DROP EVERYTHING AND READ: AN INQUIRY INTO THE EXPERIENCES OF READING IMPLEMENTERS

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ABSTRACT

"Drop Everything and Read: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Reading Implementers" explores the perspectives and experiences of reading teachers implementing the DEAR program in public secondary schools. This study aims to understand the struggles, successes, coping strategies, and insights of the participants on the impact of the program on students' engagement, literacy skills, and overall reading culture. Through qualitative and in-depth interviews, the research highlights strategies employed by teachers, the role of student's choice in reading materials, and the effects on students' attitudes toward reading and learning. This study was conducted to selected reading teachers of Diosdado Macapagal National High School and Corazon C. Aquino National High School to explore their experiences, struggles, coping strategies, and insights toward the implementation of DEAR in their respective schools. The quantitative-phenomenological methodology covers discussions that the researcher used to get the data about the study. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study provided valuable insights for enhancing the effectiveness of DEAR initiatives. To conclude, the findings illustrate the importance of comprehensive planning, continuous support, and adaptability in the successful implementation of DEAR programs. Addressing the identified struggles and leveraging the strategies used by implementers, schools can enhance the effectiveness of DEAR sessions, ultimately promoting a lifelong love of reading among students. This study contributes valuable insights for educators and policymakers aiming to refine and sustain reading intervention programs.

Keywords: DEAR program, reading intervention, literacy, qualitative research, phenomenology, reading implementers, educational strategies, reading culture, reading engagement, student attitudes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) is a structured initiative implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) to promote reading among students. This program encourages schools to designate regular periods during the school day where students and teachers pause all activities to focus on independent reading.

Despite the acknowledged benefits of DEAR for supporting struggling readers, a gap exists in understanding the challenges teachers encounter when implementing these initiatives. While DEAR shows promise in fostering a love of reading and enhancing academic outcomes, research lacks a comprehensive examination of the specific obstacles faced by DEAR implementers. Implementing DEAR in secondary schools can face challenges, particularly due to the lack of sufficient reading materials and reading engagement. This issue can hinder the effectiveness of DEAR sessions, as students may not have access to a variety of books that cater to their interests

and reading levels. Schools may struggle to maintain a diverse and current library collection, which is essential for engaging students and promoting a love for reading. Additionally, schools may struggle with limited resources to support DEAR, such as insufficient space for quiet reading environments, outdated or insufficient book collections, and inadequate funding for purchasing new reading materials. Overcoming these challenges requires strategic planning, prioritization of reading literacy initiatives, collaboration with stakeholders to allocate sufficient resources, and creative scheduling to integrate DEAR effectively into the school day without compromising other educational priorities.

An in-depth study conducted in the Southwestern United States by Velten and Mokhtari (2015) revealed complex challenges within the after-class intervention program. These include various aspects of program implementation and evaluation, such as identifying underperforming students for enrollment, training, and selecting competent instructional staff, securing appropriate spaces within the school, encouraging reluctant students to participate, and conducting comprehensive pre- and post-assessments to measure program effectiveness. The potential solutions to enhance instructional quality, optimize instructional dosage, an improve program fidelity (Velten & Mokhtari,2015).

Similar challenges have emerged in the Philippines, as documented in Acita et al.'s (2022) research. A research on the difficulties in reading programs in both urban and rural schools in the cities and municipalities of Cebu, Bohol, and Negros Oriental. This study highlighted issues within the reading program, such as lack of resources, difficulties in defining the purpose of reading, unfamiliarity with letters, sounds, words, and correct pronunciation, and challenges in implementing systematic strategies. The execution of the intervention encountered obstacles primarily due to students' comprehension difficulties and teachers' struggles to break down vocabulary because of the students' limited word knowledge (Acita et al., 2022).

On the other hand, in the municipality of Compostela itself, one of the reading teachers in Diosdado Macapagal National High School, expressed that implementing the DEAR program can be rewarding yet challenging experience for teachers. With packed curricula and competing instructional priorities, carving out dedicated time for DEAR is difficult. Access to appropriate reading materials also presents a challenge for teachers implementing DEAR. Especially, for teachers stationed in a school with limited resources. By overcoming challenges and persistently advocating for the importance of reading, teachers perform an important role in nurturing a culture of literacy and ultimate learning within classrooms and school communities. However, challenges and struggles that DEAR implementers are facing must not be invalidated. It needs to be addressed or program should be improved otherwise.

In summary, various reading implementers in public secondary schools encounter a myriad of struggles and challenges when implementing reading initiatives, including, but not limited to, inadequate time and resources, the balancing act of curriculum demands, fostering student engagement and motivation, assessing progress, and ensuring equity and access to reading materials. Addressing these struggles necessitates ongoing support, professional development, and collaborative efforts among educators, administrators, and stakeholders.

1.1 Research Questions

This study explored the perspectives of DEAR implementers in their circumstances and activity dealings in the implementation process in public secondary schools. It was guided by the following questions;

1. What were the experiences of the participants in the implementation of the DEAR program?

2. What were the struggles of the participants in the implementation of the DEAR program?

3. What were the strategies utilized by the participants in coping with the implementation of the DEAR program?

4. What were the insights gained by the participants from the implementation of the DEAR program?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the study presents articles and studies that are deemed relevant to the research undertaken. This is done with the aim of providing a wider and clearer understanding of the topic chosen.

Reading is a critical skill that not only enhances knowledge but also fosters personal growth, character development, and improves logical thinking, reasoning abilities, and awareness across social, economic, political, and environmental dimensions (Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, & Jesmin, 2011). It plays a vital role in improving reading comprehension (Anonat, 2011) and involves interpreting written words as well as understanding the author's perspective—an art emphasized by Leedy (1956) and Smith & Robinson (1980).

Conversely, DEAR time provides dedicated periods for students and teachers to engage in reading their chosen books (Smith, 2019). This initiative accommodates varying student interests, abilities, and reading skills by offering a selection of books to choose from during designated times. Furthermore, DEAR Time enhances vocabulary, spelling, writing skills, fluency, proficiency, language enrichment, cultural understanding, critical thinking, personal engagement, sociolinguistic knowledge, pragmatic skills, and emotional intelligence (Akande & Oyedapo, 2018).

Moreover, DEAR is a widely adopted reading initiative in numerous public secondary schools, allocating dedicated time during the school day for both students and teachers to engage in independent reading. It offers uninterrupted periods for students to immerse themselves in reading, fostering their engagement and motivation (Hawkins et al., 2020). Recent research indicates that sustained silent reading programs, such as DEAR, can notably enhance students' reading volume and enjoyment (Schmidt et al., 2018). It provides opportunities for students to enhance their literacy skills, encompassing reading comprehension, vocabulary enrichment, and fluency. Studies have shown a positive correlation between sustained silent reading programs like DEAR and improvements in reading proficiency (Kim & White, 2021). Moreover, DEAR contributes to nurturing a reading culture within school communities, emphasizing their significance or reading for pleasure and lifelong learning. Gambrell & Marinak's research in 2018 underscores the role of school-wide reading initiatives in shaping students' attitudes towards reading and fostering a positive reading environment.

In secondary education, where students are grappling with intricate subjects and preparing for advanced studies or careers, these reading initiatives assume a dynamic role in supporting their educational journey. They prove instrumental in elevating students' literacy skills, including enhancing reading comprehension, expanding vocabulary, and improving fluency. Research conducted by Guthrie et al. (2020) emphasizes the importance of sustained silent reading and independent reading programs in bolstering students' reading proficiency.

Furthermore, a critical juncture in the DEAR process involves the students' brief reciting of chosen narrative, an exercise meticulously designed to gauge their comprehension mastery. This facet of comprehension is intricately woven with the students' ability to draw insightful inferences that bridge the textual content with their pre-existing cognitive frameworks, bridging the gap between localized understanding and broader conceptual contexts (Delamente, 2019).

In addition, recent studies by Cerdan and Gilbert (2018) highlight the positive influence of literature circles and book clubs on cultivating students' critical thinking abilities and their capacity to interpret complex texts. Additionally, findings from Flood et al. (2021) emphasize the necessity of integrating diverse literature into reading initiatives to accurately reflect students' identities and experiences.

