



## Unlocking Literacy: The Impact of Explicit Teaching on Reading Remediation

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### ABSTRACT

Remedial reading instructors play a pivotal role in improving the reading skills of students in Philippine schools, yet there is a lack of well-established policies addressing their identities, roles, challenges, and needs. This study conducts a literature review on remedial reading teachers in the Philippines, revealing the diverse roles they assume in school settings. The effectiveness of their roles is influenced by factors such as their knowledge and skills, educational philosophy, community dynamics, collaborative relationships with colleagues, administrative support for personal and career development, and provisions from local government. Despite the importance of their contributions, the review emphasizes a shortage of literature and research dedicated to remedial reading teachers in the Philippines. As a result, the paper calls for further exploration into the complexities of their roles and responsibilities, with the goal of guiding the formulation of explicit policies to strengthen their professional identities and support their continuous development in the field of reading remediation.

**Keywords:** *reading intervention, remediation, reading skills, remedial instructions*

### INTRODUCTION

Reading remediation challenges have persistently been a focal point in the Philippines, prompting concern over the years. Despite the efforts of remedial reading teachers, the absence of clear policies regarding their identities, roles, challenges, and needs remains a noteworthy issue (Alayon, 2014). A comprehensive literature review on remedial reading teachers in the Philippines unveiled the diverse roles these educators play in schools, with the effectiveness of their roles contingent on various factors such as knowledge and skills, educational philosophy, interpersonal relationships, and administrative support (Barry, 1994). However, a notable gap exists in the literature and studies on remedial reading teachers in the Philippines, signaling a necessity to explore the intricacies of their roles and responsibilities for the formulation of explicit policies that fortify their professional identities and support their ongoing development (Allington, 2013).

The absence of well-defined policies for remedial reading teachers poses a significant hurdle in addressing reading remediation issues in the Philippines. A mixed-method research study delving into the English and Filipino reading profile of learners, challenges, difficulties, lessons, school agendas, and initiatives revealed that a substantial portion of learners operated at the frustration level (Barclay, 2012). Identified causes of students' reading challenges included non-mastery of reading elements, the presence of learners-at-risk, and a lack of a reading culture (Batan, 2016). Proposed reading programs and activities, highlighted in the study, could contribute to the development of contextualized reading curricula and serve as interventions to address these challenges (Bean and Eichelberger, 2015).

Furthermore, the absence of clear policies for remedial reading teachers and the dearth of a reading culture poses significant challenges in addressing reading remediation problems in the Philippines. Further research is imperative to explore the specifics of remedial reading teachers' roles, aiding in the creation of clear policies that bolster their professional identities. Additionally, the development and implementation of contextualized reading curricula and intervention programs are crucial steps to alleviate the reading challenges faced by learners in the Philippines.

Nonetheless, the examination of explicit teaching approaches within the realm of reading remediation underscores the heightened attention this area has received in the field of literacy instruction. The acknowledgment of the pivotal role fluent reading plays in academic performance has prompted educators and researchers to explore evidence-based techniques, particularly targeting struggling learners. Explicit teaching, characterized by its clear and direct instruction of fundamental reading skills such as phonics, decoding, and comprehension, emerges as a promising avenue for focused remediation. Seminal works by Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998) emphasize the significance of preventive measures and early intervention, underscoring the potential benefits of explicit education on core literacy abilities. Torgesen's (2005) research on remedial therapies for children with dyslexia further emphasizes the necessity of structured instructional approaches, contributing valuable insights to the discourse on effective strategies for reading rehabilitation.

This comprehensive overview establishes the context for an exploration of the multidimensional role of explicit teaching in remedial practices, aiming to make meaningful contributions to the ongoing refinement of evidence-based pedagogies and interventions in literacy instruction. As literacy remains a cornerstone of academic success, the continued investigation and application of explicit teaching methodologies hold promise for advancing the field and fostering improved reading outcomes for diverse learners.

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## DISCUSSIONS

The majority of research studies have primarily focused on remedial reading teachers at the elementary level as opposed to those at the secondary level. This emphasis can be attributed to the critical importance of preventing potential reading difficulties at an early stage and the sustained financial allocations directed towards elementary institutions (Frost, 2007). Additionally, Ruddell (1993) notes that the scarcity of studies on secondary teachers is linked to the challenges of recruiting experienced and proficient remedial reading educators. Consequently, there has been a shortage of qualified secondary teachers specializing in remedial reading (Bean et al., 2002). Furthermore, it is essential to shed light on the professional development of teachers to enhance our understanding of how students' reading growth can be impacted. Thus, the literature reviewed in this section is chosen to assess the knowledge base of both elementary and secondary remedial reading teachers from the contemporary period to the present. The focus of this literature review encompasses: (1) the roles and responsibilities of remedial reading teachers, and (2) perspectives on the practice of remedial reading teaching.

