

CARE FOR NON-READER (CNR) AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Jessa D. Baruis¹, Ramlah A. Ampatuan², Husna T. Lumapenet³

¹ Teacher I, Department of Education, Satinitigan Elementary School, New Cebu, President Roxas, North Cotabato, Philippines

² Associate Professor, Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology, Doroluman, Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines

³ Associate Professor, Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology, Doroluman, Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Generally, this study determined the care for non-reader (CNR) amidst covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, sought to answer the following: the interventions and strategies made by the teachers in extending Care for Non-Reader learners during this pandemic; the challenges encountered by the teachers in reaching out the non-reader learners to be a reader; the issues and concerns of parents that the CNR teachers encountered in the New Normal setting; the coping mechanisms to issues and concerns of parents encountered by the teachers.

Qualitative-phenomenology employed, 7 teachers and 4 schools served as participants, the gathering of the data was done through the utilization of an open-ended questions.

Based from the result, it was found out in the study that despite of the pandemic, reading coordinator teachers under the Care for Non-Reader program should be implemented employing different strategies to hasten the challenges brought by the COVID-19 virus. It is also implied that reading programs like CNR will beget fruitful results; hence, continuing and sustaining the program implementation is really a must amidst pandemic.

Meanwhile, in the implementation of the program, challenges are also unavoidable especially during this pandemic wherein teachers were prohibited to have contact with their learners to avoid the possible spread of the COVID-19 virus. Teachers noted that they encountered the challenges on the distance of non-readers from school to their home, lacking of learners' interest in reading, and declining parents' involvement and support to the implementation and sustainability of CNR program.

Keyword: - Care for Non-Reader, and COVID-19 pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

The lockdown has been implemented globally to eliminate the spread of Corona virus originating in Wuhan, China. All establishments including schools' normal operations were stopped, thus a new modality of teaching was introduced and imposed. The Department of Education embraced modular distance learning and online teaching.

A report by Gioia (2008), Chairman of the US National Endowment for the Arts, showed that literary reading has declined among Americans across age and educational levels. Furthermore, people tended to read less frequently as they grew older. Rhee (2001) proved that race and education were strong predictors of reading habits: White Americans were more inclined to reading than their Asian counterparts, whereas graduate-level respondents read more often than those who attained lower education. In the study by Su-Yen Chen (2007), students majoring in arts and architecture were found to spend the largest amount of time in reading than students of other majors.

Pakistan is a developing country having poor literacy rate. The Government of Pakistan presented education plan 2011-2012 to improve the quality of education. Government has shown interest in field of education because reading capabilities of young Pakistanis seem quite low while compared with other countries. It becomes a great hindrance in young generation's future and a serious issue which need to be solved and addressed at all levels. Comprehension in reading of children is below according to their grade level that makes Pakistan far behind in race of reading in world (Annual survey of education Research as cited by (Ministry of Finance, 2012).

MANILA, Philippines (2019), among 79 participating countries and economies, the Philippines scored the lowest in reading comprehension in the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), according to the results. PISA is a worldwide study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development that examines students' knowledge in reading, mathematics, and science.

In the study of Ley, Schaer and Dismukes (1994) which revealed that students show a remarkable decline in their attitude towards reading as well as how much they read as they age. This is also proven from the Malaysian Reading Profile Survey in 2010 which mentioned that Malaysians above 10 years old read an average of only eight to twelve books a year (National Library of Malaysia, 2010). This is relatively low when compared to other countries like the United States and China (Salim Md. Zain, 2012). Other than that, the findings were also parallel with the findings found by Kaur and Thivagarajah (1999) who accentuated that Malaysian students read very little.

However, despite the pandemic, the Department of Education continues to adopt the "Care for Non-Readers Program" as a reading program. The implementation of the program paved the way to alleviate the national problem of serious reading failures. Although the Department of Education has conducted multiple reading interventions, such as tutorial classes, family visits and peer reading. Result is consistently showing a reoccurring high percentage of readers at the frustration level and a low percentage of independent readers.

Furthermore, the researcher wanted to determine the present condition of these Care for Non-Reader Program of the DepEd amidst of COVID-19 Pandemic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the strategies, interventions, and challenges encountered by the teachers amidst of pandemic for the Care of Non-Reader learners. As such, the challenges and perceived problems encountered of the teacher in reaching-out the Non-Reader learners and coping mechanisms of the teachers.