Thus, implementing DEAR initiatives can pose several challenges for teachers, impacting the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. Here are some struggles and challenges faced by teachers in implementing DEAR. One of the primary challenges reported by teachers is finding dedicated time within the school day for DEAR sessions. Research by Guthrie and Davis (2003) highlights that scheduling conflicts and competing academic priorities often limit the frequency and duration of sustained silent reading activities like DEAR. Teachers frequently encounter challenges related to the availability and adequacy of reading materials. In a study conducted by the National Education Association (NEA, 2016) found out that insufficient resources in school libraries and budget constraints delayed teachers' ability to provide diverse and engaging books for DEAR sessions. Another significant issue is the lack of proper assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of the DEAR program. Without appropriate metrics to evaluate student progress and the impact of DEAR sessions, it is challenging to make informed decisions about how to improve and sustain the program. According to Black and Wiliam (1998),

formative assessment tools are vital for providing feedback that can guide instructional practices and improve student outcomes. Thus, the absence of such tools in DEAR implementation can impede the program's success.

Hence, maintaining student interest and participation in DEAR activities can be challenging. Research by McQuillan (2007) suggests that student motivation may decline if they perceive DEAR as a mandatory rather than a voluntary activity, affecting the overall effectiveness of the initiative.

As a result, many teachers express a need for professional development and support in implementing DEAR effectively. The absence of a comprehensive implementation plan and clear guidelines can hinder the successful execution of the DEAR program. Without a structured framework, teachers may struggle with understanding how to integrate DEAR sessions into their daily routines effectively. Research by Fullan (2007) indicates that well-defined implementation plans and guidelines are essential for the successful adoption of educational programs. Without these, the consistency and quality of DEAR sessions can vary widely. The International Literacy Association (ILA) emphasizes the importance of ongoing training to equip teachers with instructional strategies and classroom management techniques for successful DEAR implementation (ILA, 2020).

Consequently, maintaining the sustainability and continuity of the DEAR can be challenging. Therefore, regular, uninterrupted reading sessions require ongoing commitment from both students and educators. Since, factors such as changes in school schedules, varying academic demands, and limited resources can disrupt the continuity of DEAR sessions. A study by Reutzel, Fawson, and Smith (2008) on the other hand, highlights that sustaining literacy programs like DEAR over time demands consistent administrative support and resource allocation, which can be difficult to maintain.

Moreover, ensuring that students have access to a diverse range of appropriate reading materials can be difficult, particularly in resource-limited settings. According to Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2009), successful implementation of DEAR requires careful planning, professional development for teachers, and sufficient resources, all of which can be barriers to effective execution. Lack of preparation among educators is a major barrier to the effective implementation of DEAR. Teachers who are not adequately trained or prepared may find it difficult to facilitate DEAR sessions effectively. This includes understanding how to select appropriate reading materials, manage classroom dynamics, and engage students in reading activities. Research by Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) emphasizes the importance of comprehensive professional development for teachers to ensure they are equipped to implement new programs successfully. The struggles associated with implementing DEAR can impede its overall effectiveness. If students are not consistently engaged or if sessions are frequently interrupted, the program's potential benefits, such as improved literacy and a love for reading, may not be fully realized. Hiebert and Reutzel (2010) emphasize that without proper implementation and sustained effort, the effectiveness of independent reading programs like DEAR can be significantly diminished, limiting their impact on student learning outcomes.

In Indonesia, it is not surprising that many educators are struggling to find the best way to grow the reading habit. Many students required to read many books and articles academically, but the fact shows that some of them are reluctant readers who can read but they do not read (Pandian, 2000). This case requires the lecturer to find the best way in solving the students' challenges, particularly in reading. Reading is a process that involves similarly complicated skills involving several readers (Mancilla-Martinez & Lesaux, 2010). A certain strategy should be employed as an effort in giving a positive view of reading. Reading is not only an academic activity inside the classroom, but also developing reading habit outside the classroom. In growing the habit, the concept of reading for pleasure needed to be considered.

In the Philippine, the problem of students in reading is not a new issue. In fact, certain studies reveal that the reading problems of Filipino students seemed to be perennial (Alayon, 2014; Habagat & Rizon, 2012; Lalunio, 1994; Miguel, 2007; Montalban, 2010; Umali, 2016). Due to such problems, reading and literacy instruction have always been the top priority in all Philippine Curricula. Umali (2016) labels that reading instruction in the Philippines can be distinguished into two facets: (1) the regular reading class which is embedded in the standard curriculum, and (2) the remedial reading class which is a separated subject given to those students who need help in correcting and improving their reading difficulties.

The practice of remedial reading has been in the limelight for a long time in the Philippine education sector. In fact, the study of Gener (1976) presents how elementary schools and high schools in the country devised their own remedial reading programs to assess their students reading level so that they can provide proper interventions

for them. Although, remediation for struggling readers has been practiced in the Philippines for decades, its optimization has reached its prime only through the Department Order (DO) 45, series of 2002 – Reading Literacy Program in the Elementary Schools and DO 27, s. 2005 – Remedial Instruction Programs in High School of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd).

Clark and Rumbold (2006) described reading for pleasure as an interpretive activity based on the experience, expectations, and immediate read environment of readers. The texts chosen in reading for pleasure reflect the readers' own choice. The pleasure aimed to gain the joy of ready experienced by the readers, so the outcomes were the growth of reading habit as well as the improvement of text comprehension. To tackle the reading for pleasure concept, Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) activity might be one of the excellent breakthroughs. DEAR activity had been implemented previously by Sugiarsih (2017). She assigned her elementary students with this activity to improve the reading comprehension skill. Her research found out that during the activity, students were very happy because they were able to be self-selected their reading with their interest and ability levels.

Some successfulness of DEAR implementation also found in some articles written by Foreign Teachers. Williams (2017) stated that DEAR was a good routine activity implemented at school. It was even paired with "what's on your bag" activity which purposively done to gain more awareness in bringing books to school. Williams found out that DEAR brought up the reading pleasure that triggered the students' reading habits increased higher.

Research evidences show effectiveness of reading programs established in developing countries (Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016; Abeberese, et, al. 2014). Much similar to reading programs in developed countries, most programs focus on either improving reading frequency, enhancing reading instruction, or both. For instance, Friedlander and Goldenberg (2016) found that there was a positive impact on Rwandan students' reading achievement when reading programs both gave books and delivered effective reading instruction. Abeberese, et. al (2014) found similar results when Filipino students were given appropriate reading materials combined with instruction from well-trained teachers. These findings are essential for developing countries as evidence suggests that poor children are prone to developmental delays arising from reading challenges (Roskos, et, al. (2009).

In the Philippines, implementing DEAR through the Department of Education offers substantial benefits for literary development and academic achievement among students. Although there may be challenges in its implementation, recent studies shed light on the effectiveness and strategies for integrating DEAR into Filipino educational settings. Fernandez & Swanzon (2018) demonstrate that DEAR can improve reading skills and comprehension across diverse linguistic contexts. It can also stimulate reading engagement and motivation among Filipino students, fostering a greater interest in reading for pleasure. The research underscores the significance of establishing supportive reading environments and ensuring access to diverse reading materials to bolster reading motivation (Tumulak & Acuña, 2020). Alipio & Salazar (2021) emphasize the importance of providing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in promoting reading engagement and effectively facilitating DEAR sessions. Gee, J. P. (2007). However, interactive games make reading fun and engaging, motivating students to participate actively and reinforcing literacy skills through play.

Nonetheless, educators frequently encounter difficulties and obstacles in effectively executing each reading program. Pressing constraints such as tight schedules and limited resources make it challenging to allocate adequate time for reading initiatives and provide access to a diverse array of reading materials (Strommen & Mates, 2020). Balancing the demands of a crowded curriculum with the integration of reading initiatives can lead to potential conflicts in prioritization and time management (Skerrett & Moss, 2016). Moreover, engaging students and cultivating intrinsic motivation for reading can prove challenging, particularly given the diverse interests and reading proficiencies among students (Guthrie et al., 2019). Assessing students' progress and holding them accountable for their reading engagement and comprehension, especially in the absence of standardized measures, presents additional hurdles for teachers (Deacon et al., 2021).

Furthermore, ensuring equity and access to reading materials for all students, particularly those from marginalized or low-income backgrounds, poses significant challenges for educators and schools (Ivey et al., 2018). Moreover, one-on-one reading allows for individualized attention and feedback, which can help address specific reading challenges and improve comprehension. Allowing students to select their reading materials based on their interests. Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & You, W. (2012). The implementation of DEAR sessions provides several benefits: they are highly favorable among students, boost self-esteem by promoting autonomy and confidence in reading, and reduce cases of bullying by fostering a positive and inclusive classroom environment. These outcomes

are supported by research and highlight the importance of integrating DEAR programs into school curriculums to enhance both academic and social-emotional development.

