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EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF PRIMARY TEACHERS IN ADDRESSING LEARNERS' BASIC LITERACY AND NUMERACY GAPS AT BAYVIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of Grade 1–3 teachers in addressing learners' basic literacy and numeracy gaps at Bayview Elementary School, Mariveles, Bataan. It examined the gaps observed, the interventions used, the challenges and successes experienced, the coping strategies employed, and teachers' insights and recommendations. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was employed with nine teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method. The analysis yielded 144 significant statements, 55 open codes, and 25 themes. Teachers encountered difficulties in letter and sound recognition, reading, vocabulary, comprehension, counting, number recognition, number sense, place value, and basic operations. They used differentiated instruction, remediation, concrete and visual materials, small-group and one-on-one support, peer assistance, and engaging activities. Limited time and resources, learner differences, and limited home support presented challenges. Teachers responded through patience, perseverance, flexibility, and collaboration. The essence of their experience was patient, adaptive persistence, as teachers continuously adjusted instruction while valuing small but meaningful learner gains. The study recommends early identification, regular monitoring, differentiated instruction, adequate intervention time and materials, teacher development, and stronger school–family collaboration. A Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide and an Administrative Recommendation Matrix were proposed.

Keywords: *Basic Literacy, Basic Numeracy, Grade 1–3 Teachers, Learning Gaps, Phenomenological Research, Teacher Experiences, Classroom Interventions*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Foundational literacy and numeracy are among the most important skills that children develop in the early years of schooling. World Bank et al. (2022) emphasized that children need basic reading and mathematical skills to continue learning successfully as they progress through school; when these skills are not developed in the early grades, learners experience greater difficulty as lessons become more complex. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has continued to emphasize learning recovery and the need to address learning gaps (DepEd, 2022, 2023), most recently through the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program (DepEd, 2024; Republic Act No. 12028, 2024).

This concern is particularly relevant at Bayview Elementary School, where learners in the primary grades are expected to develop essential literacy and numeracy competencies. In Grades 1 to 3, these competencies include recognizing letters and sounds, reading words and sentences, developing reading comprehension, recognizing numbers, counting, understanding place value, and performing basic mathematical operations. Learners, however, may demonstrate varying levels of development and mastery of these skills, which may require teachers to consider different instructional approaches and learning activities suited to the needs of their pupils. Understanding how teachers recognize and respond to these variations is important in examining how foundational literacy and numeracy are developed in the early grades.

In addressing learners' varying levels of literacy and numeracy development, teachers may employ different instructional strategies, such as differentiated instruction, small-group remediation, peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS), guided reading, and concrete-representational-abstract (CRA) activities. The selection and implementation of these strategies may depend on several factors, including learners' needs, available instructional resources, classroom conditions, and teachers' professional experiences. Exploring teachers' accounts can provide insights into how they choose and implement instructional interventions, how they perceive their usefulness, and how they navigate the different situations encountered in their classrooms. Their experiences may also offer a deeper understanding of the practices, adjustments, and insights involved in supporting foundational learning.

The researchers' interest in this topic arose from their observations and professional experiences within the school context, where foundational literacy and numeracy remain important areas of attention in the early grades. Recognizing that learners have different levels of readiness, learning needs, and developmental progress, the researchers became interested in understanding how Grade 1 to 3 teachers approach the task of supporting learners' foundational skills. As graduate students in the Doctor of Education program majoring in Educational Management, they also recognized the importance of understanding classroom practices and teachers' experiences as bases for informed educational decisions. The study therefore seeks to explore teachers' lived experiences in addressing learners' basic literacy and numeracy needs and to generate insights that may contribute to context-sensitive instructional planning and school management.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by three theories that help explain how teachers identify and respond to the literacy and numeracy difficulties of learners in Grades 1 to 3: the Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework of Fuchs and Fuchs (2006), the Simple View of Reading of Gough and Tunmer (1986), and the Mathematical Proficiency Framework of the National Research Council (2001).

These theories were selected because they are closely connected to what teachers experience in their everyday classrooms. Learners in Grades 1 to 3 do not all learn at the same pace. Some may have difficulty recognizing letters and sounds, reading words, or understanding simple texts; others may struggle with counting, number recognition,

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place value, basic operations, or solving mathematical problems. Because of these differences, teachers need to observe learners carefully, identify their specific needs, and provide appropriate support. The theories serve as guides for understanding teachers' experiences rather than as tools for measuring the effectiveness of an intervention through statistical tests. They help explain how teachers recognize learning gaps, choose strategies, adjust their instruction, respond to challenges, and reflect on what works for their learners. This is consistent with the qualitative nature of the present study, which focused on the experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers as shared in semi-structured interviews.

Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework

The RTI Framework, associated with Fuchs and Fuchs (2006), emphasizes the importance of identifying learners who are experiencing difficulties and providing them with the level of support they need. The framework recognizes that not all learners require the same type or amount of assistance: some may benefit from regular classroom instruction, while others may need additional or more focused support.

This idea is closely related to the experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers in addressing literacy and numeracy gaps. Teachers are often the first to notice when a learner is having difficulty. A Grade 1 teacher may notice that a learner cannot recognize letters, sounds, or numbers; a Grade 2 teacher may observe difficulty in reading fluently, understanding a short passage, or working with place value; and a Grade 3 teacher may notice problems with reading comprehension, vocabulary, number sense, or solving word problems. When these difficulties are observed, teachers may provide additional practice, work with learners in small groups, simplify instructions, give one-on-one assistance, or use different learning materials. They may also monitor the learner's progress and change the strategy when the first approach does not seem to work.

At Bayview Elementary School, teachers may use targeted interventions such as differentiated instruction, small-group remediation, PALS, guided activities, and CRA approaches in numeracy. These practices reflect the basic idea of RTI because teachers respond to the needs they observe among their learners. For the present study, RTI provides a useful lens for understanding how teachers identify learning difficulties and decide what type of support to provide. It also helps explain why teachers sometimes need to adjust an intervention based on the learner's response, available resources, and classroom situation. The framework is therefore connected to the research questions concerning the learning gaps teachers observe, the interventions they use, the challenges they experience, and the ways they cope with those challenges.

Simple View of Reading

The Simple View of Reading, developed by Gough and Tunmer (1986), explains reading comprehension through two major components: decoding and language comprehension. In simple terms, learners need to be able to read and recognize words, but they also need to understand the meaning of the words and sentences they read. The theory is relevant to the present study because literacy difficulties are among the concerns observed among learners in Grades 1 to 3, who gradually develop their ability to recognize letters and sounds, decode words, read with increasing fluency, understand vocabulary, and comprehend texts.

Teachers may observe different reading difficulties among their learners. A Grade 1 learner may recognize letters but still have difficulty combining sounds to form words. A Grade 2 learner may be able to read words but struggle to read smoothly or understand a short passage. A Grade 3 learner may read a passage correctly but have difficulty explaining its meaning, answering questions, or making connections with the text. Because these difficulties differ, teachers may also use different forms of support. Learners who have difficulty decoding may need phonics activities, sound blending, word-reading practice, and repeated reading, whereas learners who can decode but struggle with comprehension may benefit from vocabulary development, questioning, storytelling, guided reading, and discussion. The Simple View of Reading therefore helped the researchers understand why teachers need to look closely at the

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specific reading difficulty experienced by each learner, and how teachers' observations influence their instructional decisions and adjustments.