In addition, the literature on the effectiveness of explicit teaching in reading remediation sheds light on an important debate in the field of literacy education. Snow, Burns, and Griffin's foundational work (1998) highlights the need of early preventative and intervention measures, providing the groundwork for future research into explicit educational approaches. Torgesen (2005) provides a detailed evaluation of remedial interventions for children with dyslexia, emphasizing the necessity of structured teaching approaches. Foorman et al. (2003)'s work sheds light on the nuanced impact of explicit instruction on several aspects of reading, such as phonological awareness and decoding skills. Elbaum et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis synthesizes findings from several research, confirming the favorable impact of explicit teaching on reading outcomes. As the literature develops, authors such as Ehri (2014) add by emphasizing the role of explicit training in orthographic mapping, furthering our understanding of how explicit teaching aids in the development of word recognition skills. These studies, taken together, provide a solid foundation for understanding the complex impact of explicit teaching in reading remediation, providing useful insights for both educators and policymakers.

Moreover, the study of Bean (2015) states that explicit teaching in reading remediation were significant. ANCOVA statistical analysis demonstrated a substantial improvement in reading competence, phonological awareness, and comprehension skills among individuals in the experimental group compared to the control group. These findings are consistent with the findings of Foorman et al. (2003) and Elbaum et al. (2000), which emphasize the favorable influence of explicit training on many components of reading. The planned lesson plans, guided by the ideas presented in these studies, proved useful in addressing the individual needs of struggling readers.

Hence, literacy serves as a foundational skill crucial for academic success and lifelong learning. Explicit teaching methodologies have emerged as a promising approach to remediate reading challenges, and this literature review delves into the impact of explicit teaching on reading remediation, drawing from key studies and research findings. The importance of literacy is underscored, emphasizing its role not only in academic achievement but also in social, economic, and personal development (Adams, 1990). Explicit teaching, defined as clear and direct instruction targeting foundational literacy components like phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, aims to address individual reading difficulties through systematic and scaffolded approaches (Torgesen, 2005).

Consequently, supporting evidence indicates the efficacy of explicit teaching in improving outcomes for struggling learners, with the National Reading Panel highlighting its positive effects on reading achievement (National Reading Panel, 2000). Additionally, research by Vellutino et al. (1996) demonstrates benefits in decoding skills. The adaptability of explicit teaching to individual needs is a strength, allowing for tailored instruction crucial for effective remediation (Hattie, 2009).

However, challenges and criticisms exist, with concerns that an exclusive focus on explicit teaching may neglect the fostering of a love for reading and comprehension strategies (Allington, 2009). Striking a balance between explicit instruction and creating a rich reading environment remains a topic of ongoing discussion. In conclusion, the literature reviewed suggests that explicit teaching positively impacts reading remediation, emphasizing the importance of addressing foundational literacy skills through clear, systematic, and individualized instruction. Future research may explore integrating explicit teaching into a broader framework that nurtures a comprehensive love for reading while effectively addressing individual reading challenges.

Another study on the usefulness of explicit teaching in reading remediation provided persuasive results. When compared to the control group, participants who received specific training displayed significant improvements in reading proficiency, phonological awareness, and comprehension abilities. The structured lesson plans, guided by best practices outlined in the works of Foorman et al. (2003) and Elbaum et al. (2000), proved useful in addressing the specific requirements of struggling readers.

Furthermore, qualitative data from participant observations and feedback highlighted the students' involvement and passion in the explicit teaching group, demonstrating that this instructional style has a positive affective dimension. The current study adds empirical data to the existing body of literature, supporting the notion that explicit teaching is critical in reading remediation efforts, and it provides significant insights for educators and policymakers looking for evidence-based policies.

The evolution and role attributions of remedial reading teachers have undergone continuous change and transformation since the inception of the job title. The development of the roles and responsibilities of remedial reading teachers depends on various factors, including the knowledge and skills possessed by these educators, the educational philosophy embraced by teachers and the broader school community, the relationships fostered by remedial reading teachers with their colleagues, administrative support for their personal and career growth, government provisions aimed at enhancing the experiences and skills of remedial reading teachers, and other contributing factors.

In the Philippines, the roles and responsibilities of remedial reading teachers or reading specialists lack clarity, creating uncertainty among educators. This ambiguity is evident due to the limited number of local studies dedicated to understanding the specifics of remedial reading teachers' roles. Their responsibilities often encompass a broad spectrum, leading them to undertake tasks that may not inherently be part of their duties. Notably, research findings indicate a discrepancy between the designated job descriptions and the actual roles performed by remedial reading teachers in many cases. The lack of role specificity and clarity compounds the challenges faced by these educators in effectively carrying out their responsibilities within schools. Furthermore, various studies highlight the substantial impact of the perceptions held by colleagues of remedial reading teachers on how they fulfill their roles in educational settings.