As a result, teachers employ various coping strategies to address challenges and enhance the effectiveness of DEAR initiatives. Teachers often adapt DEAR sessions to fit within their instructional schedule. Research by Guthrie and Davis (2003) suggests that flexible scheduling allows teachers to integrate DEAR into daily routines without disrupting other academic activities, thereby enhancing consistency and student engagement.

Additionally, DEAR sessions can significantly boost students' self-esteem. By allowing students to choose their reading materials and providing them with uninterrupted reading time, DEAR sessions empower students and foster a sense of autonomy. This autonomy is linked to increased motivation and confidence in their reading abilities. Guthrie, Wigfield, and You (2012) found that students who engaged in self-selected reading activities exhibited higher levels of self-esteem and a stronger belief in their reading capabilities. Providing guidance and support to students in selecting appropriate reading materials is crucial. Teachers facilitate DEAR by recommending books aligned with students' interests and reading levels, as suggested by research from the National Education Association (NEA, 2016). Meanwhile, giving students the autonomy to choose what they read increases their motivation and engagement, as they are more likely to be interested in and enjoy the material they select. Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & You, W. (2012). Thus, implementing DEAR sessions in schools has been found to be highly favorable among students. These sessions provide a dedicated time for reading, which helps cultivate a habit of reading and enhances academic performance. According to a study by Ivey and Johnston (2013), students in classrooms with structured DEAR programs showed greater enthusiasm for reading and improved reading comprehension skills compared to those in traditional reading instruction settings.

Meanwhile, creating a positive reading culture within the classroom encourages student participation in DEAR. Research by Allington and McGill-Franzen (2018) emphasizes the role of teachers in modeling enthusiasm for reading and fostering a supportive environment where reading is valued and celebrated. On the other thought, Topping, K. J., & Ferguson, N. (2005) pair reading raises peer support and collaboration, allowing students to learn from each other and build confidence in their reading abilities.

Therefore, engaging in professional development opportunities equips teachers with effective instructional strategies for DEAR implementation. The International Literacy Association (ILA, 2020) emphasizes the need for ongoing training to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in promoting literacy and supporting student reading development.

Consequently, various findings also revealed that DEAR programs implemented in schools effectively enhance students' literacy skills. In the research conducted by Clark and Rumbold (2006) showed that sustained silent reading programs, like DEAR, significantly enhance students' attitudes towards reading. While not exclusively focused on DEAR, these findings highlight the positive impact of similar initiatives on reading engagement. Other studies by Guthrie and Davis (2003) indicate that sustained silent reading activities improve students' reading comprehension skills and overall academic performance. These studies emphasize the academic benefits associated with integrating regular reading time into the school day. According to the National Literacy Trust (2019), students who participate in regular reading activities like DEAR are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards reading and demonstrate higher levels of reading proficiency. These findings reflect the broader impact of reading initiatives on student preferences and literacy outcomes. the International Literacy Association (ILA, 2020) explores teachers' perspectives on the implementation of DEAR programs. While qualitative in nature, these studies provide insights into educators' experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits associated with integrating DEAR into instructional practices.

Moreover, in the study of Doronio, et al. (2023), describes the Department of Education's proactive stance is clearly evident in implementing the Drop-Everything-And-Read (DEAR) program, which was introduced in accordance with DepEd Memorandum No. 22, s. 2011, as discussed by Acita et al. (2022). Originally adopted from successful practices observed in educational systems abroad, the DEAR initiative is meticulously crafted to integrate reading deeply into the educational framework (Caga, 2019). This strategic initiative aims to elevate reading to a habitual and essential pursuit within the academic sphere (Sanden, 2014). Through careful planning, the DEAR program is structured to stand-in sustained and immersive engagement with a variety of written materials. It seeks to create an environment where students actively consume, question, and explore diverse discourses, thereby nurturing

a genuine enthusiasm for reading and facilitating deeper comprehension of ideas and perspectives conveyed through written communication (Acita et al., 2022; Caga, 2019).

On the other hand, in 2013, the English Area at St. Agnes Academy, Inc. initiated the DEAR Time Program to equip students with reading skills and strategies, enabling them to extract comprehensive information and derive meaning from texts. The program aims to foster a love for literature as a means to expand students' experiences, perspectives, understanding of human nature, and worldview, ultimately influencing their values. Additionally, it aims to encourage students to independently read a wide range of complex materials. This activity takes place every Wednesday from approximately 7:50 to 8:00 in the morning, lasting for 10 minutes.

Therefore, continuing this initiative, the English Area of the High School Unit maintains the DEAR Time program, which enhances both receptive skills—reading and listening—as well as oral and writing abilities. Aligned with the institution's commitment to academic excellence and guided by its vision-mission of fostering a vibrant, learning-centered community, the school believes that a genuine passion for reading correlates with academic success.

However, previous research on the DEAR time program has predominantly focused on its benefits, particularly in promoting reading habits. Few studies have explored students' perceptions and the factors influencing their engagement during DEAR time sessions (e.g., Dowhower, 1987; McKay, 2001; Hismanoglu, 2005). This study specifically examines high school students' perceptions of the DEAR time program and the factors that deter their participation. Employing a quantitative survey method, the researcher seeks to assess students' attitudes and evaluations of the DEAR time program.

Thus, insights from educators who implement DEAR programs in secondary schools offer valuable perspectives on both its effectiveness and challenges. DEAR initiatives are instrumental in nurturing a positive reading culture within schools, with teachers highlighting the importance of creating a supportive environment where reading is valued and seamlessly integrated into daily routines (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). Hence, teachers observe that DEAR sessions enhance student engagement and motivation towards reading, encouraging students to explore diverse genres and develop individual reading preferences (National Literacy Trust, 2019).

However, teachers also face challenges such as managing varying student interests and reading abilities during DEAR sessions. Successful implementation requires strategies for selecting appropriate reading materials and accommodating different learning styles to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness (Gambrell & Morrow, 2014).

Additionally, educators express a clear need for ongoing professional development to enhance their skills in implementing DEAR effectively. Training sessions and workshops focused on instructional strategies and classroom management play a decisive role in supporting teachers as they integrate DEAR into their teaching practices (International Literacy Association, 2020). Meanwhile, parents also significantly influence the success of DEAR programs. When parents are not engaged or informed about the importance of DEAR, they might not reinforce reading habits at home, reducing the overall impact of the program. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) highlight the importance of parental involvement in improving student outcomes and supporting school programs.

Nonetheless, research findings emphasize that DEAR programs contribute positively to academic outcomes by strengthening students' reading comprehension skills and overall academic performance (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). These insights highlight the multifaceted impact of DEAR programs and the importance of continuous support and adaptation in educational settings.

In this regard, DEAR program encourages students to engage in reading any available educational material. Reading increases a student's knowledge base, which can be utilized when writing paragraphs and essays in commerce. When students are exposed to new terms, their vocabularies also improve. Students' writing may also improve due to their increased reading engagement. As Mobley (2015) explained that the DEAR program implemented in schools prevents students from dropping out because early exposure to the DEAR program improves students' reading skills and fosters academic achievement. Thus, the greater the students' exposure to reading, the greater their knowledge and skills, which will be advantageous in real-world situations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study would employed phenomenological research design using qualitative method which helps in analyzing the most common perceptions of the informants. The qualitative method provides the main perspective for the research. Phenomenological research is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This design and method are appropriate in studying the experiences of the participants since it provides a comprehensive, empathetic, and context-rich understanding of their lived realities. This approach can yield valuable insights that inform the design, implementation, and improvement of educational programs such as DEAR. The information was gathered from the transcribed responses of the participants in an in – depth interview sessions to be used in the analysis of this study.

3.2 Research Locale

This research was conducted at the municipality of Compostela. Compostela is one of the several towns sitting on the vast plains of Davao de Oro. Its development started before World War II, when the area was still a forest and this gargantuan land is home of many diverse species of flora and fauna. The only inhabitants were indigenous *Mandayas* who chose to settle along the Agusan River. At the time, Compostela was an incongruous mixture of wooden-roofed houses concentrated along the Agusan River which was properly known as "dungguanan" (embarkation). This area later became its center of trade and commerce or Poblacion. According to the legends, Compostela got its name as "Kampo de Kastila" or became the temporary refuge of Spanish soldiers that came from the Eastern Coast of Davao Oriental.

The study was conducted in the selected public secondary schools of East and West District of the municipality of Compostela, Division of Davao de Oro. Several public secondary schools will be chosen where the particular in-depth interview sessions will be conducted namely; Three reading teachers will come from Diosdado Macapagal National High School from the East district and Four reading teachers from Corazon C. Aquino National High School from the West District of the municipality.