Mathematical Proficiency Framework

The third theoretical foundation is the Mathematical Proficiency Framework of the National Research Council (2001), which describes mathematical proficiency through five interconnected areas: conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, and productive disposition. The framework is important because being good at mathematics is not simply about getting the correct answer. A learner may know how to follow a procedure but not understand why it works; another may understand a mathematical idea but have difficulty applying it to a problem. Teachers therefore need to look not only at the final answer but also at how learners think and work through mathematical tasks.

This perspective is related to the numeracy concerns identified in the study. Learners in the early grades may experience difficulties with number recognition, counting, number sense, place value, basic operations, and problem solving, and as they move from Grade 1 to Grade 3 these skills become increasingly connected and are used in more complex classroom activities. Teachers may use counters, blocks, pictures, number lines, drawings, real-life examples, and other concrete materials; they may also allow learners to work with peers, provide repeated practice, break difficult tasks into smaller steps, or use the CRA approach. For this study, the framework helps explain how teachers recognize different types of numeracy difficulties and respond to them through classroom practices and instructional adjustments.

Synthesis of the theories

The three theories provide different but complementary ways of understanding the experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers. RTI explains how teachers identify learners who need additional support and provide appropriate interventions; the Simple View of Reading helps explain literacy difficulties, particularly those related to decoding and language comprehension; and the Mathematical Proficiency Framework provides a broader understanding of the skills involved in mathematical learning and the ways teachers respond to numeracy difficulties. Together, they provide a practical way of looking at what happens in the classroom: addressing learning gaps is not simply a matter of following a prepared intervention. Teachers need to observe learners, make decisions, adjust activities, use available resources, and find ways to respond when learners continue to struggle.

This is particularly relevant at Bayview Elementary School, where learners in Grades 1 to 3 have different levels of literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers may face challenges related to learner differences, limited materials, time constraints, classroom management, and home support. At the same time, they may experience successful moments when learners begin to improve, participate more confidently, or demonstrate skills they previously struggled with. The three theories thus support the qualitative purpose of this study: they provide a foundation for understanding what teachers observe, what they do, what challenges they encounter, how they adjust their practices, and what they learn from their experiences.

Review of Related Literature

The literature reviewed covers foundational literacy and numeracy, learning recovery and remediation, literacy and numeracy development, assessment, differentiated instruction, teacher preparedness, parental and community involvement, and the current Philippine learning recovery context. These topics correspond to the issues that surfaced in the teachers' accounts.

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Foundational literacy and numeracy, and early identification

World Bank et al. (2022) emphasized that children need basic reading and mathematical skills to continue learning successfully; when these skills are not developed in the early grades, learners may experience greater difficulty when lessons become more complex. The literature also stresses early identification. Teachers are often in the best position to notice when learners are struggling because they see how learners perform during everyday classroom activities: whether a child can recognize letters, read words, understand a story, count objects, recognize numbers, or solve basic mathematical tasks. These observations help teachers determine what kind of support a learner may need.

Learning recovery and remediation in the Philippine context

DepEd (2022) recognized that learners returned to classroom learning with different levels of readiness and learning needs following disruptions in education. Some needed additional practice and remediation before they could participate successfully in grade-level lessons. This placed teachers in an important position: they needed to determine which learners required additional support while continuing to teach the rest of the class, which in practice could mean small-group activities, additional exercises, review of previously taught skills, or individual assistance. DepEd (2023) further emphasized strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy through learning recovery initiatives, reflecting the understanding that reading and mathematics skills are essential to success in other subjects. For learners in Grades 1 to 3, strengthening these competencies is particularly important because they are still developing the skills they will use throughout their education.

While policies and assessment results can identify learning gaps, teachers' experiences can provide a clearer picture of how these gaps are addressed in actual classrooms. Learning recovery has become an important part of Philippine basic education. DepEd (2023) introduced and strengthened programs intended to help learners regain competencies that were not sufficiently developed, recognizing that learners may need different forms and levels of support. One important part of learning recovery is remediation, which gives learners additional opportunities to practice skills they have not yet mastered. For teachers, however, remediation often requires additional planning, preparation, and monitoring: they may need to prepare activities that differ from regular lessons and adjust them according to learners' abilities. DepEd (2023) also emphasized enrichment, consolidation, and intervention opportunities, for which teachers may use games, guided practice, exercises, reading activities, and other strategies.

The implementation of these programs may also create challenges. Teachers may have to manage intervention activities while fulfilling their regular teaching responsibilities, and may have to work with limited resources and varying levels of learner participation. These realities make teachers' experiences important in understanding how learning recovery programs are actually implemented. More recently, DepEd (2024) strengthened these efforts through the ARAL Program, which gives attention to learners who need additional academic support, particularly in reading and mathematics. The literature suggests that learning recovery is not simply about providing more activities; it involves identifying the right skill, choosing an appropriate strategy, monitoring progress, and adjusting instruction when necessary. These responsibilities are closely connected to the experiences explored in the present study.

Reading development

Reading development begins with basic skills and gradually becomes more complex. Gough and Tunmer (1986) explained through the Simple View of Reading that successful reading comprehension depends on both decoding and language comprehension: learners need to recognize words and sounds while also understanding the meaning of what they read. Castles et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of effective and systematic reading instruction; learners who experience difficulty may need explicit teaching and repeated opportunities to practice specific skills, particularly in the early grades, when the basic components of reading are still developing.

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In the classroom, teachers may observe different reading problems. Some learners struggle to recognize letters and sounds, others have difficulty blending sounds to read words, and still others read words correctly but have difficulty understanding sentences or passages. These differences require support that matches the learner's specific difficulty. DepEd (2025) continued to emphasize reading as a priority area in learning recovery, with interventions that may include phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension activities that allow teachers to focus on the particular reading skill learners need to develop. Reading intervention can also be made more engaging through storytelling, pictures, games, guided reading, and other interactive activities, which may help learners become more comfortable with reading and encourage participation. Teachers can observe learner responses during these activities and adjust their instruction accordingly. These studies and programs support the present research because they emphasize the need to understand not only learners' reading difficulties but also the experiences of the teachers who address them every day.

Numeracy development

Numeracy involves more than memorizing numbers and mathematical procedures. The National Research Council (2001) described mathematical proficiency as involving conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, and productive disposition, which work together to help learners understand and use mathematics effectively. During the early grades, learners develop important numeracy skills such as counting, number recognition, number sense, place value, basic operations, and problem solving; when they have difficulty with these foundations, they may also struggle with more complex mathematical tasks later on.

Teachers may use different approaches to make mathematical concepts easier to understand. Concrete materials such as counters, blocks, objects, pictures, and number lines can help learners see mathematical relationships, and teachers may then gradually move learners toward drawings and symbols. The CRA approach is particularly useful because it allows learners to first experience mathematical ideas using concrete objects, then represent them through pictures or models, and eventually work with abstract numbers and symbols; it may be especially helpful for learners who find mathematical symbols difficult to understand. DepEd (2024) identified mathematics as one of the priority areas under the ARAL Program, reflecting the need to support learners who have not yet mastered foundational competencies. Teachers may also use games, real-life situations, peer activities, repeated practice, and differentiated tasks to support numeracy development, adjusting learning activities to learners' abilities and interests. The literature thus shows that numeracy difficulties may take different forms and that teachers need to observe learners carefully to determine the most appropriate response.

