WWW.IJRPR.COM

International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Clinical Supervision as an Intervention to Improve Teachers' Efficacy in Teaching Remedial Reading

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ABSTRACT :

Reading literacy remains a major challenge among Filipino learners, particularly in the primary grades. This action research investigates the efficacy of clinical supervision as an intervention to strengthen teachers' competencies in remedial reading instruction at Moscoso-Rios Central School. Utilizing participatory qualitative methods, fifteen teachers participated in cycles of clinical supervision that included orientation, observation, feedback, and reflection. Data from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically. Results reveal that before the intervention, teachers reported uncertainty, lack of confidence, and inconsistent instructional practices. Clinical supervision fostered professional reflection, collaborative learning, and instructional improvement, resulting in increased teacher efficacy and confidence. The study recommends institutionalizing clinical supervision in school-based professional development to sustain gains in teacher competence and student reading outcomes.

Keywords: Clinical supervision, teacher efficacy, remedial reading, professional development, action research, reflective practice, instructional supervision

Introduction

The Reading Challenge in Philippine Education

Reading proficiency is a cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning. In the Philippine context, persistent concerns regarding reading literacy have been highlighted by both national and international assessments. According to the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Filipino students ranked among the lowest in reading comprehension globally (OECD, 2019). These findings underscore the urgent need to enhance literacy instruction, particularly in the early grades where foundational skills are established.

Despite numerous interventions and programs launched by the Department of Education (DepEd), reading proficiency among Filipino learners remains low, especially among those requiring remedial support. This challenge is evident at Moscoso-Rios Central School, where current data indicate a significant number of pupils are not meeting grade-level reading benchmarks. Teachers report uncertainty in implementing effective remedial reading strategies, often expressing a lack of confidence and a need for structured professional guidance.

Clinical Supervision as a Solution

Clinical supervision offers a collaborative, developmental approach to instructional supervision, prioritizing feedback, reflection, and professional dialogue (Goldhammer et al., 1993). Unlike traditional evaluative supervision, clinical supervision supports teachers in diagnosing challenges, experimenting with instructional strategies, and reflecting on their practice. This study investigates the impact of clinical supervision on enhancing teacher efficacy in remedial reading and seeks to establish a sustainable framework for instructional improvement in the context of Philippine basic education.

Literature Review

Teacher Efficacy and Student Outcomes

Teacher efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), refers to teachers' beliefs in their abilities to organize and execute actions required to positively influence student achievement. Research consistently demonstrates that teachers with higher efficacy are more resilient, innovative, and effective in classroom practice (Goddard et al., 2000). In remedial reading, efficacy is especially critical, as teachers must individualize instruction, assess diverse learning needs, and maintain learner motivation.

Clinical Supervision in Educational Practice

Clinical supervision is rooted in the principles of developmental supervision and reflective practice. Goldhammer et al. (1993) describe clinical supervision as a process comprising pre-observation conferences, classroom observations, post-observation feedback, and reflective discussions. The approach emphasizes mutual trust, professional collaboration, and the co-construction of knowledge between supervisors and teachers (Glickman et al., 2018; Acheson & Gall, 2003).

Numerous studies highlight the positive effects of clinical supervision on teacher growth and instructional quality. Constructive feedback, supportive dialogue, and opportunities for professional reflection contribute to enhanced teacher competence, confidence, and willingness to adopt new pedagogical strategies (Schön, 1983; Glickman et al., 2018).

The Philippine Context

The DepEd's Basic Education Development Plan (2022) and Basic Education Research Agenda (2016) emphasize the importance of professional development and instructional supervision in raising teacher quality and student outcomes. However, implementation at the school level is often hampered by inconsistent support structures and a lack of systematic feedback for teachers, particularly in remedial reading programs.

Research Objectives

This study aims to examine the effects of clinical supervision on teacher efficacy in remedial reading instruction at Moscoso-Rios Central School. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers before, during, and after the implementation of clinical supervision?
2. How does clinical supervision improve teacher efficacy in remedial reading?
3. What strategies can ensure the sustainability and institutionalization of clinical supervision in professional development programs?

Methodology

Research Design

A **qualitative participatory action research** design was employed to explore the lived experiences of teachers as they engaged in cycles of clinical supervision. This collaborative approach allowed for the joint identification of challenges, implementation of interventions, and reflection on outcomes.

Participants

Fifteen teachers from Moscoso-Rios Central School participated in the study. All were actively involved in remedial reading instruction, with teaching experience ranging from early-career to mid-career. The sample included two male and thirteen female teachers, reflecting the demographic profile of the school's teaching staff. Teachers provided informed consent and were selected based on their direct involvement in remedial reading.

Intervention: Clinical Supervision

The intervention consisted of multiple stages:

- **Orientation and Capacity-Building:** Teachers attended sessions introducing the principles and procedures of clinical supervision.
- **Pre-Observation Conferences:** Teachers and supervisors discussed instructional objectives, learner needs, and planned strategies.
- **Classroom Observations:** Teachers were observed as they conducted remedial reading sessions.
- **Post-Observation Feedback:** Structured, constructive feedback was provided, focusing on strengths, areas for improvement, and reflective dialogue.
- **Evaluation and Sharing:** Teachers participated in discussions to consolidate learning and share experiences.

