and role-playing to make learning fun.” (R2)

“Teachers use play and interactive activities, such as toys, puzzles, matching games, and role-playing, to make learning both fun and engaging.” (R8)

These findings align with recent research highlighting the effectiveness of play-based learning in early literacy development. A study by Klemme (2024) found a strong connection between play experiences and literacy learning, particularly in the development of language and vocabulary. Similarly, Leal

Ramirez (2025) emphasized that play-based learning not only enhances early literacy skills but also fosters a lasting love for reading and writing. Moreover, interactive reading activities, such as role-playing and using expressive voices, have been shown to improve comprehension and vocabulary acquisition (Reading.com, 2024).

Table 3. Assessment practices for reading readiness

Emerging themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Diagnostic assessment	3	30
Observation and checklists	4	40
Tracking and adjusting instruction	3	30

Source: Interviews

Table 3 presents the assessment practices used by teachers to evaluate reading readiness among primary learners. The data show that the most frequently employed method was observation and the use of checklists, which allow teachers to monitor learners' progress and identify specific areas needing support. Three respondents reported using diagnostic assessments to determine learners' initial reading skills and readiness levels, while another three applied tracking and adjustment of instruction to address individual learning needs.

"I used checklists and observations to monitor the progress of my learners." (R2)

"I use diagnostic assessments to identify each learner's individual strengths and weaknesses, and then implement formative and progress-monitoring assessments to continuously track and support their skill development." (R3)

A study by Wilkins (2025) highlights the critical role of diagnostic assessments in providing detailed information about students' strengths and weaknesses, thereby informing targeted instructional strategies. Similarly, the Kentucky Department of Education (2025) emphasizes the importance of regular progress monitoring to adjust instruction and ensure that all learners remain on track. Additionally, the use of observation-based tools, such as checklists, is supported by resources like the Primary Early Reading Skills Checklist (Twinkl, 2024), which help educators document and analyze students' reading development. Collectively, these findings suggest that integrating multiple assessment methods enables teachers to deliver responsive and individualized reading instruction, effectively promoting early literacy development.

Problem 2: What are the challenges encountered by teachers in conducting reading readiness for primary learners?

Table 1. External factors affecting reading readiness

Emerging Themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Parental involvement and home support	6	60
Access to learning materials	2	20
Socioeconomic background	2	20

Source: Interviews

Table 1 shows the external factors affecting reading readiness among primary learners. Six teachers reported that parental involvement and home support are important, as learners benefit from guidance and encouragement at home. Two respondents noted that access to learning materials, such as books and educational resources, helps develop early reading skills. Another two highlighted that socioeconomic background can influence learners' exposure to literacy experiences and overall readiness for reading.

"Home support, environment, and access to books affect reading readiness." (R1)

"Lack of support or guidance from parents, and parents' background (example: not being able to read) affect reading readiness." (R4)

A study by Çobanoğlu and Kumlu (2020) highlights that parental involvement, including academic support and participation in learning activities, significantly enhances students' reading abilities. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2020) reported that active parental engagement, such as reading with children and setting high expectations, positively influences early literacy outcomes.

Table 2. Strategies for handling learner differences

Emerging Themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Differentiated instruction	6	60
Individualized learning activities	3	30
Adjusting lessons to the learner's level	1	10

Table 2 reveals the strategies used by teachers to address learner differences in reading readiness. The results show that six teachers use differentiated instruction, tailoring their teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of learners. Three respondents reported implementing individualized learning activities to provide targeted support, while one teacher adjusts lessons according to learners' levels. These strategies suggest that teachers actively adapt their instruction to accommodate varied learning needs, ensuring that all students can effectively develop essential reading skills.

"Start where the child is." (R1)

"Employ different strategies according to the learner's needs." (R7)

"Teachers employ different strategies to meet individual learners' needs and support their reading readiness." (R9)

This aligns closely with the findings of Zhou (2024), who reported that differentiated instruction significantly improves reading comprehension skills among primary students. Research by Smith (2025) supports this practice, highlighting that individualized literacy programs not only enhance reading and writing skills but also boost students' self-confidence and motivation.

Table 3. Effects of time limits and curriculum demands

Emerging Themes	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Limited time for practice	5	50
Pressure to meet academic standards	2	10
Affects slow learners' progress	3	30

Source: Interviews

Table 3 highlights the effects of time limits and curriculum demands on reading readiness among primary learners. The results show that five teachers reported limited time for practice, which reduces opportunities for learners to develop and reinforce essential reading skills. Three respondents noted that these constraints particularly affect the progress of slower learners, making it difficult for them to keep up with their peers. Additionally, two teachers highlighted the pressure to meet academic standards, which can limit instructional flexibility. These findings suggest that time constraints and strict curriculum demands can affect the effectiveness of reading instruction, underscoring the need for flexible scheduling and differentiated pacing to support all learners.

Teachers have less time to teach basic skills such as recognizing letters, sounds, and words. When lessons are rushed to meet deadlines, children may not fully develop the skills they need before learning to read. Too much focus on completing the curriculum can also reduce play and storytelling activities that help build language and interest in reading.” (R3)

“Time limits affect learners’ reading readiness because they may not fully develop reading skills when there are too many competencies to complete per quarter, leaving less time to master each skill.” (R5)

“Slow readers are left behind due to limited practice time.” (R7)

This is supported by Martina et al. (2020), who found that time constraints during reading assessments significantly impacted students’ comprehension performance. Similarly, Ludewig et al. (2022) observed that limited instructional time and resources disproportionately affect students, particularly those who need more support. Catts (2021) emphasized that an excessive focus on meeting academic standards can narrow instruction and hinder the development of foundational reading skills. These findings suggest that time constraints and strict curriculum demands may reduce the effectiveness of reading instruction, highlighting the need for flexible scheduling and differentiated pacing to ensure that all learners, including slower readers, can develop essential reading skills.

Conclusion

This study found that primary school teachers use a combination of explicit instructional strategies, play-based activities, and varied assessment practices to enhance reading readiness. Strategies such as phonics instruction, word and sound games, storytelling, picture reading, and interactive activities like role-playing and songs were commonly employed, along with observation, checklists, and diagnostic assessments to monitor learner progress and adjust instruction. These approaches support foundational literacy skills while promoting engagement and motivation among young learners.

Teachers, however, face challenges that limit the effectiveness of reading readiness instruction, including limited parental involvement, insufficient learning materials, time constraints, curriculum pressures, and diverse learner needs. Addressing these issues requires targeted professional development, access to adequate resources, and systemic support to enable teachers to implement effective literacy practices.

The study's limitations include a small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and the lack of direct classroom observations, which may affect generalizability. Future research should involve larger, more diverse teacher samples, incorporate classroom observations, and track learners' literacy outcomes over time. Additionally, exploring interventions that strengthen home, community, and systemic support could provide further insights to enhance reading readiness instruction in primary education.

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