Assessment and progress monitoring

Assessment plays an important role in identifying learners who need additional support. DepEd (2022) emphasized the use of assessment information in planning learning recovery: assessment helps teachers understand what learners already know and which competencies still need to be developed. For literacy, teachers may assess learners' ability to recognize letters and sounds, decode words, read fluently, understand vocabulary, and comprehend texts; for numeracy, they may look at counting, number recognition, place value, basic operations, and problem solving. Assessment, however, need not be limited to formal tests. Teachers also gather information through classroom observation, learner participation, written work, oral responses, and daily activities, which allow them to notice difficulties that a single test may not reveal. DepEd (2024) also emphasized identifying learners based on their actual learning needs before providing intervention, so that support is directed toward the specific skills learners need to develop.

Progress monitoring is equally important. After an intervention is provided, teachers need to observe whether the learner is improving; if a strategy does not produce the expected progress, they may need to modify the activity, provide additional practice, or try another approach. This literature is closely related to the present study because

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teachers' experiences may include how they identify learning gaps, interpret assessment information, monitor learner progress, and make instructional decisions.

Differentiated instruction

Learners differ in their readiness, learning pace, interests, and ways of understanding information, so teachers may need to use different approaches rather than rely on a single strategy for the entire class. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to adjust activities, materials, grouping, or the level of support according to learners' needs. In a Grade 1 classroom, some learners may need additional practice in letter recognition while others are ready to read simple words; in Grade 2, some may need support in reading fluency while others already read independently; and in Grade 3, some may require help with comprehension while others can work with longer and more complex texts. The same differences appear in mathematics: some learners still need concrete objects to understand numbers, while others are ready to solve problems using symbols. DepEd (2024) emphasized using varied approaches when addressing learning gaps, such as small-group teaching, peer support, additional examples, guided practice, and modified activities. Differentiated instruction is relevant to this study because teachers' experiences may reveal how they decide which learners need additional support and how they modify instruction to meet different learning needs.

Teacher preparedness

Teachers play an important role in addressing learning gaps. DepEd (2022) recognized teacher professional development as an important component of learning recovery: teachers need appropriate knowledge and skills to assess learners, identify difficulties, provide interventions, and monitor progress, and professional development may provide new ideas and strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Applying these strategies in the classroom, however, may still require adjustments depending on class size, learner ability, available materials, time, and classroom conditions. DepEd (2024) also emphasized capacity-building for teachers involved in foundational literacy and numeracy, recognizing that teachers need continuing support as learner needs change.

At the same time, teachers may experience pressure when intervention responsibilities are added to their regular workload. They may need to prepare additional materials, conduct remediation, communicate with parents, and monitor learner progress while continuing their regular teaching duties. Teacher preparedness should therefore be understood together with teachers' actual classroom experiences. The present study sought to understand how teachers apply what they know, what challenges they experience, and how they adjust their practices.

Parental and community involvement

Learning does not take place only inside the classroom. Parents and guardians can help children practice literacy and numeracy skills at home. DepEd (2023) emphasized the importance of family and community participation in supporting learning: parents can listen to children read, practice basic number activities, encourage them to complete learning tasks, and communicate with teachers about their progress. However, families differ in time, resources, and ability to provide academic support. Some parents may have enough time to work with their children, while others have work or family responsibilities that make regular assistance difficult. Teachers may therefore have different experiences with parents and guardians: some receive strong support, while others need to find alternative ways to help learners who receive limited assistance at home. This literature is relevant because parental and community support may influence the implementation of classroom interventions and the progress of learners.

Learning recovery programs and school-level implementation

The Philippine education system continues to address learning gaps through various programs and interventions, and DepEd (2023, 2024, 2025) has continued to strengthen learning recovery efforts, particularly in reading and mathematics. These programs demonstrate the government's recognition that some learners need additional support

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beyond regular classroom instruction. However, implementation takes place in actual classrooms where teachers work with different learners, resources, schedules, and school conditions. National programs provide general directions, but teachers' experiences may differ from one school to another: a strategy that works well in one classroom may need to be adjusted in another, and factors such as class size, learner motivation, attendance, available materials, parental support, and teacher workload may influence implementation. This makes school-level research important, because understanding teachers' experiences can help explain how learning recovery policies and programs are translated into everyday classroom practice.

Review of Related Studies

The studies reviewed below are grouped into international studies, local studies, and studies focused on learners in Grades 1 to 3. They show what has been found about literacy and numeracy interventions and where teachers' own experiences remain less documented.

International studies

International studies show that foundational literacy and numeracy gaps remain a concern in many countries. Spink et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of identifying differences between expected learning standards and learners' actual performance; their work highlights the need for accurate assessment so that interventions can be directed toward the skills learners actually need. UNICEF (2025) demonstrated the value of ability-based instruction and continuous monitoring in supporting learners who are behind expected competencies; instead of assuming that learners in the same grade have the same abilities, the approach focuses on their current level of learning.

Other international studies have reported positive results from targeted interventions. Hazin et al. (2025) examined inquiry-based and project-based approaches to addressing learning loss among elementary learners, and their findings suggest that active learning experiences can support the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Maruyama and Igei (2024) found that structured remedial programs supported by teachers, parents, and communities can contribute to improvements in reading and numeracy, which also highlights the importance of collaboration. Hall et al. (2023) reported that systematic reading interventions can improve outcomes for learners experiencing reading difficulties, supporting structured and appropriate support rather than the expectation that struggling learners will improve through regular instruction alone. Myers et al. (2022) found positive effects of targeted mathematics interventions, particularly in mathematical problem solving, suggesting that learners benefit when instruction directly addresses the skills they find difficult.

Recent studies have also explored technology and innovative approaches. Widiawati et al. (2025) identified trends such as gamification, personalized learning, and equity-focused instruction, which give teachers additional ways of engaging learners and responding to differences in learning needs. Susanto et al. (2024) found that learners develop stronger numeracy skills when mathematics is connected to real-life experiences. Chang (2023), using cross-national TIMSS data, reported a relationship between early literacy skills and later mathematics achievement, which supports the idea that literacy and numeracy should not always be viewed as completely separate areas of learning. However, Henkel et al. (2024) and Sari (2025) emphasized that the success of innovative teaching approaches can depend on teacher readiness, resources, learner characteristics, and educational context, suggesting that teachers may need to adapt interventions rather than apply them identically in every classroom.

Philippine studies

Philippine studies similarly show that literacy and numeracy gaps remain a concern among elementary learners. Santiago and Mustacisa (2024), in their study of Grade 3 learners in Samar, found that learner outcomes were influenced by access to learning materials, parental involvement, and socioeconomic conditions. These findings suggest that learning difficulties cannot always be addressed through classroom instruction alone: learners' home

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environments and available resources may also affect their opportunities to practice and strengthen foundational skills. Villamor and Arante (2022) identified literacy and numeracy intervention as an important area for teacher development, with challenges such as limited resources and insufficient training that may affect teachers' ability to provide consistent intervention. Rivera (2022) discussed the increased workload and complexity experienced by teachers during periods of educational disruption, which can influence how teachers prepare and deliver instruction and how much time they can devote to individual learners.