These schools were renowned schools for its implementation of the different reading initiatives including the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Program of the Department of Education.

Diosdado Macapagal National High School was located in Century Homes, Purok – 13, Barangay Poblacion and known to its school brand name as *"The Fortress of Diverse Culture for Excellence"*. This school is known to its dedication in providing time for intervention programs across different learning areas. Recently awarded as one of the Best School Implementer in Asynchronous/Blended Learning in the Division level.

Meanwhile, *"The Oasis of Dreams"*, as it is being branded; Corazon Aquino National High School was situated at Sitio Baclog, Barangay Osmeña of this municipality where academic achievement and fair leadership was manifested through a more than skin deep, reflecting actions, attitudes, and leadership style of an empowered woman that inspires respect and admiration, not just for her looks but for her wisdom, her ability to make sound decision, and her commitment to the betterment of their school community.

3.4 Research Participants

There were seven participants in this study, deemed sufficient to saturate the information gathered from the studied group using In-Depth Interview (IDI).

Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the selection of participants were the following: A public secondary reading teacher in the School Year 2023-2024 at Diosdado Macapagal National High School and Corazon C. Aquino National High School Compostela District, Compostela, Davao de Oro, who have at least three years' experience as reading teacher.

3.5 Procedure

The researcher was involved in a series of undertakings in the process of data collection. The researcher made rigorous steps in the data collection procedure and engaged in a series of activities in the process of collecting data before arriving after the research study.

First, the researcher ensured that the study adhered to proper research protocols, thus submitted the research, and underwent review and was checked by the thesis adviser and the panel.

Second, the researcher asked the permission and consent of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division Office of Davao de Oro, then before conducting the study, the paper underwent in the ethics review process in which the ethical aspect of this paper was examined. After attaining the protocol's ethical approval, the researcher ensured that the steps were properly followed and hold the accountability of all the procedures and activities associated with the protocol.

Then, the researcher asked the permission and consent from the Public-School District Supervisor, and District Coordinating Principal, and School Heads, to conduct the study. The researcher prepared the materials and tools needed for the data gathering such as the interview guide, audio recorder, and field notes.

Third, participants were identified using the purposive sampling method. Some participants were recruited and contacted through the help of gatekeepers, who were asked to read and sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement form. The researcher ensured that the selected participants met the criteria and had experience as reading teacher. The research objectives and the entire methodology were explained to the selected participants. Additionally, participants were sent informed consent forms via email and were asked to provide their e-signatures if they agreed to the conditions stipulated, ensuring their participation was voluntary and without coercion.

Fourth, individual in-depth interviews were held through face-to-face and virtual meetings at a specified time agreed upon by the participants after they had read and signed the consent letters. The guide questions for the interview were validated before the conduct of the study. The researcher established a series of scheduled meetings with the participants, following dates most convenient for them. Participants were sent meeting links at convenient times for interviews. Their roles and rights were thoroughly explained before the interview, and compensation was provided for their inconvenience. All proceedings were recorded to ensure validity and reliability. The researcher also asked permission from the participants to record the interviews. Throughout the interview, responses were noted down while being assisted by an audio recorder to compensate for any mishearing and aid transcription and coding later.

Fifth, the recorded interviews were stored in a password-secured flash drive, ready for transcription. The drive was kept in a secure and locked storage place accessible only to the authorized person of the study, the researcher. It was also uploaded to Google Drive, not viewable to the public, for additional security and backup. All responses were transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy during data analysis. After the study, all data was stored for three years, after which it was destroyed to prevent unauthorized access. Lastly, a thematic analysis was conducted. The responses of the participants were analyzed thoroughly based on the core ideas, with the researcher being assisted by an analyst to ensure correct data analysis.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The measures undertaken to ensure ethical considerations in this study were based on the principles of the Belmont Report in 1979. The researcher adhered to fundamental principles of ethical consideration: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Before conducting the study, the Ethical Review Committee (ERC) examined the ethical aspects of the paper, and their approval was sought prior to initiation. After obtaining ethical approval, the researcher ensured strict adherence to protocol, maintaining accountability for all procedures and activities.

In addition, the researcher strictly complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173), which protects individuals from unauthorized processing of personal information. Anonymity was maintained wherever possible through the use of code names to conceal participants' identities. All data were securely stored in a locked cabinet inaccessible to unauthorized individuals. Access to the data was restricted to the researcher and

panel of experts involved in the study. Data protection measures were implemented to ensure the accuracy and security of the gathered information.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions that explored the experiences, struggles, coping strategies, and insights of reading implementers in public secondary schools of Department of Education, Compostela District, Compostela, Davao de Oro. The research participants were selected through purposive sampling technique. There were seven participants in this study which were enough to saturate information gathered from the studied group who were reading teachers.

4.1 What are the experiences of the participants in the implementation of the program?

This section presents the results for the first major research question. "What are the experiences of the participants in the implementation of the program?" Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research questions. The questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the viewpoints of the DEAR reading implementers.

The responses were subjected to content analysis where the themes across all responses were drawn. In keeping with the research ethics for qualitative research, codes had been used in order to conceal the identities of the research participants. The presentation of the result was done according to the order of specific research questions used in this study.

4.1.1 Positive Experiences in the Implementation of the DEAR Program

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What are the positive experiences in the implementation of the DEAR program?' The responses generated six themes: Focus on reading, students get interactive, strong bonds among students, fostering love for reading, and learners get to enjoy the activity.

The participants highlighted the positive experiences they noted during the implementation of DEAR sessions. Which they emphasized that this program will help not only the student to improve their reading level but also enhance their abilities and personal growth among students.

Informant 1 pointed out that;

Actually, there are lots of positive experiences that I have noted during the implementation of the DEAR, one of these is the focus in reading. During DEAR sessions we have to make use of the allotted time to be spent solely in reading. He also added that because of the program, it became easier for him to identify students with reading problems.

Focus on Reading. The participant shares his positive experience noted during the conduct of DEAR sessions which constituted the importance to deliberate effort or program aimed at prioritizing and enhancing reading skills and habits among participants in the DEAR program. Its primary goal is to foster a positive attitude towards reading and to improve comprehension, critical thinking, and knowledge acquisition through DEAR reading sessions and activities

Informant 2 narrated;

Students are more interactive in the activity, especially if activities will be done outside the classroom and I can see it that they seem to be excited.

Students Get Interactive**.** Students often get interactive and engaged during DEAR sessions especially during hands-on activities like projects based on the reading material, games and play activities which is done outside the classroom which make DEAR sessions more interactive and meaningful for students. DEAR sessions provide a structured time for students to read and engage with texts in different avenues in a way that promotes enjoyment, comprehension, and interaction which are all conducive to active participation in the related activities.

Informant 3 cited:

They seem happy with the different activities in reading where they can interact, they can share and at the same time they can explore different types of reading materials.

Further, informant 5 also added;

There are still positive experiences that I have noted with my students and also to me as a teacher. On the part of the student, they are more interactive, they are having fun while doing different activities that I have prepared.

Meanwhile, informant 6 shared that:

Though most of the students participated each activity, there also few who did not show interest and more likely those students who are identified to have problem in reading.

Strong Bond with Other Students**.** DEAR sessions not only promote individual reading skills but also create opportunities for students to connect, communicate, and collaborate with their peers. These interactions nurture a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where bonds among students can grow stronger over time.

informant 2 shared that:

DEAR program provides avenue for learners to grow in their own pace. Because they are given the chance to choose the kind of materials of their interest and shared with the rest of their classmates.

Breather for Teachers. DEAR sessions offer a much-needed breather for teachers, helping them to recharge and manage their own workload more effectively. It provides a structured time during DEAR sessions when students are quietly engaged in reading. This creates a calm and peaceful environment, giving teachers a break from the usual hustle and bustle of classroom activities.

Informant 2 expressed;

The implementation of DEAR is something that we can say a breather to us, because we, teachers can make use of our ideas and strategies on how to make DEAR sessions engaging as possible. It became an alternate activity for me that at some point we can get off ourselves from the curriculum that we used to follow.

Learners Enjoying the Activity. Students enjoy DEAR activities because the program provide opportunities for choice, relaxation, intellectual growth, exploration, social interaction, intrinsic motivation, and a supportive environment – all of which contribute to a fulfilling and enjoyable reading experience.

Informant 4 narrated that:

I can see in the face of the learner that they came to enjoy every activity I prepared for them.