Such reasons prompted the researchers to conduct a study on the impact of the Care for the Non-Readers (CNR) program on the reading performance of struggling readers in selected elementary and secondary schools of Pres. Roxas, Magpet, Makilala, North Cotabato.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the qualitative-phenomenology as a research design. Qualitative research aims to build a holistic, primarily the narrative, description to inform the researchers understanding of the occurrence of the phenomenon in a social and cultural context (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020; Jordan & Franklin, 2020; Kawamura, 2020). In addition, it is a combination of observations, interviews, and the review of documents. Hence, it gives the significance of finding at the variables in its natural setting in which they are found. The gathering of the data is made through the utilization of an open-ended questions that provided direct quotations coming from. Here, the interviews are important part of the research (Silverman, 2020).

Meanwhile, phenomenology intends to focus on detailed description of the phenomenon being explored before the researcher could reach at interpreting the descriptions or interpretations (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2020). It is fundamental to do the summary of findings, discussions of findings, recommendation or future implications to give readers the panoramic perspectives of the study. The purpose of phenomenology is to look closely at the phenomenon under stud in order to give an in-depth meaning to the lived experienced of the participants.

Moreover, this study is qualitative-phenomenology since it will deal with the interventions of the teachers made during the COVID 19 Pandemic crises. More so, this will determine their teaching strategies, problems encountered and issues they met while adhering the proper protocols in coping the Care for Non-readers learners to read independently.

The participants of this study are the selected elementary and high school teachers of the CNR learners. First will be the, five teachers coming from the different schools of President Roxas, and Magpet both elementary and Secondary. Lastly will be the two secondary public school teachers coming from the municipality of Makilala, North Cotabato.

To select them, the researcher uses the purposive sampling specifically the criterion-based sampling. They will be chosen using the criteria as stated below:

1. The ancillary load or designation of the participants in in a certain school;
2. The subject loads of the teachers must be aligned to the reading subject; and lastly
3. Years of teaching of the participants in a particular school.

The analysis of the data will be based on the context of Creswell (2013). It will identify the themes of the responses of the Key Informants. The frequency of the responses as well as the core idea will be drawn. The framework of the NVIVO on the thematic analysis will be utilized as shown below:

General-50% of the informants shared the same theme of their responses.

Typical- 25-40% of the informants shared the same theme of their responses.

Variant-20% of the informants shared the same theme of their responses.

During the conduct of the interview, the informants were interviewed individually. This was followed by the interview of the focus group. A token was given to them as such a sign of gratitude for the time and effort they gave. After the interview, the researcher translated the Bilingual answer into English. This gave the universality of the paper. The data analyst did the thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Consequently, the peer debriefer checked the correctness of the process as well as the findings based on the contexts of the research questions (Richard & Memphill, 2018). Moreover, the result of the study was returned to the informants for the member to check (Harper & Cole, 2012). They confirmed about the veracity of their responses. Each one was discussed profoundly. Lastly, the editor checked the grammatical and lexical contents of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies Made by the Teachers in Extending Care for Non-Reader (CNR) Program during this Pandemic

The first research question of the study asked about on the strategies of reading teachers during this pandemic. Table 1 presents the emerging themes with the corresponding frequency and core ideas. These themes include: CNR teachers provide reading materials to learners, they also provide reading materials to parents, CNR teachers taught parents/guardians how to teach reading activities, and advice parents/guardians to seek assistance from neighbors and or relatives.

CNR Teachers provide reading materials to learners

The Care for Non-Readers (CNR) teachers help the learners in providing them reading learning materials that they could read while there is pandemic. Based on what are shared by the teachers who are involved in the program, because of the CNR implementation in their school, they have to strategize reading activities that could sustained the reading program amidst pandemic.

They need to motivate non-readers to develop their interest to read and they also become motivated to learn as they are given the opportunity to read and have been given more time to read with the assistance of their parents or guardians at home.

The result of themes generated implied that during this pandemic reading coordinator teachers made an effort in extending reading materials to their non-reader students. It is in congruent to the findings of a blogger in (<https://www.lexialearning.com/blog/6-ways-help-students-struggling-reading-close-gap>) which states that the involvement of parents in a struggling child's education can make a world of difference. One way to involve parents and keep them informed of their child's literacy development is to offer ways to reinforce newly learned skills at home. Many parents can feel intimidated by extending their child's learning, so think about providing parents with reading strategies that can make at-home reading fun, such as the child retelling passages in their own words as the parent reads a book aloud.