Besoña (2025) reported positive outcomes from the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Roadmap through diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction, and continuous monitoring, but also identified challenges related to time and resources. Olabiyi et al. (2025) noted that national reading programs can produce positive results, but their long-term success depends on consistent implementation and support; intervention programs therefore need sustained attention rather than treatment as short-term activities. Magno (2022), Bautista and Gatcho (2022), and Ancho et al. (2021) identified broader challenges such as poverty, large class sizes, and limited educational resources, which may influence learners' performance and the ability of teachers to provide individualized support. Casingal et al. (2025) found that structured assessment tools such as the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA), together with instruction that considers learners' language backgrounds, can support literacy development. Wolf et al. (2022) emphasized the value of school-community partnerships in strengthening literacy support, suggesting that collaboration among teachers, families, schools, and communities can provide learners with more consistent support.

Studies on early elementary learners

Studies involving early elementary learners provide important information for the present research. Aposaga (2022), through the OK: KENNIE Project, identified learners classified as non-readers and non-numerates during assessment, highlighting the importance of identifying learning difficulties early and providing appropriate intervention. Duzon and Paragas (2023) reported difficulties in reading comprehension and decoding among elementary learners, supporting interventions that address specific reading skills instead of treating all reading difficulties alike. Niala (2023) found that localized instructional materials can improve reading comprehension, suggesting that materials familiar and appropriate to learners' context make reading activities easier to understand. Dumamba-Salilama (2024) emphasized structured intervention in phonological awareness, decoding, and reading fluency, skills learners need to develop before they can understand more complex texts.

Other studies have examined interactive approaches. Descartin and Nemenzo (2024) reported positive effects of collaborative learning on reading performance, Bangoy et al. (2024) highlighted the usefulness of audio-visual materials, Gigante (2024) found that phonics-based activities can improve learner engagement, and Calub (2026) reported positive results from rhymes and songs as instructional tools for reading comprehension. These studies suggest that teachers can use different approaches depending on learners' needs and interests. In numeracy, Talento (2024) identified difficulties in number recognition, place value, and basic operations among elementary learners, which are closely related to the numeracy concerns examined in the present study. Cocos (2025) found that learners experienced difficulties in fractions and word problems but benefited from manipulatives, games, and contextualized instruction, suggesting that learners understand mathematical concepts better when teachers provide concrete and meaningful experiences. Diron and Baldonado (2025) reported that differentiated instruction can improve reading comprehension, and Sardoma and Accad (2025) found that reading models tailored to urban, rural, and suburban school contexts improved reading proficiency, reinforcing the importance of adjusting instruction to learners' different abilities and circumstances. Jabanes and Futalan (2025) found a relationship between literacy and numeracy difficulties, which supports the decision to examine literacy and numeracy together rather than as completely separate learning concerns.

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Synthesis and research gap

The literature and studies reviewed show that foundational literacy and numeracy remain important concerns in both international and Philippine education. A common finding is that learning difficulties should be identified early so that learners can receive appropriate support before their gaps become harder to address. Assessment is an important starting point: teachers need to know what learners can already do and which skills they still need to develop. Assessment alone, however, is not enough; teachers need to use the information they gather to plan interventions, monitor progress, and make changes when necessary.

Another important theme is the role of the teacher. Teachers are not simply responsible for delivering lessons; they also observe learners, identify difficulties, prepare interventions, adjust instruction, provide encouragement, communicate with parents, and monitor progress. These responsibilities can be challenging, particularly with large classes, limited materials, different learner abilities, and limited instructional time. The reviewed studies also show that no single intervention works for every learner: some respond well to small-group instruction, while others benefit from peer support, concrete materials, games, localized resources, phonics activities, or guided practice. This reinforces the importance of teachers being flexible and responsive to the needs of their learners.

Although many studies have examined the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy interventions, fewer have focused on the actual experiences of teachers while implementing them. Assessment results can show whether learners improved, but they do not fully explain what teachers experienced while trying to help them improve. The present study is situated in this gap. It sought to understand the experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers at Bayview Elementary School as they identify literacy and numeracy gaps, implement interventions, experience challenges and successes, and find ways to cope with difficulties. It adds a teacher-centered perspective to the existing literature: rather than focusing only on learner scores or intervention outcomes, it gives attention to the people who implement the interventions every day, whose experiences may provide practical information for improving classroom practices, school support, and future literacy and numeracy programs.

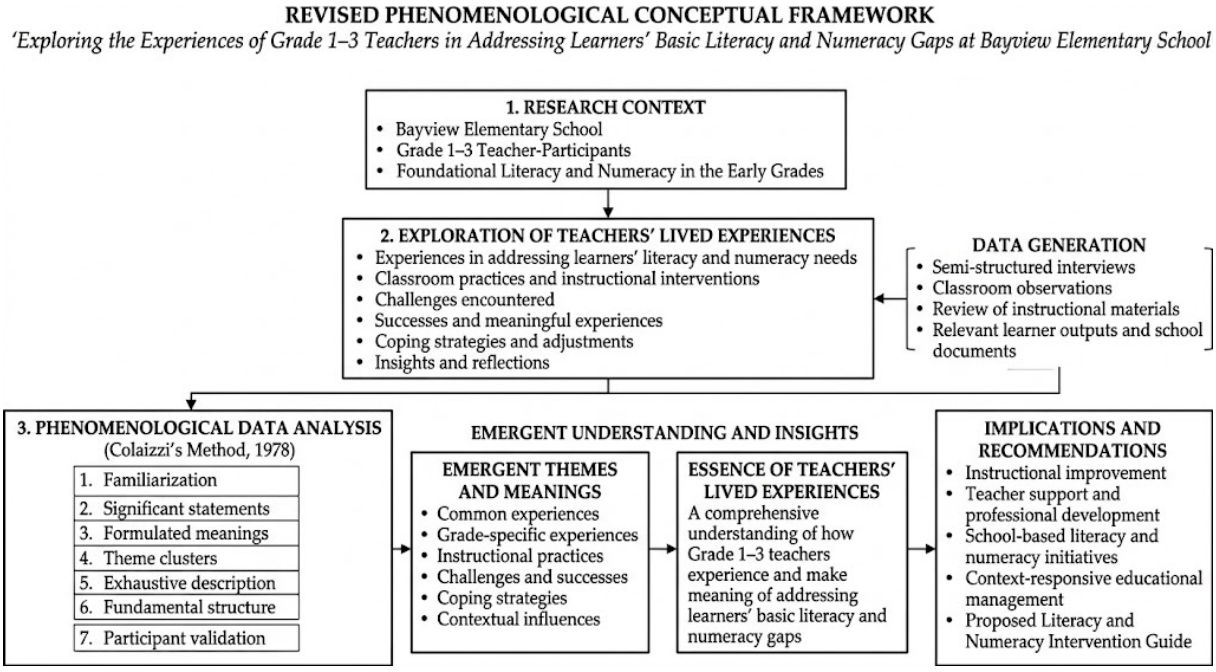
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is anchored in a qualitative phenomenological design. It moves away from a traditional Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to prioritize the subjective, lived experiences of participants. Rather than treating variables as predetermined inputs or outcomes, the framework (Figure 1) illustrates the flow from the study's localized context, through phenomenological inquiry, to the emergence of essential meanings and actionable educational implications.