Informant 5 added with her saying:

Me, also as a teacher, I am also happy upon seeing them. Happy to see them showing their interest in reading and helping one another, aside from that I can see that they are having fun while doing the activity.

Informant 6 also cited that*:*

As a Filipino teacher, I observed that they have a different response to the program, it is different in the sense that I notice how they enjoy the activities being prepared for them.

Informant 7 substantiated by saying:

Because of the activities of the DEAR sessions, they get to enjoy their bond with their other classmates. And in my part as teacher, I am happy with what I have observed with how they enjoy and interested with the activities during DEAR sessions.

4.1.2 Best Practices in Conducting DEAR Program

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 'What are your best practices in conducting the DEAR Program?' The following themes served as results: Reading in-tandem, freedom to choose, One-on-One Reading Session, and game integration.

Reading In-tandem. A structured reading intervention technique where two individuals, often a more proficient reader (such as a teacher, parent, or a peer) and less proficient reader (typically a student), read together. This paired reading is a valuable instructional strategy that enhances reading abilities through collaboration, modelling, immediate feedback, and personalized support. It can be particularly effective in improving fluency, comprehension, and confidence for readers at various skill levels. On this note;

Informant 2 explains that:

After diagnosing the reading level of the learner, using the Phil-IRI tool, (non-reader, frustration, instructional, and Independent), I will make use of the result for paired reading or I call it reading in-tandem.

Informant 4 on the other hand stated that:

One of the practices that I have done with my class is the reading in-tandem, where they are being paired up. One struggling reader be paired with one that is already in the instructional level.

Informant 5 also raised her idea and noted that:

I used peer reading, where the identified struggling readers or frustrated one will be paired to the student who is an independent reader.

Freedom to Choose. During the DEAR sessions, allowing students to select their own reading materials based on their interest can significantly enhance their engagement and enjoyment of the activity. And also, giving them the freedom to choose and select their own reading materials based on their interests, teachers can foster a positive reading culture, promote lifelong reading habits, and support individualized learning experiences in DEAR sessions. This approach not only enhances engagement but also nurtures a love for reading that extends beyond the classroom. On this note;

Informant 3 gives her point of view and said:

One of the practices that I can say effective and someway for me I considered it as one of the best practices I had in DEAR sessions is the idea of giving my students the freedom to choose their own reading materials that they loved.

Informant 5 also confirmed the same idea by saying:

One of my best practice with my learners is to request them to bring their own reading materials in which they are interested.

Likewise, Informant 7 added that:

When it comes to best practices in the DEAR sessions, I usually give my learners the chance to choose a reading material that they are interested with. A kind of reading materials where they can decide the kind of genre they are about to read and share.

One – on – One Reading Session. In the DEAR program, these one-on-one reading sessions provide a highly effective method for nurturing each student's personal development, improving their reading abilities, and cultivating a lifelong passion for reading.

In this note, Informant 2 gives her personal remark by stating that:

After conducting the GST in my classroom, out of 27 students, I noted 1 identified as slow reader. With this particular student, I allotted time and different approach of intervention, thus I decided to conduct one-on-one reading session with the learner.

Game Integration. Integrating games into DEAR sessions, especially the outdoor ones, teachers can create a dynamic and holistic learning environment that supports the physical, cognitive, and emotional development of students. This balanced approach helps in nurturing a well-rounded individual who are not only proficient readers but also healthy and socially adept. In this manner,

Informant 6 share her point of view stating that:

I prepare lots of reading activities every DEAR session that makes them feel excited. We have tongue twister activities, message relay, spelling relay, we also have text-tula where they contribute single line as part of the whole piece of a poem. Everybody became a contributor and co-author of the poem they formed at the end of the activity.

4.1.3 Ways in Which the Student Benefitted the DEAR Program

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.3 'How did your students benefit from the DEAR Program?' The following themes emerge and served as results; Highly favorable, boost students' self-esteem, and reduce cases of bullying.

Highly favorable. This is one of the benefits of implementing the DEAR program, indication that it offers substantial advantages or positive outcomes for students. The program aids in their academic development, boost their cognitive and emotional abilities, and foster a lasting passion for reading and learning.

Thus, informant 1 shares his idea and declares that:

Talking about benefits, well, it is really beneficial to the students, a highly favorable one knowing that the program was being implemented with its goal to give them so much care to improve themselves in terms of their reading skills.

Informant 2: furthermore, cited that:

It is beneficial and highly favorable to students considering the fact that every DEAR session they are happy with the experience because they came to enjoy different activities inside and outside classroom settings. Aside from that, beneficial for students also knowing that you give them the chance to read their own favorite books and able to choose their favorite spot where they can focus on reading their material.

Informant 3 also agrees and said:

Yes, it is highly favorable to students, being in reading especially the Drop Everything and Read makes them more expose on reading that makes them discover new books and help them develop the love of reading.

Informant 5 confirmed the idea by stating that:

When it comes to DepEd program, whether it is reading related or not, it is the welfare of the students should come first. Because in the department, it is always the things that are beneficial to the students will be given much priority. This DEAR program is highly favorable to the students as the prime beneficiaries of the program.

Informant 6 expresses the same idea and said:

DEAR program is beneficial to the students since they are the one being helped in the program.

Informant 7: meanwhile, declares that:

DEAR program is intended for our students, meaning if there is someone who benefitted from the program it is always the students, How? It helps them to become a better reader.

Boost Students' Self-esteem. DEAR sessions enhance student's self-esteem by advancing their reading abilities, promoting academic success, offering positive reinforcement, instilling a sense of accomplishment, supporting personal growth, providing relaxation and enjoyment, and cultivating empathy and emotional intelligence.

Informant 4 pointed out that:

It helps them to become a better reader. It also helps them boost their confidence. They came to enjoy the activities therefore they are able to interact with their classmates as well.

likewise, Informant 5 also said that:

Not just the skills but on how they are going to make their confidence grow in different level. If they knew how to read, they not likely be ashamed every time they are being called.

Reduce Cases of Bullying. DEAR sessions help reduce bullying by fostering empathy, creating a positive environment, building social skills, enhancing self-esteem, providing role models, encouraging inclusion, and reducing idle time.

Thus, informant 7 stipulated that:

Aside from the stronger bond between classmates, it also helps reduce the cases of bullying in the classroom knowing that in the activity they were helping one another.

4.2 Struggles Encountered in the Implementation of the DEAR Program

This section presents the results to the second major research question 'What are the struggles of the participants in the implementation of the DEAR program??' Three specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the understanding of the research informants on the struggles of the participants in the implementation of the DEAR program.

4.2.1 Struggles in the Implementation of DEAR Program

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1 "What are your struggles in the implementation of the DEAR program?" are presented in this section. In this specific question emerges the following various themes: Lack of materials, time constraints, students skipping sessions and absenteeism, insufficient reading facilities, lack of support, and no specific guidelines and proper assessment tool.

Lack of materials. This will help ensure that all students have access to the necessary materials for a successful DEAR program. To address the shortage of materials, it is essential to invest in educational resources,

seek support from community and governmental organizations, and implement innovative solutions like digital libraries or book donation programs. On this note,

Informant 1 shares his experience and said:

Like any other reading teachers, one of my struggles also in implementing the DEAR is lack of materials.

Informant 2: attested also by citing that:

It is hard for me to find learning materials for different DEAR activities, though there is an existing DepEd LR-Portal, the problem is that, materials available in the portal is more on reading materials for elementary level.

Informant 3 had this to say:

When I ask them to bring any reading materials at home, some of them said there is, but most of them got to refuse since they do not have any available reading materials also at home. Lack of materials for me is the main struggle in implementing DEAR sessions.

Informant 4 also shared her sentiment and said:

It is lack of materials the first and foremost struggle that I have undergone during the implementation.

Informant 5 at the same time gives her remarks by saying:

There are lots of struggle in the implementation of the DEAR program, but I want to mention for me that the very basic among those struggles – it is lack of materials.

Informant 6 pointed out:

There is no enough and suitable materials for the DEAR sessions. Then if we have to maximize the availability of the DepEd LR Portal, I suggest that before it is being made available, developer of the site should make sure that there are materials fit to use for secondary level.

Meanwhile Informant 7 suggested that:

There should be a ready-to-use materials for DEAR sessions so that disappointment every time we access the LR portal is being disregarded.

Time Constraints. These are significant struggle in implementing successful DEAR sessions. It involves finding creative solutions to integrate DEAR sessions into the school day, such as starting with shorted sessions, integrating reading time into existing subjects, or seeking administrative and community support to prioritize the program's importance in fostering reading habits and improving literacy skills.