CNR Teachers Provide Reading Materials to Parents/Guardians and Taught Parents Strategies on How to Teach Reading Activities

Furthermore, CNR teachers also made the pupils love reading since they were introduced to parents the concept of why reading is important. This narrative clearly describes that CNR teachers motivated parents to teach their children to read and love reading since they are not allowed to conduct a face-to-face class with their students.

The findings implied that the CNR program as implemented in the secondary schools have to be sustained by the CNR teachers during this pandemic making strategies in motivating students to love reading. The program is intended for non-readers, the students who at their grade level have not reached reading proficiency required of them. This result that the program has helped the pupils develop interest or love in reading which confirms to the findings of Mitchell (2018) who found out in her research that when reading program is successfully conducted like when readers are provident with reading practice which is very vital in making the readers realize that they are indeed, readers, they are more motivated and engaged to read.

Advice Parents/Guardians to Seek Assistance from Neighbors and or Relatives

The teacher participants shared that the parents could seek assistance in teaching reading to their children with the help of their neighbors and or their relatives. The teachers noticed that through CNR, pupils were given with the necessary help. The non-readers are given the time by the teachers who taught and encourage parents to help their children to read and provide the needed help through the assistance of neighbors or relatives in the absence of face-to-face learning.

In addition, teachers believe that in today's situation, asking for help from neighbors is considered an effective strategy because there is no other way to address the lack of reading instruction than to seek help from highly educated people.

It can be gleaned from the findings that when pupils are given the necessary scaffolding or form of help in reading, they will also be able to read and soon become independent readers. As shared by the teachers, in scaffolding learners, there are varied strategies being introduced and these activities are helpful for pupils to learn reading. This idea is in accordance to what is explained by Gredler, Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) that for reading mastery to be attained, children need to be presented with different strategies such as listening and talking activities; provided with different books; and other opportunities for them to increase awareness of phonological aspects and to recognize the words being read.

Table 1. Themes and Core Ideas on the Strategies of Reading Teachers During this Pandemic

	Frequency	Core Ideas
CNR teachers providing reading materials to learners	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage learners to love in reading • Motivate learners to read
CNR teachers providing reading materials to parents/guardians	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reading materials • Use for reading tasks at home • Give parents the option of selecting books for their children to read
CNR teachers taught parents/guardians strategies on how to teach reading activities	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap parents on what to read • Use oral reading under parents' supervision • Orient/explain parents on the steps involved in conducting reading • Give reading selection to parents • Demonstrate how to use the reading materials
Advice parents/guardians to seek assistance from neighbors and or relatives	Variant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parents/guardians to ask help

Legend: *General -50% and above of the responses*
Typical- 25%-49% of the responses
Variant-24% and below of the responses

Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing the CNR program

In implementing the CNR while observing health protocols, teachers have encountered different forms of challenges. The emergent themes on this includes: challenges on the distance of non-readers from school to their home, lacking of learners' interest in reading, and declining parents involvement and support to the implementation and sustainability of CNR program. The responses on the said themes are considered general and typical. Table 2 shows the themes, frequency of the responses and the core ideas which correspond to each theme.

Distance of Non-readers from Home to School

This is one of the challenges revealed by the teachers. During this pandemic, location of students who are non-readers is a challenge for the reading coordinator teachers. They particularly pointed out that the learners are

difficult to reach especially during this pandemic because their movement are limited to adhere in the implemented general community quarantine and others health protocols for the safety and protection of everyone.

Another participant emphasized that distance between the struggling learners from home to school is a challenge for her during this pandemic

During this pandemic the distance of non-reader learners are part of the challenges encountered by the reading teachers. The situation is very similar to the findings of this study where teachers considered distance of non-reader learners from school to home as a challenge. Indeed, there are teachers finding difficulty to reach their learners during this pandemic because teachers are not permitted to handle face to face instruction. Hanslo (2016) in his study targets the problem on the lack of love for reading among the second language learners and established the idea of implementing extensive reading. This means, the problem of having the children to love reading is also evident in other contexts. Fisher (2013) also generates similar findings and all teachers under study also encountered obstacles and implemented methods to restart pleasure reading.