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Figure 1. **Conceptual Framework of the Study**



The framework begins with the **Research Context**, which establishes the environment and scope of the study. It highlights Bayview Elementary School, specifically the Grade 1 to 3 teacher-participants who directly navigate foundational literacy and numeracy concerns in the early grades. Connected to this context is the **Exploration of Teachers' Lived Experiences**, which captures the core qualitative phenomenon: authentic accounts of how teachers navigate their daily classroom realities, including their actual instructional practices, interventions, challenges, meaningful successes, coping mechanisms, and personal reflections, without imposing pre-classified categories or assumed variables prior to data gathering.

To capture these experiences, **Data Generation** is conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and reviews of instructional materials and relevant school documents. The collected qualitative data are then systematically analyzed through **Phenomenological Data Analysis** using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method, which moves sequentially from familiarization with the data and identification of significant statements to formulating meanings, organizing theme clusters, writing an exhaustive description, identifying the fundamental structure, and conducting participant validation. The outcome of this process is **Emergent Understanding and Insights**, at two levels:

- **Emergent Themes and Meanings:** the shared and grade-specific patterns, practices, challenges, and coping strategies that describe the participants' collective narrative.
- **Essence of Teachers' Lived Experiences:** the core, fundamental structure that captures the deeper, unified meaning of what it means for early-grade teachers to address basic literacy and numeracy gaps.

Finally, the essential understanding gained from the teachers' accounts leads to **Implications and Recommendations**. Grounded directly in the empirical findings rather than established beforehand, these insights inform instructional improvement, teacher professional development, school-based literacy and numeracy initiatives, and context-responsive educational management, culminating in a proposed, evidence-based Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide.

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Statement of the Problem

This study explored the experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers in addressing learners' basic literacy and numeracy gaps at Bayview Elementary School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What basic literacy and numeracy gaps do Grade 1 to 3 teachers observe among their learners?
2. What targeted classroom interventions do Grade 1 to 3 teachers use to address the identified literacy and numeracy gaps?
3. What challenges and successes do teachers experience while implementing these interventions?
4. How do teachers cope with or overcome the challenges they encounter during the implementation of literacy and numeracy interventions?
5. What insights and recommendations can be drawn from the teachers' experiences to improve future literacy and numeracy interventions?

Assumptions of the Study

As this is a qualitative study, no hypothesis was tested. Instead, the study rested on the following assumptions:

1. Grade 1 to 3 teachers at Bayview Elementary School observe basic literacy and numeracy gaps among their learners and respond to them through classroom interventions.
2. Teachers are able to describe their experiences of identifying gaps, implementing interventions, and coping with challenges in their own words.
3. The participants answered the interview questions honestly and based on their actual experiences.
4. The meanings that teachers attach to their experiences can be identified and organized into themes through Colaizzi's phenomenological method.
5. Teachers' experiences can provide a sound basis for practical recommendations to improve literacy and numeracy intervention.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it focuses on the actual experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers who work with learners experiencing difficulties in basic literacy and numeracy. By listening to these teachers, the study contributes a teacher-centered perspective to the scholarly discussion on foundational learning and may benefit the following groups.

Learners. The findings may help improve the way literacy and numeracy difficulties are addressed in the classroom, to the benefit of the learners themselves. The practices that teachers described may guide the choice of interventions that fit learners' needs, such as letter and sound recognition and counting in Grade 1, fluency and place value in Grade 2, and comprehension and word problems in Grade 3. As learners improve their basic skills, they may also become more confident and more willing to take part in class, and stronger foundations in the early grades prepare them for the lessons that follow.

Teachers. The study may help teachers reflect on their own experiences in addressing learning gaps. It documents strategies that worked, challenges that were common, and adjustments teachers made to meet learners' needs. The experiences shared by the participants may give other teachers ideas for planning interventions, managing small

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groups, providing remediation, and monitoring progress, and may encourage teachers to share their practices and learn from one another.

School Administrators. The findings may help school administrators understand the challenges teachers face when addressing literacy and numeracy gaps. Because the teachers in this study coped largely on their own, school leaders may see where structured support, protected time, and materials are most needed. The findings may also help them improve existing intervention programs so that these respond better to teachers and learners.

Schools Division Office of Bataan. The study may give the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Bataan information about the actual experiences of teachers in addressing foundational literacy and numeracy gaps. The findings may help identify common classroom challenges and practices that can be considered in planning teacher training, instructional support, and learning materials, and may contribute to the SDO's continuing efforts to improve foundational learning among elementary learners.

Parents and Guardians. Parents and guardians may gain a better understanding of the difficulties their children may experience in reading and mathematics. The study may encourage them to communicate more closely with teachers and to provide simple learning activities and support at home. Cooperation between parents and teachers may give learners more opportunities to practice their skills and receive encouragement both at home and in school.

Department of Education. The study may provide DepEd with school-level information on how teachers experience and respond to literacy and numeracy gaps. The findings may contribute to the improvement of learning recovery, remediation, and intervention programs, and the teachers' experiences may supply practical information for developing policies, programs, and support systems for foundational learning.

Future Researchers. This study may serve as a reference for future researchers interested in foundational literacy and numeracy, teacher experiences, learning gaps, and classroom interventions. The findings may suggest ideas for similar studies in other schools, grade levels, or educational settings, and may serve as a basis for testing approaches that help learners develop stronger literacy and numeracy skills.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study focused on the experiences of Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 teachers in addressing learners' basic literacy and numeracy gaps at Bayview Elementary School in Mariveles, Bataan. It examined how teachers identified learners' difficulties, chose interventions, adjusted their teaching, and responded to different learning needs. The study covered foundational literacy skills (letter and sound recognition, decoding, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension) and foundational numeracy skills (number recognition, counting, number sense, place value, basic operations, and simple problem solving).

The participants were nine teachers selected through purposive sampling: three Grade 1 teachers, four Grade 2 teachers, one Grade 3 teacher, and one teacher who handled Grades 1 to 3. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews during the first trimester of School Year 2026–2027.

The study was limited to the experiences and perspectives of teachers at one school. It did not statistically measure the effectiveness of interventions and did not use pre-test and post-test comparisons. It did not include teachers from other grade levels, secondary schools, or other institutions, and it did not gather the views of learners, parents, or school heads. The study also fell short of its target of three participants per grade level: Grade 3 was represented by only one teacher, so findings specific to Grade 3 reflect one teacher's account. In addition, one participant's response to the final interview question was incomplete. The study did not aim to generalize the participants' experiences to all elementary teachers; it aimed to give a deeper understanding of what Grade 1 to 3 teachers experience in addressing

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literacy and numeracy gaps. The experiences, challenges, strategies, and insights the participants shared may still be useful to teachers and schools facing similar concerns.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined according to how they were used in the study. Where a source is cited, the definition was adapted to fit the context of the study.

Basic Literacy refers to the fundamental skills needed for reading and understanding written language, which include recognizing letters and sounds, decoding words, reading with fluency, understanding vocabulary, and comprehending texts. In this study, it refers to the reading difficulties observed by Grade 1 to 3 teachers and the reading skills addressed through classroom interventions.