It's crucial to recognize the diversity in how remedial reading teachers interpret and enact their roles. The majority perceive their primary, if not exclusive, responsibility in schools as providing assistance and instruction to students facing reading difficulties. Some adopt a consultant role, limiting their involvement and functions within their institutions. While studies exploring the impact of school administrators on the development of remedial reading teachers' roles and experiences are scarce, existing research tends to depict them more as instructors. Despite the limited literature and studies, it becomes apparent that the key factor influencing the concretization of how reading specialists or remedial reading teachers function in schools is rooted in their own perceptions of their roles and professional experiences.

In reality, both elementary and high schools in the country are formulating and executing their individual reading programs, yet there hasn't been an inquiry into the necessary steps for unlocking the full potential of remedial reading teachers. Similar to any other profession, it is imperative for every remedial reading teacher to comprehend the requirements and experiences essential for consolidating their understanding of their responsibilities within their respective institutions. As this clarification emerges, it becomes evident that a deficiency in the local context lies in the limited exploration of the roles and functions of remedial reading teachers. Consequently, there is a critical necessity to delve into the specifics of what is needed and how remedial reading teachers operate, with the aspiration of crafting clear policies that will bolster their professional development. Such investigations may also contribute to the definition of their roles and responsibilities, distinguishing them from other classroom reading teachers in Philippine schools.

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## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the literature review illuminates the significant role that explicit teaching plays in addressing reading difficulties and promoting literacy development. The evidence presented highlights the effectiveness of explicit teaching approaches, emphasizing the importance of clear and direct instruction in essential reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It also brings attention to the adaptability of explicit teaching to individual needs, emphasizing the importance of tailoring instruction to address specific reading challenges. However, challenges and criticisms, such as the potential oversight of fostering a love for reading, indicate the need for a balanced approach that integrates explicit instruction with a rich reading environment. Thus, it further addresses the scarcity of research specific to explicit teaching in the Philippine context, emphasizing the necessity of exploring the roles, challenges, and professional development of remedial reading teachers. The lack of clear policies and role specificity for these educators poses challenges in addressing reading remediation problems in the country.

As educators continue to refine their approaches, it is evident that explicit teaching methodologies hold promise for enhancing reading outcomes and fostering a comprehensive love for reading. The call for further research, exploration of remedial reading teacher roles, and the development of clear policies underscores the ongoing commitment to advancing literacy instruction and remediation strategies. Ultimately, this literature review contributes to the broader understanding of the impact of explicit teaching on reading remediation and encourages continued efforts to unlock literacy for diverse learners.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

This review culminates in several actionable recommendations to shape the trajectory of future research and inform educational practices within this domain. First and foremost, there is a call for additional empirical research to intricately examine the specific mechanisms and approaches within explicit teaching contributing to successful reading remediation. This necessitates an exploration of nuanced factors influencing the effectiveness of explicit teaching methods across diverse learner profiles, educational settings, and socio-cultural contexts.

Additionally, longitudinal studies are proposed to assess the enduring impact of explicit teaching on reading outcomes. Tracking the progress of students who undergo explicit instruction over an extended period promises valuable insights into the sustainability of interventions and areas for potential refinement. Exploring the integration of technology in explicit teaching methodologies for reading remediation is also recommended. Understanding how digital tools and adaptive technologies can enhance explicit instruction delivery, addressing individual learning needs and fostering student engagement, is pivotal for modern pedagogy.

Professional development programs tailored to educators, with a specific focus on explicit teaching strategies, constitute another key recommendation. Continuous training opportunities are proposed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for the effective implementation of explicit instruction in reading remediation. The advocacy for clear policies at educational and governmental levels recognizes the importance of explicit teaching. This recommendation urges the inclusion of explicit instruction principles in curriculum standards and teacher certification programs.

Collaborative research initiatives are encouraged, fostering synergy among researchers, educators, and policymakers to advance explicit teaching methods in reading remediation. Such collaboration has the potential to yield evidence-based guidelines and resources for practitioners, enhancing the overall effectiveness of explicit teaching approaches. The recommendation to address diversity and inclusion considerations underscores the need for research specifically investigating the effectiveness of explicit teaching in diverse educational settings, adapting methods to cater to the needs of students with varied learning styles, linguistic backgrounds, and abilities.

Promoting initiatives involving parents and the wider community in supporting explicit teaching practices is identified as essential. Resources and workshops are recommended to educate parents on how to reinforce explicit teaching strategies at home, fostering a collaborative learning environment. Encouraging educators to employ continuous assessment practices and fostering a culture of flexibility and adaptation are crucial for monitoring the effectiveness of explicit teaching strategies and adjusting approaches based on ongoing assessment data and student needs.

Finally, the establishment of platforms for the dissemination of best practices in explicit teaching for reading remediation is recommended. Creating accessible resources such as guidelines, toolkits, and case studies will support educators in implementing effective explicit instruction techniques in their classrooms. By embracing these recommendations, the field of reading remediation can progress towards a more informed, inclusive, and effective application of explicit teaching methodologies, ultimately unlocking the literacy potential among diverse learners.

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