Lacking of Learners' Interest in Reading

This challenge pertains to the interest of students who need assistance in learning how to read and are considered as non-readers. They need attention from teachers and they are recipients of this CNR program. For the teacher participants, when there are several non-readers to deal with, this is a challenge for them on how they can actually make them readers as they need to teach struggling students who are not motivated to become reader

In this study, teachers revealed about their difficulties of handling non-reader learners if they are situated in a far location because of the restrictions implemented during this pandemic. In support, Almutauri (2018) that teaching reading is really an arduous task especially on the reading comprehension aspect. However, for Davies et al. (2016), this is not a challenge if teachers are able to find the right strategy in teaching reading. In their study, a teacher who is handling 48 learners in the class is able to facilitate reading by employing strategies to engage learners such as relating particular sounds to the letters of the alphabet and rote memorization with the use of flashcards and charts to enhance student reading skills. But since we are observing health protocols reading teachers found it as a challenge since they are not permitted to have contact with their students.

Parents' involvement and support

Teachers also considered parents' involvement and support as the most challenging part in the implementation of CNR during this time of pandemic. For the teacher participants, they have observed that parents have different reasons in being reluctant in their involvement by helping their children become a reader and giving their full support to the teachers in handling while observing health protocols

In addition, parents' availability is also hindrances in assessing struggling students to be readers. Parents are too busy working for sustaining their family needs by working on their farms and producing earnings for their family's consumption in their everyday existence in this world.

Parent's educational attainment is also an issue for one teacher-participant which she considered as hindrance in supporting their children to become readers. She elaborated that:

These findings of the study is also similar to the idea of Otto, W., Barrett, Smith, Dulin, Johnson, Barganz, & Smith, (1972) that reading teachers are addressing the need of the diverse learners since there are different groups of students when it comes to reading. In a learning situation, diversity of the learners is inevitable; hence, teacher should be able to find the most appropriate strategy in handling them and the use of differentiated instruction is important. Content can be differentiated by using leveled texts, technology, and student grouping. The teaching process can be differentiated by using centers, hands on materials, and giving students additional time to complete tasks (Firmender, Reis & Sweeny, 2013).

Table 2. Themes and Core Ideas on Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Reaching out Non-Reader Learners

Themes	Frequency	Core Ideas
Distance of non-readers from school to their homes	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are not attending reading schedules
handling several non-readers	Typical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some pupils do not have interest to read
dealing with diverse reading needs	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a lot of non-readers to handle • Lack of time in attending all non-readers
lacking reading resources	Typical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-readers are of different cognitive abilities • Pupils have different needs when it comes to reading • Lack of reading materials

Legend: *General -50% and above of the responses*
Typical- 25%-49% of the responses
Variant-24% and below of the responses

Parents' Suggestions to CNR Teachers in the New Normal Setting

With the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of the CNR program during this new normal, teachers noted the parents' suggestions. As shown in Table 3, the suggestions employed by the parents to teachers are classified into core ideas such as the proposed minimal face-to-face classes; and provide multi-lingual reading booklets.

Parents Suggestions

In order to address the challenges of the teachers in handling diverse needs of the learners who receive the CNR program, the parents' suggested to reading teachers to implement minimal face-to-face classes to help non-reader leaders to be readers.

Giving the parents an opportunity to choose the reading materials will develop their interest and support their motivation to read. For Almutauri (2018), the use of different learning materials addresses the needs of the learners who also need scaffold in terms of comprehension and in terms of learning phonemic awareness.

Table 3. Suggestions of Parents to CNR Teachers Encountered in the New Normal Setting

Themes	Frequency	Core Ideas
Conduct physical classes	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose minimal face-to-face classes
Make available reading booklets	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide multi-lingual reading booklets

Legend: *General -50% and above of the responses*
Typical- 25%-49% of the responses
Variant-24% and below of the responses

How Reading Teachers Cope with the Challenges Encountered

These are the suggestions of the participants to resolve the problems and challenges encountered by the reading coordinator teachers in implementing Care for Non-Reader Program amidst pandemic.

The prevailing themes generated are the following: One of the issues faced is handling non-reader learners during this pandemic is the distance of non-reader learners from home to school. The issue can be resolved through sub-dividing the struggling readers to every teacher to minimize the number of the pupils and also cater their needs individually by scheduling mass home visitation on a regular basis with the help of Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) and Local Government Unit (LGU) through providing transportation. In implementing this, the teachers will work hand in hand while observing health protocols.

Another theme is motivating all struggling students to become readers, encourage them that in learning reading is very important. Therefore, struggling students to read should encourage to exert an effort to love reading with the help and support of their teachers in providing contextualized and improvised reading materials.

As confirmed, improvising and contextualizing reading materials motivates students to read. The teachers may be very resourceful to download reading materials from online resources, make other reading resources to be available for their learners by improvising and contextualizing them in line with our current setting and situation.