Basic Numeracy refers to the ability to understand and use numbers and basic mathematical ideas in solving simple tasks and everyday problems, consistent with the view of mathematical proficiency of the National Research Council (2001). In this study, it includes number recognition, counting, number sense, place value, basic operations, and mathematical problem solving.

Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) Approach refers to a mathematics teaching approach in which learners first work with concrete objects, then use pictures or representations, and eventually move toward abstract numbers and symbols. In this study, it is one of the approaches used to help learners understand mathematical concepts.

Coping Strategies refer to the ways teachers respond to or manage the challenges they encounter in implementing literacy and numeracy interventions. In this study, these include adjusting instructional strategies, collaborating with colleagues and parents, making lessons more playful, and relying on patience and perseverance.

Decoding refers to the ability to connect letters and sounds to recognize and read words (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). In this study, it is a foundational reading skill that teachers identified as an area of difficulty among learners.

Grade 1–3 Learners refer to learners enrolled in Grades 1, 2, and 3 at Bayview Elementary School during the period covered by the study. They are the learners whose literacy and numeracy difficulties were observed and addressed by the teacher-participants.

Grade 1–3 Teachers refer to the teachers assigned to Grades 1, 2, and 3 at Bayview Elementary School who have direct experience in teaching learners with basic literacy and numeracy difficulties. They served as the participants in the study.

Learning Gaps refer to the difference between the skills learners are expected to have at their grade level and the skills they actually demonstrate. In this study, learning gaps are based primarily on teachers' observations, assessment information, and classroom experiences.

Learning Recovery refers to efforts and activities intended to help learners regain or strengthen competencies they have not yet sufficiently developed, such as those under the National Learning Recovery Program (Department of Education, 2023). In this study, it refers to efforts related to foundational literacy and numeracy among learners in Grades 1 to 3.

Number Sense refers to a learner's understanding of numbers, quantities, relationships between numbers, and how numbers can be used in different situations. In this study, it is considered one of the foundational numeracy skills that teachers address through intervention.

Reading Comprehension refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and make meaning from what has been read, which together with decoding explains reading success in the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). In

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this study, it refers to learners' ability to understand words, sentences, passages, and simple texts appropriate to their grade level.

Response to Intervention (RTI) refers to an approach that emphasizes identifying learners who need additional support and providing increasingly focused instruction based on their needs and responses (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).

Targeted Interventions refer to classroom strategies and activities intentionally provided to learners who experience specific literacy or numeracy difficulties. In this study, these include differentiated instruction, small-group remediation, peer tutoring, guided practice, reading activities, and CRA-based numeracy activities.

Teacher Experiences refer to the personal and professional experiences of Grade 1 to 3 teachers while identifying learning gaps, implementing interventions, dealing with challenges, observing learner progress, and adjusting their classroom practices.

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METHODS

This section describes how the study was carried out: the research design, methods, and techniques; the research locale, population, and sample; the research instrument and its construction and validation; the data gathering procedure; the preparation and analysis of the data; the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness and ethical conduct; and the alignment of the methodology with the research questions.

Research Design

The study used a qualitative, descriptive phenomenological research design, specifically a cross-sectional, non-experimental, applied research approach, to explore the lived experiences of Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 teachers in addressing learners' basic literacy and numeracy gaps at Bayview Elementary School, Mariveles, Bataan. Phenomenology aims to describe the common meaning of a lived experience for several individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The design was appropriate because the study sought to understand how teachers encountered and responded to learners' literacy and numeracy difficulties, how they interpreted those experiences, and what meaning they attached to their practices.

The study was cross-sectional because data were collected from the participants within a single period, the first trimester of School Year 2026–2027. It was non-experimental because no variable was manipulated and no intervention was administered by the researchers, and it was applied because its findings were translated into practical outputs for the school. The study did not statistically measure the effectiveness of interventions; it sought instead to understand the meaning and essence of the teachers' experiences.

Methods and Techniques

Qualitative phenomenological inquiry served as the primary research method. Data were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews with nine Grade 1 to 3 teachers. The semi-structured format allowed the researchers to use prepared questions while giving participants the freedom to describe their experiences in their own words. Follow-up questions were asked to clarify responses and to encourage participants to give examples. The interviews explored how teachers identified literacy and numeracy gaps, selected and implemented interventions, adjusted instruction, experienced challenges and successes, and coped with difficulties.

After the phenomenological analysis, the findings underwent a programmatic synthesis, which translated the themes, challenges, successful practices, and coping strategies into pedagogical insights and administrative recommendations. These served as the basis for the proposed Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide.

Research Locale, Population, and Sample

The study was conducted at Bayview Elementary School in Mariveles, Bataan. The population consisted of the teachers of Grades 1, 2, and 3 at the school. The sample was composed of nine (9) teachers selected through purposive sampling, which is used to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling suited the study because it required participants who had direct and relevant experience with the research problem. The intended sample was three teachers per grade level. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants as actually interviewed.

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Table 1. **Distribution of the Participants by Grade Level**

Grade level	Participant codes	f
Grade 1	P1, P2, P6	3
Grade 2	P3, P4, P7, P9	4
Grade 3	P5	1
Grades 1–3 (no single grade specified)	P8	1
Total		**9**

Note. Participants are identified by codes to protect their identities.

Table 1 shows that three teachers taught Grade 1 (P1, P2, P6), four taught Grade 2 (P3, P4, P7, P9), and one taught Grade 3 (P5), while one teacher (P8) answered for Grades 1 to 3 without specifying a single grade. The study therefore fell short of its target of three participants per grade level; because Grade 3 was represented by one participant, findings specific to Grade 3 reflect one teacher's account and are tentative.

Inclusion criteria. Participants had to (a) be currently teaching Grade 1; Grade 2, or Grade 3 at Bayview Elementary School; (b) have experience identifying learners with basic literacy and/or numeracy difficulties; (c) have experience providing instructional strategies, remediation, or interventions to address such difficulties; and (d) voluntarily agree to participate and give informed consent.

Exclusion criteria. Teachers who did not handle Grades 1 to 3 at the school, who had no experience in addressing learners' literacy or numeracy difficulties, or who did not give informed consent were not included. The nine participants were identified by the codes P1 to P9, which were used in transcripts, data analysis, and the presentation of findings in place of their names.

Research Instrument

The main research instrument was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide (Appendix A). It contained five main questions, one for each research question, with follow-up questions asked when clarification was necessary. The interview questions were based on the research questions, the objectives of the study, the theoretical framework, the related literature and studies, and the qualitative phenomenological design. The guide focused on (a) the literacy and numeracy gaps teachers observed, (b) the interventions used to address these gaps, (c) the challenges and successes experienced during implementation, (d) coping strategies and ways of overcoming challenges, and (e) insights and recommendations for improving literacy and numeracy interventions.

Construction and validation of the instrument

The interview guide was constructed from the research questions and the relevant literature. Because the instrument was researcher-developed, it underwent expert validation before data collection (Appendix B). The validators were individuals with expertise in areas such as qualitative research, elementary education, literacy, numeracy, educational administration, or instructional supervision. They assessed the guide in terms of relevance, clarity, appropriateness, organization, alignment with the research questions, and suitability for phenomenological inquiry. The researchers revised the instrument based on the validators' comments and recommendations.