Informant 1 gives his point of view by stating that:

Time allotted for DEAR sessions is not enough. Time for the activity will consumed solely on the preparation of materials.

Informant 2 explains by saying that:

The 30 minutes to 1-hour allotted time for DEAR session and activities per learning area is not enough, most of the time will be consumed upon the course of giving instruction as to what the students are going to do with the activity.

On the same manner, Informant 4 share the same sentiment and said:

We are only given 1-hour for our activity per DEAR sessions, for me it is not enough, it will only be spent for giving instructions.

Meanwhile Informant 5 explains that:

One-hour dedicated time for reading per learning area is not enough for successful DEAR implementation.

Informant 6 on the other hand, raise a question by saying:

How are we going to make use of the 1-hour allotted time to be sufficient for our activity without overlapping with other learning area?

Students' Skipping Sessions and Absenteeism. Habitual skipping sessions of students and absenteeism pose a significant challenge to the successful implementation of the DEAR program.

Informant 1 gives his personal note on this matter and said:

When students are aware of the schedule for reading activity, those who are identified slow reader used to sneaked out.

Informant 2 suggested and shared that:

Her identified SL, she made a special time for the specific student where she will not give idea as to when and where will she conduct her reading intervention as part of their DEAR sessions since she is doing a one-on-one reading intervention with the identified SL.

On the other hand, Informant 7 complaints and said:

During DEAR sessions, I have student that is not so good in reading used to skipped from the activities and usually during the scheduled time, they are absent.

Inadequate Functional Reading Facilities. Upgrading libraries, creating dedicated reading areas, ensuring maintenance, and incorporating technology can enhance the DEAR program's effectiveness. Thus, addressing the issue requires investment in school infrastructure, support educational authorities, and community involvement.

Informant 1 shares his disappointment and said:

Sometimes the struggle is just somewhere in the surroundings. In this kind of program where student needs to read, there should at least facilities that are updated like libraries or even spots that is suitable for a reading environment.

Informant 4 fires up her complaint and stated that:

We do not have a functional reading facility that is available for the purpose of silent reading. There is a library, but reading materials is also insufficient and outdated at the same time the space is not really fit for effective reading activity.

Informant 5 also signifies the same struggle and shared:

Our school has no functional reading facilities, unlike to the big schools.

Informant 6 and 7 shares the same complaints by stating that:

There is no proper reading facility or reading hub that will cater the needs of the students in terms of reading. "Maybe if this facility exists in our school, students will surely be trained and practiced reading in their own pace." Informant 7 added.

Lack of Support. Schools and educational stakeholders should collaborate to promote the benefits of reading and literacy, advocate for dedicated time and resources for the DEAR program, engage parents and community in supporting reading initiatives, and provide ongoing professional development for teachers. Building a strong foundation of support ensures that the DEAR program can effectively promote a culture of reading and enhance students' literacy skills.

Informant 4 gives her remarks on this matter and said:

It is not that strong the support for DEAR program since I observe that it is implemented in quite a rush.

Informant 7 backed up the statement of the latter and cited:

Lack of support also, there is a need to strengthen the reading skills of the students but some government agencies was not able to see it or even other stakeholders to show support especially in the learning materials and facilities knowing that they are more than capable to provide such.

No Specific Guidelines. Lack of clear guideline can create significant difficulties when implementing the DEAR. Establishing clear guideline ensures consistency, enhances support from stakeholders, facilitates resources allocation, and ultimately maximizes the impact of the DEAR program on student literacy development.

Informant 4 posed and express her point of view, she stated:

There is no proper assessment method at the same time there is no implementation plan that exists.

Informant 5 also said that:

There is no specific guide to follow during the DEAR sessions.

Informant 6 reiterate again and complaint:

There is no assessment method that will gauge the improvement of the students.

Informant 7 shares the same concern by saying:

For the agency, DepEd, it will be more okay if the program has a guide or plan in the implementation so that reading implementers do not find it hard to track the progress of the student.

No Specific Assessment Tools. It is essential to develop and implement specific assessment tools for the DEAR program. These tools should be designed to measure key aspects of reading development, provide consistent evaluation standards, and offer actionable data to inform program improvements.

Finally, Informant 5 declares her disappointment and said:

There is no specific assessment tool that is suitable to use to assess if activities are somehow effective for the growth and development of the learners or not.

4.2.2 Effect of Struggles to the Implementation of the DEAR Program

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 2.2, 'How did the struggles affect the implementation of the DEAR Program?' The following were the themes that emerges based on

the responses of the participants – difficulty on sustainability and continuity, difficulty on the implementation, and impedes the effectiveness.

Difficulty on Sustainability and Continuity. It requires multifaceted approach, including securing adequate resources, building strong support networks, fostering a culture of reading, and continuously evaluating and adapting the program to meet the needs of all participants.

Informant 1 gives his remarks and noted that:

As to sustainability and continuity, for me it is difficult. Given with the fact that we cannot evaluate if we on the right track as I go along with the implementation because of the absence of concrete plan or guide to follow.

Informant 2 asserts also that:

Instead of intensifying the continuity of the program, more likely it will be weakened. Because teachers will be more confuse in terms of making decisions as to what kind of materials will be used for the next DEAR sessions and activities.

Difficulty on the Implementation. The struggles in implementing the DEAR program can manifest in various ways, creating significant barriers to its successful execution.

Informant 2 expressed her sentiments by saying that:

It is difficult for us to implement the program effectively for some reasons first and foremost is the unavailability of materials.

Informant 4 at the same time shares her point of view and stated that:

I cannot guarantee that the activity we are trying to give to our students is quite effective since there are no proper assessment methods to be used to measure the progress of the learners. Aside from that, the fact that we do not have a proper venue to conduct reading activities, it weakens the idea to reach the goal of the program.

Informant 5 also relate the idea and said that:

For me, the mentioned struggles intensely affect the successful implementation of the program, thus I find it hard to measure if the program is being implemented effectively.

Impedes the Effectiveness. Conducting DEAR sessions can face several challenges that impede its effectiveness. Understanding these struggles can help in developing strategies to overcome them and ensure a successful DEAR program.

Informant 5 asserts that:

So, chances that we are just trying to implement the program because we are told to implement, as to the effectiveness, I cannot guarantee that there is a 100% success on the goal of the implementation.

Informant 6 finally added that:

Given with the struggles, I can say that its effect is not just on me as a teacher, but mostly on the students and to the program as well. With all the mentions struggles, there is a chance that the program will not be as effective as it is supposed to be.

Informant 7 declares by stating that:

Because of these struggles, it possible hinders the effectiveness of the program, at the same time it is a burden to the teacher knowing that they are also be the one to look for materials and think of the activities that they need to give to the students. So, the program will likely be less effective because of the noted struggles.

4.2.3 Causes of the Struggles in the Implementation of the DEAR Program

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.3, "What are the causes of the struggles in the implementation of the DEAR program?" The following themes were created – diverse learners, no concrete implementation plan and guidelines, no proper assessment tool, and unprepared implementation.

Diverse Learners. Implementing DEAR sessions can encounter various obstacles that delay their effectiveness. Identifying these challenges is crucial for devising strategies to address them and ensuring the success of the DEAR program.

Informant 1 gives a share of his view point by stating that:

As to the causes of these struggles is mainly based on the level of engagement of the students. It depends on how they are able to perceive things and ideas. Knowing that they are diverse in nature, it only means that they have different way of perceiving ideas especially when it comes to reading. In the same manner that they also have different level of attention span.

No comprehensive Implementation Plan and Guidelines. The absence of a comprehensive implementation plan can significantly impede successful execution of DEAR sessions. Lacks of planning causes struggles in implementing DEAR effectively. The elements in a comprehensive implementation plan, schools can mitigate the struggles associated with DEAR sessions and enhance their overall effectiveness.

Informant 2 expressed by saying that:

If it is being implemented in the secondary level, there should be a comprehensive plan, a guide that will govern the implementation, as to how it is being done in the schools.

Informant 4 also added and explains that:

If I will be asked about the causes of the struggles, I would say it is because of the desire of the agency. I mean, DEAR program is promising, but the implementation of it is somehow in a rushed. Unpreparedness of the agency for the necessary materials, plans, and tools for the success of the implementation.

Informant 5 signifies her ideas also and asserts:

Causes for me is the failure to provide comprehensive or concrete plan.