Data Collection

Data were gathered through:

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Explored teachers' experiences before, during, and after clinical supervision.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** Examined perceptions of the intervention's impact and recommendations for sustainability.
- **Document Analysis:** School records, Phil-IRI results, and observation notes were reviewed for triangulation.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, securing informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and protecting participants' rights. Teachers were informed

of their right to withdraw at any stage and assured that all data would be anonymized.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Caulfield, 2023) was used to identify, analyze, and report patterns in the qualitative data. The process involved data familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, and synthesis, with Microsoft Excel facilitating data management.

Results

Teachers' Experiences Before Clinical Supervision

Theme 1: Uncertainty and Lack of Confidence

Prior to the intervention, teachers expressed significant challenges in remedial reading instruction. They reported uncertainty in diagnosing reading difficulties, selecting appropriate interventions, and assessing learner progress. Many relied on "trial and error" approaches, with limited success. As one participant noted, "I conduct remedial reading sessions, but sometimes I am not sure whether the strategy I use is really effective for the learner."

This uncertainty was compounded by a lack of structured professional development and ongoing support. Teachers felt isolated in their efforts to help struggling readers, often expressing diminished confidence in their abilities.

Theme 2: Inconsistent Instructional Practices

Teachers described varied and inconsistent approaches to remedial reading. Without a clear framework or guidance, instructional and assessment practices differed widely, resulting in uneven support for learners. Several teachers indicated that their methods were "dependent on available resources and past experiences," rather than evidence-based strategies.

Experiences During the Implementation of Clinical Supervision

Theme 3: Structured Support and Professional Dialogue

The clinical supervision process introduced a structured framework for professional support. Pre-observation conferences helped teachers clarify objectives and plan lessons more purposefully. Classroom observations provided real-time insights into teaching practices, while post-observation feedback encouraged reflection and self-assessment.

Teachers described the process as "supportive rather than evaluative," with feedback focusing on growth and development. One participant shared, "The feedback I received after observation allowed me to recognize my strengths and areas for improvement."

Theme 4: Reflective Practice and Collaborative Learning

The intervention fostered a culture of reflection and collaboration. Teachers became more systematic in planning interventions, regularly evaluating the effectiveness of their strategies. Reflective dialogue with supervisors and peers promoted the sharing of ideas and problem-solving. As a result, teachers were more willing to experiment with new approaches and seek out best practices.

Experiences After Clinical Supervision

Theme 5: Increased Efficacy and Confidence

After engaging in clinical supervision, teachers reported significant gains in efficacy and confidence. They felt more capable of diagnosing reading difficulties, selecting targeted interventions, and monitoring learner progress. Teachers also reported improvements in classroom management and a stronger sense of professional identity. "I am now more confident in selecting appropriate reading interventions," one participant stated.

Theme 6: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The process instilled a commitment to continuous professional growth. Teachers valued the opportunity for ongoing feedback and dialogue, expressing a desire for regular clinical supervision cycles. The intervention was seen as a catalyst for developing a school culture centered on reflective practice and instructional excellence.

Impact on Teacher Efficacy in Remedial Reading

Constructive Feedback and Professional Growth

Teachers attributed their growth in efficacy to the constructive feedback and reflective opportunities provided by the intervention. They highlighted the

importance of specific, actionable feedback in shaping their instructional decisions and building self-confidence. The collaborative nature of supervision reduced anxiety and encouraged openness to change.

Enhancement of Instructional Skills

Clinical supervision led to measurable improvements in lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment. Teachers reported greater proficiency in differentiating instruction, managing diverse learner needs, and fostering student engagement. The process also promoted the adoption of evidence-based strategies, contributing to better learner outcomes.

Discussion

Theoretical Implications

The findings align with Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that mastery experiences, social modeling, and verbal persuasion enhance self-efficacy. Clinical supervision provided teachers with mastery experiences (successful implementation of new strategies), social modeling (collaboration with peers and supervisors), and verbal persuasion (constructive feedback), all of which contributed to increased efficacy.

Alignment with Existing Literature

Consistent with prior research (Goldhammer et al., 1993; Glickman et al., 2018), the study demonstrates that clinical supervision promotes professional growth through structured observation, feedback, and reflection. The findings also support the assertion that teacher efficacy is a critical determinant of instructional quality and student achievement (Goddard et al., 2000).

Practical Implications

The study highlights the need for school-based professional development frameworks that incorporate clinical supervision. Regular cycles of observation, feedback, and reflection can help sustain gains in teacher competence and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Institutionalizing clinical supervision in school improvement plans and Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions may facilitate wider adoption and sustainability.

Challenges and Limitations

The study was limited to one school and a small sample of teachers, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore the impact of clinical supervision in diverse contexts and examine quantitative measures of student outcomes.

Recommendations

1. **Institutionalize Clinical Supervision:** Schools should integrate clinical supervision into regular professional development activities, ensuring sustained support for teachers.
2. **Develop Standardized Frameworks:** Division offices should provide guidelines and resources for implementing clinical supervision across schools.
3. **Foster Collaborative Learning:** Schools should promote peer mentoring and reflective dialogue to enhance the impact of supervision.
4. **Monitor and Evaluate Outcomes:** Ongoing assessment of teacher and student outcomes should inform continuous improvement efforts.
5. **Expand Research:** Further studies should examine the long-term effects of clinical supervision on instructional quality and learner achievement.

Conclusion

Clinical supervision emerged as an effective intervention for improving teacher efficacy in remedial reading instruction. The structured, supportive process fostered professional reflection, collaborative learning, and instructional competence, resulting in increased confidence and commitment to continuous improvement among teachers. Institutionalizing clinical supervision in school-based professional development programs holds promise for raising instructional quality and addressing persistent literacy challenges in Philippine education.

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