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Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researchers secured permission from the appropriate school principal and the Schools Division Office (Appendix C). They explained the purpose, scope, procedures, and ethical considerations of the study and then identified the nine qualified teacher-participants. Each participant received an informed consent form that explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality measures, audio-recording procedures, and the participant's right to refuse or withdraw.

The researchers asked permission to audio-record the interviews, and recording was done only with the participants' consent. Interviews were scheduled according to the participants' availability and conducted individually in a suitable setting using the validated interview guide. Many participants answered in a mix of Filipino and English. After each interview, the recordings were transcribed, and the researchers reviewed the recordings and transcripts for accuracy. Participants' names were replaced with codes in all transcripts and analysis files, and the transcripts and field notes were then organized for analysis.

Data Preparation

The interviews were transcribed, and many answers were in Filipino–English code-switching. Original wording is quoted in the excerpts presented in the Results, with English translations given in parentheses. The transcript of P9 contained speech-to-text errors, so only segments clear enough to interpret were coded; these are marked with an asterisk (*). P6's answer to the last interview question ended mid-sentence, so P6's recommendations were not captured, and P8's answer to the same question gave lessons learned rather than explicit recommendations.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method, which consists of seven steps. An eighth step was added by the researchers as an application phase. The steps were carried out as follows.

Step 1: Familiarization with the data. The researchers read the transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the participants' experiences and reviewed the audio recordings when necessary.

Step 2: Identifying significant statements. Statements directly related to the research questions were extracted. These concerned learning gaps, interventions, challenges, successes, adjustments, coping strategies, and recommendations.

Step 3: Formulating meanings. The researchers interpreted the meaning of each significant statement while remaining grounded in the participants' actual accounts. Statements in Filipino or in mixed Filipino and English were rendered in English at this step.

Step 4: Developing themes. Statements with similar meanings were assigned open codes and clustered into categories and themes. The researchers compared Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 experiences to identify common and grade-specific themes.

Step 5: Developing an exhaustive description. The themes were integrated into a detailed description of the teachers' experiences.

Step 6: Identifying the essence of the experience. A condensed statement of the essential meaning of the participants' lived experience was formulated.

Step 7: Member checking. A summary of the interpretations was prepared for presentation to the participants so that they could confirm, clarify, or correct it.

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Step 8: Formulation of pedagogical insights and practical outputs. The validated themes were synthesized into the Proposed Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide and the Administrative Recommendation Matrix. The learning gaps, successful practices, challenges, coping strategies, and instructional adjustments served as the empirical basis for these outputs. Step 8 is an additional application phase of the study and is not part of Colaizzi's original seven steps.

Validation of the proposed outputs

The proposed Intervention Guide and Administrative Recommendation Matrix were to be reviewed by practitioners with relevant experience in elementary education, literacy, numeracy, and instructional supervision, such as Master Teachers, reading or mathematics coordinators, and the School Head. The outputs were reviewed in terms of relevance to the identified learning gaps, clarity, appropriateness for Grade 1–3 learners, feasibility within the school context, consistency with the findings, and usefulness to teachers and school administrators.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The study considered the four criteria of qualitative trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was strengthened through in-depth interviews, follow-up questions, and member checking. Dependability was supported by documenting the research procedures, from participant selection and instrument validation to transcription, coding, theme development, and interpretation. Confirmability was maintained by grounding interpretations in the participants' actual statements and keeping transcripts, field notes, and coding records. Transferability was supported by describing the research setting, participants, grade levels, and context in detail so that readers can judge whether the findings may apply to similar educational settings.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers observed ethical standards throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and each participant received an informed consent form and had the right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw without penalty. Identities were protected by using codes in place of names. Audio recordings were made only with the participants' permission, and recordings, transcripts, and field notes were stored securely and accessed only by authorized members of the research team. The researchers maintained honesty and accuracy in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data, and no information was fabricated, falsified, or intentionally altered.

Alignment of the Methodology with the Research Questions

Table 2 shows how the methodology was aligned with the five research questions.

Table 2. **Alignment of the Methodology with the Research Questions**

Research question	Primary source or procedure	Analysis
1. What literacy and numeracy gaps do teachers observe?	Semi-structured interviews	Themes on identified learning gaps
2. What interventions do teachers use?	Semi-structured interviews	Themes on intervention practices
3. What challenges and successes do teachers experience?	Semi-structured interviews	Themes on challenges and successes

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4. How do teachers cope with challenges?	Semi-structured interviews	Themes on coping strategies and adjustments
5. What insights and recommendations can be drawn?	Synthesized findings; member checking; review of outputs	Pedagogical insights, administrative recommendations, and Intervention Guide

Through this methodology, the study gave Grade 1 to 3 teachers the opportunity to describe in their own words the strategies they used, the challenges they faced, the adjustments they made, the successes they observed, and the support they believed was necessary.

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RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the phenomenological analysis. Nine teachers were interviewed: three from Grade 1 (P1, P2, P6), four from Grade 2 (P3, P4, P7, P9), one from Grade 3 (P5), and one teacher (P8) who answered for Grades 1 to 3 without specifying a single grade. Because Grade 3 was represented by one participant, findings specific to Grade 3 reflect one teacher's account and are tentative. The findings are presented by research question (RQ) in the sequence of the interview items, followed by the comparison across grade levels, the exhaustive description and essence of the experience, member checking, and the pedagogical insights and proposed outputs. Interpretation of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and earlier studies is presented in the Discussion.

Familiarization with the Data and Overview of Themes

In Step 1, the transcripts were read in full and compared across participants. Five first impressions guided the coding. First, the words "patience," "consistency," and "different needs" recurred in almost every interview regardless of grade level. Second, teachers described gaps as building on one another, so that unresolved letter-sound or number-sense gaps in Grade 1 seemed to reappear as non-reading in Grade 3 (P5). Third, nearly every teacher described the same core toolkit of flashcards, pictures, manipulatives, and small groups, with differences between grades lying in the specific gaps and in how time was arranged. Fourth, challenges were mostly about time, learner diversity, and home support, and only a few teachers described seeking help from colleagues or the school head. Fifth, success was described as small, gradual gains in reading and in confidence rather than dramatic change.

Steps 2 and 3 produced 144 significant statements, each linked to a formulated meaning and an open code. The 55 open codes were clustered in Step 4 into 25 themes, which are presented below by research question. The codebook, the significant statements with their formulated meanings, and the theme-by-participant matrix are in Appendix D. Table 3 shows how the interview items, research questions, and themes were aligned.

Table 3. **Alignment of Research Questions, Interview Items, and Themes**

Research question	Interview item	Themes
RQ1. What basic literacy and numeracy gaps do Grade 1 to 3 teachers observe among their learners?	Q1	Themes 1–4
RQ2. What targeted classroom interventions do Grade 1 to 3 teachers use to address the identified literacy and numeracy gaps?	Q2	Themes 5–9
RQ3. What challenges and successes do teachers experience while implementing these interventions?	Q3	Themes 10–16
RQ4. How do teachers cope with or overcome the challenges they encounter during the implementation of literacy and numeracy interventions?	Q4	Themes 17–20
RQ5. What insights and recommendations can be drawn from the teachers' experiences to improve future literacy and numeracy interventions?	Q5	Themes 21–25

Table 3 shows that each of the five interview items corresponded to one research question. Each research question was analyzed separately through Steps 2 to 4, and the results were then integrated in Steps 5 and 6.