Meanwhile, Informant 6 added that:

The implementation of the program is somehow in a rushed. It was only announced to the end of the teacher requiring us to implement without giving any comprehensive guidelines on how are we going to implement the program.

No Proper Assessment Tool. The absence of proper assessment tools can significantly undermine the effectiveness of DEAR implementation. Without assessment tool, it is challenging to track students' reading progress and development.

Informant 4 cited by saying that:

There is no assessment tool being provided for us to check or monitor the progress of the students.

Informant 6 also added and said:

There is no existing assessment tool to track the progress of the students whether their reading skills has improvement or it resulted the other way around. There is also no plotted strategy on how make the program more effective as much as possible.

Unprepared Implementation. Unpreparedness in the implementation of DEAR sessions can create substantial struggles, delaying the program's success and effectiveness.

Informant 6 provides her point of view on this regard and cited:

For me, DepEd is unprepared when it comes to the implementation of the DEAR. That are clear reasons why implementers find it hard in terms of the way how it is being done in the classroom.

Informant 7 with the same sentiment affirmed that:

Maybe the higher authorities had missed to anticipate that whatever programs they are trying to implement, there should always be things to consider. Materials, well-crafted implementation plan, assessment tool and other necessary things needed to be prepared before it is being forwarded to the level of the teachers for implementation.

4.3 Strategies Utilized by the Participants in Coping with the Implementation of the DEAR Program

This section presents the results to the 3rd major research question, "What are the strategies utilized by the participants in coping with the implementation of the DEAR program?" Two specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.3.1 Strategies Used in Coping with the Struggles in the Implementation of the DEAR Program

In this section, there were emerging themes from the responses to specific research question 3.1, 'What strategies did you use in coping with the struggles in the implementation of the DEAR Program?' The emerging themes were the following – integrating reading to other activities, sourcing out and devising personalized materials, sharing ideas and quizzes for assessment, plan activities ahead of time, and communicate with parents.

Integrating Reading to Other Activities. Integrating reading with other activities can be an effective coping strategy to enhance the implementation of the DEAR program. This approach can help address various challenges, making reading more engaging and relevant to students' overall learning experience.

Informant 1 dictate his idea on this matter and said:

I make use of this strategy to cope up with what is lacking, for us in Senior High School, since we had no enough reading materials, we made use a copy of different recipes ask them to familiarize the ingredients found in it and have them search the ingredients in different part of the classroom, first to complete all necessary ingredients will be the first to perform their cooking activity with an extra point added to the existing rubric of the activity.

Informant 2 on the other hand added:

As to coping strategies, what I did is I am trying to use varied strategies to avoid boredom. I allotted time for reading and an hour for outdoor activities, but of course the activities must be aligned with purpose of reading.

Sourcing Out and Devising Personalized Materials. Sourcing and creating personalized materials can be very effective in overcoming challenges in implementing the DEAR program. These strategies help ensure that reading materials are engaging, suitable, and tailored to meet the diverse needs of students.

Informant 1 narrates that:

If I have another set of activities and materials are not available, well, teachers as we are, I will be the one to create my own materials. I will devise my own or sometime I made use of the technology, I download materials and modify it to fit with the planned activities and make it more suitable to the target participants of the activity.

Informant 2 also asserts and said:

In terms of lack of materials, I made used of the internet-based materials and modify it, but most of the time I devised materials of my own that is suitable for the desire activities during the scheduled DEAD sessions.

Informant 3 signify her affirmation and states that:

To cope up with the struggles, of course as teacher, we have lot of ways on how we can address the things that are not within our reach. Make up and devise my own materials for indoor and outdoor activities that somehow allow students to engage without compromising the goal to enhance reading.

Informant 4 approved and shared:

I have lots of strategies actually, but first and foremost the most common is to devise my own materials suitable for the desired activities. I usually do print materials that are internet-based and download video materials since my students are more active if they are able to see moving pictures or if activities are being integrated with the advent of technology.

Informant 5 agreed also by saying in vernacular:

We have to devise my own, I need to print or even download from the internet educational videos like short films, then afterwards, students are encouraged to share their ideas.

Informant 6 also applies the same strategy and quoted:

The main problem of the implementers is the lack of reading materials, so for me to make my implementation to be successful, I made my own materials, source out from internet and modify.

Finally, Informant 7 dictates her strategies by stating:

To cope up with the necessary materials, the best thing to do is to devise our own materials, make use of the availability of the internet to download suitable materials for the desired DEAR activities of the day or even print, but making sure that the materials will support the goal in implementing the DEAR sessions.

Sharing Ideas and Quizzes for Assessment. Implementing DEAR in school setting can present various challenges, such as maintaining student interest, ensuring consistent participation, and measuring the program's effectiveness. Using sharing ideas and quizzes for assessment can be effective coping strategies to address these challenges. Thus,

Informant 4 gives her remarks on this by saying that:

When it comes to assessment since there is no specific assessment tool being provided to note students' progress so I made my own way of conducting assessment through the sharing of ideas and in a form of quizzes. I do multiple choice type of assessment or sometimes in a form of essay where rubric is being provided.

Informant 7 also confirmed by stating:

As to the assessment tool, I cannot say that what I do is effective but for me it was since assessment tool that I used depends on the kind of activities that I prepared for my students for that specific DEAR sessions. At some point, I made use of quizzes, essay and most of the time I assessed them through sharing of ideas to the rest of the class.

Plan Activities Ahead of Time**.** This theme emphasized that planning activities ahead of time is a vital coping strategy for implementing the DEAR program. It helps create a structured and consistent routine, enhances student engagement, improves classroom management, enables effective assessment and feedback, and foster a school-wide culture of reading. By preparing in advance, teachers can ensure that DEAR time is productive, enjoyable, and beneficial for all students.

In this note, Informant 5 gave her remarks and said:

For me to have manage my time properly, I have always plan to have my reading materials ahead of the schedule. I made sure to print materials before the scheduled DEAR sessions or even download videos necessary for my desired activities for my class.

Giving Assignments and Communicate with Parents. Implementing DEAR program can be demanding, but employing strategies like giving assignments and communicating with parents can significantly aid in overcoming challenges.

Informant 5 again have shared her point of view on this matter:

I will give my students a take home reading task and coordinate with their parents for the monitoring and recording if the student is compliant to the said take home reading activities. Parents as well are being required to submit virtual report to support the performance of their students.

4.3.2 Assistance of Stakeholders in Coping with the Struggles in the Implementation of DEAR Program

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 3.2, 'How did the stakeholders assist you in coping with the struggles in the implementation of the DEAR program?' There is only one theme that emerges based on the responses of the informants – no much support from stakeholders except the parents.

No Much Support from Stakeholders except Parents. Stakeholders may be skeptical about the effectiveness of the DEAR program of there is no clear method to measure its impact on students' reading habits and academic performance. Without tangible results, it is hard to justify continued support. Additionally, parents who are readers themselves often value and support initiatives that encourage reading.

Informant 1 suggested that:

NGO's like fraternities they also advocate and try to reach out different schools, but here in our school, I have not experienced a support from external stakeholder. Even on the support in terms of the reading materials, in the form of donation, there is none.

Informant 2 reiterate and said:

On the other hand, parents are one of the stakeholders of the school community. Parents in some way assist us in the implementation of the DEAR program especially during the weekend that I send my students a specific reading task at home, the parents tend to monitor if their kids were doing the task and have mov's sent to me.

Informant 3 added by saying that:

When it comes to stakeholders, as far as I remember in the implementation of the DEAR, so far it is only the parents who I noticed to have given their support in the program.

Informant 4 explains and stated:

As to stakeholder's involvement in the program, mostly it is the parents whom we find it easy to reach out to assist with us in coping with the struggles. Example, we often requested them to monitor their kids at home if they are doing their reading at home task. I understand that we cannot rely support from the government even if they have the budget since more of their supported activities are more on infrastructure projects.

Meanwhile, Informant 5 discuss that:

In the coping mechanism, stakeholders should also take part to address the struggles, but in our case, only the parents have the energy to help the teachers in terms of the implementation of the program.

Informant 6 affirmed by stating that:

If there is a presence of the support of stakeholder, is most likely comes from the parents. But as to other agencies, even the LGU and BLGU, there is none. I even think of the way where they can help, even on advocating volunteers and encourage private individuals to donate their reading materials to be used in the DEAR sessions.

Informant 7 finally said:

When it comes to stakeholders' assistance to cope up with the things that are un-available, I can see nothing. I mean, nobody dares to donate used books and other reading materials, nobody dares to give materials to be used in the printing of reading activity sheets and worksheets. No one had the guts to take a share on the success of the program except for the parents.