Lastly, to encourage parents to provide assistant, help, and support for their children to become readers. The lacking of parents support in any form may hindrance the success of their child/children to be a reader/readers. School Principals/School Heads proposed that all teachers will observed regular visit to all identified non-reader students enrolled in their school and seek budgetary support from linkages. It also suggested that the head by the school head will solicit monetary assistance from BLGU and LGU for transportation going to the home of non-reader students that are situated in a far flung area. And school principal should allocate a budget for the monetary fund from MOOE or other partnerships so that parents would give time for their children. The collaboration effort of teachers, school principal/head, parents and even officials from BLGU and LGU may have a huge contribution to accomplish and achieve the needed fund to provide monetary assistance to parents and having sufficient reading materials for all non-reader students.

These claims are supported by the participants as their coping mechanisms to the challenges they encountered in implementing care for non-reader program amidst this pandemic.

Narrations from teacher-participants that as coping mechanisms on the challenges they encountered in implementing the CNR program. They indeed showcase how important is allocating budget from school MOOE to support and sustain the CNR Program during this pandemic.

The use of school funds to address the needs of students in learning reading strategies is supported by various literatures.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conducting this research is very productive. The researcher is also a program in-charge of the CNR in the school where she is assigned. The finding of the study is very much useful in gaining more insights and better understanding about CNR implementation amidst pandemic. The researcher affirms through this research that indeed, the program is helpful; however, during this pandemic there are more challenges that arises in the implementation of the program. The way teachers address these challenges is giving the researcher and eventually the readers of this research the realization that teachers who want to really to help their students will do everything they can to reach the goal of making their students be a reader and appreciate reading. In addition encourage the parents to extend their support and guidance in making their children readers.

Truly, the task of teachers in teaching reading is difficult. There are so many things to prepare and consider; and it takes a dose and more doses of patience and effort. The result of the study made the researcher realized that the program should be reviewed regularly so as to make it more responsive to the needs of the readers. The fact that it is viewed as helpful is not enough. Reviewing, modifying, and innovating the program activities is also necessary to suit in today's situation of our educational set up.

On the other hand, the conduct of this research has developed with the researcher the value of being broadminded and ready to accept ideas from others. While her mind has been boxed with the idea that CNR is very helpful, it is through in this research that the researcher also realized that there is no such thing as perfect program. The program implementers are encountering problems too especially during this pandemic and appropriately addressing such problems is also a must.

5. REFERENCES

- Castleberry, A., & Nolen, A. (2018). Thematic Analysis Of Qualitative Research Data: Is it as easy as it sounds? *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 10(6), 807-815.
- Chen, S. Y. (2007). Extracurricular reading habits of college students in Taiwan: Findings from two national surveys. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(8), 642-653.
- Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D. (2020). *The phenomenological mind*. Routledge.
- Gioia, D. (2008). *To read or not to read: A question of national consequence*. DIANE Publishing.

- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2020). *Qualitative research methods*. Sage
- Jordan, C., & Franklin, C. (Eds.). (2020). *Clinical assessment for social workers: qualitative methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Kaur, S. & Thivagarajah, R. (1999). The Reading Habits of ELLS Students in University Science Malaysia. Universiti Sains Malaysia. [Online] <http://www.ultibase.rmit.edu.au/Articles/Aug01/kaur.htm> (Sep. 25, 2011)
- Ley, T. C., Schaer, B. B., & Dismukes, B. W. (1994). Longitudinal study of the reading attitudes and behaviors of middle school students. *Reading Psychology: An International Quarterly*, 15(1), 11-38.
- National Library of Malaysia. (2010). *Reading profile of Malaysians: 2010*. Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia. Retrieved January 9, 2018, from <http://www.pnm.gov.my>
- PISA 2018 Results (Volume I). *What Students Know and Can Do*
- Richards, K. A. R., & Hemphill, M. A. (2018). A practical guide to collaborative qualitative data analysis. *Journal of Teaching in Physical education*, 37(2), 225-231.
- Rhee, A. M. S. O. (2001). Adult reading habits and patterns. *Reading psychology*, 22(3), 175-203.
- Silverman, D. (Ed). (2020). *Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications Limited.
- Zain, K. H. N. (2012). The effect of using group work on reading Comprehension for the students of the eighth grade of smpn 1 cangkriangan in the academic year of 2011/2012. *Yogyakarta: Unpublished Thesis*.