4.4 Insights Gained by the Participants from the Implementation of the DEAR Program
This section presents the results to the 4th major research question, 'What are the insights gained by the participants from the implementation of the DEAR program?' There were two specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

4.4.1 Insights Gained from the experience in the Implementation of the DEAR Program
In this section, there were emerging themes from the responses to specific research question 4.1, "What insights have you gained from your experience in the implementation of the DEAR Program?" Various themes emerge such as, provision of unified guidelines, a need for careful planning, provision of appropriate reading materials, and provision of functional reading facilities.

Provision of Unified Guidelines. Provision of unified guidelines for an effective DEAR program is key to ensure consistency, effectiveness, and measurable outcomes across different schools and communities. These guidelines help in aligning the efforts of all authorities, implementers, and stakeholders, making the program more structured and impactful.

Informant 1 shares his insight stating that:

If DepEd desires to implement a program, it should be backed up with ready – to – use materials and a unified guideline that will serve as our road map in implementing DEAR sessions.

Informant 2 shares her suggestions and asserts that:

I suggest to the people at the top of the agency – the higher authorities in DepEd that if they think of implementing programs beneficial to the students, they should at least make sure to provide the necessary materials, and action plan that will serve as guide in the implementation

A Need for Careful Planning. Careful planning is essential for the effective implementation of the DEAR program. Thoughtful preparation helps to address potential challenges, ensures that all participants are on the same page, and maximize the impact of the program.

Informant 3 shares her ideas and stated:

My insights that I have gained from my experience in the implementation of the program is that, this program could have been effective and promising if it is being planned carefully before it is being implemented in the classrooms. This program could help a lot of students who are struggling in reading to become at least elevate their reading capacity level. The program is nice, it is perfect actually, but it needs thorough planning.

Informant 6 also affirmed and said that:

Maybe if the program is not in a rush, I mean if it is being planned carefully, this DEAR is already been an intensified program for reading.

Provision of Reading Materials and Facilities. Provision of appropriate and diverse reading materials and reading facilities is a cornerstone of an effective DEAR program implementation. Ensuring that students have access to engaging and suitable books fosters a love for reading and enhances literacy skills.

Informant 4 expressed her ideas by stating that:

As a teacher, the implementation of the DEAR could not be as hard as it was before if there is a provision of ample reading materials for the purpose.

Informant 5 on the other hand reiterate that:

Implementation of the DEAR program could have been effective if the task of the teachers is just to implement. I mean, materials and facilities should be provided before it is being ordered to be implemented in the classrooms.

Informant 7 explains and said that:

There should be an appropriate reading materials and facilities for reading activities in a form of support from the government and other stakeholders.

4.4.2 Suggestions for the Improvement of DEAR Program Implementation

In this section, there were emerging themes from the responses to specific research question 4.2, 'What are your suggestions for the improvement of the implementation of the DEAR program?' Several themes emerge such as, implement DEAR with everything in place, proper support from DepEd, DepEd to hire reading teachers, and provide ready-to-use reading materials.

Implement DEAR with Everything in Place. Implementing DEAR with everything in place involves thorough preparation and strategic planning to ensure the program runs smoothly and achieve its objectives.

Informant 1 suggests that:

When giving instruction to implement a program, of course before it is being cascaded to the lower level, it should be complete – from the provision of learning materials, trainings of teachers, comprehensive plan with proper time table, activity sheets, and assessment tool.

Informant 3 supported the latter and pointed out her suggestions:

My suggestions are for the higher authorities in the DepEd who bring out brain over this program, I suggest the following: 1. Unified guidelines or implementation plan for teachers to follow, 2. Provision of enough reading materials 3. Provision of reading facilities at least functional 4. Provide a specific assessment tool to monitor students' progress 6. Provide a directive to encourage the LGUs and other agencies to take part in the implementation.

This was supported by Informant 5 who contented:

I suggest that before the program is being cascaded to the lower level, everything necessary in the implementation must also be prepared.

Informant 7 also expressed her thoughts on this matter and said:

Teachers must undergo training for the purpose, provided also with ready-to-use materials and activity sheets, appropriate assessment tool, and a unified guide or plan to follow.

Proper Support from DepEd. Proper support from the Department of Education is crucial to the success of the DEAR program. When DepEd provides comprehensive backing, it ensures that schools have the necessary resources, training, and policies in place to implement the program effectively.

Informant 2 pointed out her idea and stated that:

For proper support from the Department of Education, they should conduct trainings and seminar, design a program where needed materials are available and ready-to-use.

In addition, informant 4 agreed and said that:

For the program to be a successful and less hassle on the part of the teacher is to make sure that there is a ready-to-use reading materials. There are enough activity sheets embedded in a well-crafted implementation plan.

Meanwhile, Informant 6 pointed out that:

Before gives order to implement a program in the lower level, they should at least prepare the things necessary for the implementation like reading materials or supplies for printing and designate a facility, a functional one that is fit for reading activities.

4.4.3 Pieces of Advice to other Stakeholders Involved in the Implementation of DEAR Program

In this section, there were emerging themes from the responses to specific research question 4.3, 'What pieces of advice can you share to the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the DEAR Program?' Various themes have been created such as, constant support from stakeholders, make stakeholders a part of the implementation, and government agencies Working hand-in-hand.

Constant Support from Stakeholders. Stakeholders include school administrators, teachers, parents, students, community members, and policy makers. Their collective involvement and commitment can significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the DEAR program.

Informant 1 clearly stated that:

As to stakeholders, their constant support is a way more helpful in the success of the DEAR implementation. Government agencies especially the LGU or other government sector that is capable to help in terms of the provision of reading facilities, they should make a visit to schools to check on how they can help since they have the budget for infrastructure projects like school library or reading facilities.

Informant 2 also agrees and pointed out:

I suggest for LGU and other government agencies to include in their budgetary plan the provision of reading facilities in public schools especially to the small schools who have insufficient budget to establish the necessary facilities for the purpose. For the parents also, they should assist the teachers in monitoring the progress of their kids.

Informant 4 pointed out and said that:

Parents as stakeholders, it would already be a big help for us teachers if parents will assist us in monitoring their kids if they were able to performed their reading task at home. But as to other stakeholders like LGU and other agencies, they could have help in the success of the program just by making donations of books and other reading materials.

Government Agencies Working Hand-in-hand. Various government agencies must collaborate effectively. These agencies play a crucial role in policy-making, funding, resource allocation, training, and monitoring, ensuring that DEAR programs are well-supported and sustainable.

Informant 5 gives her remark on this and note that:
To stakeholders like the LGU, since they have the budget and they are capable of providing infrastructure projects, therefore they set aside budget for the construction of reading facilities or reading hub in public schools.

Informant 6 asserted and expressed her idea on this matter and said:

It is not supposed to be parents only who would take a part for the success of the DEAR program. Other government agencies should also be included to work hand-in-hand to address the problem in reading.

Finally, informant 7 stressed out and suggest that:

Government agencies such as LGU and BLGU, they should give time to construct reading facilities. They should at least provide budget for the construction of the necessary reading facilities, especially in small schools. It Helping one another is surely effective to successfully reach the ultimate goal of the DEAR program.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Program, as examined through experiences of reading implementers, showcases a complex mix of both challenges and successes. Teachers and administrators have encountered significant difficulties, such as limited resources, diverse student reading abilities, and the necessity for sustained engagement. These issues have been further exacerbated by the lack of comprehensive implementation plans, inadequate training, and insufficient assessment tools.

Despite these hurdles, educators have shown remarkable resilience and ingenuity in their coping strategies. Many have harnessed community support, pursued additional training, and modified their teaching methods to better cater to their students' needs. Effective practices that have emerged include on-on-one reading sessions, interactive games, and allowing students the freedom to choose their reading materials, all of which enhance student engagement and literacy.

The insights gained from these experiences highlight the importance of a well-structured and supportive framework for DEAR program. Continuous professional development for teachers, strong assessment practices, and

strong administrative backing are essential for program's success. Additionally, nurturing a collaborative reading culture that involves parents and the broader community can further amplify the program's impact.

In conclusion, the DEAR program holds significant potential to enhance literacy and cultivate a love for reading among students. However, its success relies on addressing challenges faced by implementers through targeted support and strategic planning. By learning from the experiences and insights of those directly involved, educators, and policymakers can refine and strengthen the DEAR program, ultimately contributing to the academic and personal development of students.

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