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RQ1: Literacy and Numeracy Gaps Observed by the Teachers

Teachers described gaps that were foundational and uneven. All nine participants reported literacy gaps and all nine reported numeracy gaps. Table 4 presents the four themes that emerged.

Table 4. Themes on the Literacy and Numeracy Gaps Observed by the Teachers

Theme	Contributing participants	f
Theme 1: Different starting points: learners enter Grades 1–3 at widely varying levels	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P9	6
Theme 2: From letters to meaning: gaps in letter-sound knowledge, word-building, and comprehension	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9	9
Theme 3: From counting to computing: gaps in number sense and basic operations	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9	9
Theme 4: Spotting the gaps: formal assessment and everyday observation	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9	8

Note. f = number of participants, out of nine, whose statements supported the theme. It indicates how widely a meaning was shared and is not a statistical result.

As shown in Table 4, Themes 2 and 3 were shared by all nine participants, Theme 4 by eight, and Theme 1 by six. Together, the themes show that teachers saw both what the gaps were (Themes 2 and 3) and where they came from and how they were detected (Themes 1 and 4).

Theme 1: Different starting points: learners enter Grades 1–3 at widely varying levels

Six of the nine participants (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P9) said that learners entered Grades 1 to 3, or moved through them, at widely different levels. P6 traced some of the differences to weak Kindergarten preparation, while P5 linked them to absenteeism, limited follow-up at home, and earlier modular learning.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 2 (P2): "may iba't-ibang level sila ng literacy and numeracy skills" *(Learners have different levels of literacy and numeracy skills.)*

Participant 6 (P6): "some learners enter Grade 1 without knowing how to hold a pencil properly or recognize basic letters and shapes"

Participant 5 (P5): "some Grade 3 learners are still at the Grade 1 or Grade 2 level, or even non-readers, due to absenteeism, lack of follow-up at home, and the effects of previous modular learning"

Theme 2: From letters to meaning: gaps in letter-sound knowledge, word-building, and comprehension

All nine participants described literacy gaps, and these followed a progression across the grades. Grade 1 teachers (P1, P2, P6) emphasized letter recognition, letter sounds, blending, and pre-writing skills such as holding a pencil. Grade 2 teachers (P3, P4, P7, P9) pointed to building whole words, especially syllables with three letters (P3), and to reading simple sentences. The Grade 3 teacher (P5) reported weak reading comprehension in Filipino and English and learners who were still non-readers.

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Supporting excerpts

Participant 1 (P1): "nahihiya siyang magbasa in front of the class, at madalas siya nagkakamali sa pagkilala ng letters and sounds" *(The learner is shy to read in front of the class and often makes mistakes in recognizing letters and sounds.)*

Participant 3 (P3): "kapag ka nagkakaroon na ng tatlong titik sa isang pantig, halimbawa na lamang ng "nga", "mag" 'yan, doon nagkakaroon, do'n ko nakikita sa bata na hirap silang bumuo ng isang salita" *(When a syllable already has three letters, for example "nga" or "mag," that is where I see that the children have difficulty forming a word.)*

Participant 5 (P5): "many learners struggle with basic reading comprehension in Filipino and English"

Theme 3: From counting to computing: gaps in number sense and basic operations

All nine participants also reported numeracy gaps. They named counting and number recognition, addition and subtraction, regrouping (P3), place value (P8), and solving simple problems (P4, P7). P3 noted that subtraction came more easily than addition with regrouping and linked this to a familiar counting-down song used in class.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 3 (P3): "pagdating sa addition na may regrouping, tapos 'yong mayro'n pang may carry-carry" *(When it comes to addition with regrouping, the ones that still involve carrying.)*

Participant 3 (P3): "Kumbaga do'n sa subtraction, mas mabilis sa kanila." *(In subtraction, it is quicker for them.)*

Participant 4 (P4): "In numeracy, I observe difficulties in counting, basic operations, and solving simple problems."

Participant 8 (P8): "learners often struggle with recognizing basic concepts, understanding place value, and performing simple addition and subtraction"

Theme 4: Spotting the gaps: formal assessment and everyday observation

Eight of the nine participants (all except P6) described how they identified the gaps. P3, P5, and P8 mentioned formal tools such as the CRLA, RMA/MCRLA, and oral reading tests, while P1, P2, P4, P7, and P9 relied on everyday observation, recitation, and simple assessments.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 3 (P3): "'yong sa early assessment, ina-assess na agad natin sila. Sa CRLA, sa RMA" *(In the early assessment, we assess them right away, in the CRLA and the RMA.)*

Participant 4 (P4): "I usually identify these difficulties through classroom activities, recitation, reading exercises, and assessments."

Participant 5 (P5): "I identify these gaps through CRLA, weekly oral reading tests, classroom activities, and assessments."

RQ2: Targeted Classroom Interventions Used by the Teachers

The interventions were strikingly consistent across grades. Table 5 presents the five themes that emerged.

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Table 5. Themes on the Targeted Classroom Interventions Used by the Teachers

Theme	Contributing participants	f
Theme 5: Learning made concrete: visual, tactile, and multisensory materials	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9	9
Theme 6: Step-by-step teaching: structured, phonics-based, and scaffolded instruction	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9	9
Theme 7: Meeting each learner where they are: differentiated, small-group, and one-on-one support	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9	8
Theme 8: Carving out time: dedicated remediation and catch-up sessions	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9	7
Theme 9: Building confidence: encouragement, safe practice, and celebrating small wins	P1, P2, P7, P8, P9	5

Note. f = number of participants, out of nine, whose statements supported the theme. It indicates how widely a meaning was shared and is not a statistical result.

As shown in Table 5, concrete materials (Theme 5) and step-by-step teaching (Theme 6) were used by all nine participants, and differentiated support (Theme 7) by eight. Dedicated remediation time (Theme 8) was described by seven participants, and the emotional strategies of Theme 9 by five.

Theme 5: Learning made concrete: visual, tactile, and multisensory materials

All nine teachers used concrete, visual, or multisensory materials such as flashcards, picture clues, counters, blocks, number lines, and everyday objects like bottle caps and sticks. Many of the materials the teachers mentioned were low-cost and locally available.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 4 (P4): "For numeracy, I use manipulatives, visual aids, and simple real-life examples."

Participant 6 (P6): "For numeracy, I usually use concrete materials or tactile objects to teach basic numbers and simple addition."

Participant 7 (P7): "mayro'n tayong manipulatives, may real, kahit mga simple real-life examples, 'tsaka 'yong mga visual aids" *(We have manipulatives, real objects, even simple real-life examples, and also visual aids.)*

Theme 6: Step-by-step teaching: structured, phonics-based, and scaffolded instruction

All nine teachers also taught in steps. P1, P2, and P9 moved from letters and sounds to syllables to words. P5 and P6 named the Marungko and Fuller approaches. P3, P4, and P7 used guided reading and the I do–you do–we do routine, and P9 moved learners from concrete objects to pictures to numerals.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 1 (P1): "I started with simple letters and sounds, then gradually introduce syllables and simple words."

Participant 3 (P3): "'Yong tinatawag natin na "I do, you do, we do."" *(What we call "I do, you do, we do.")*

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Participant 5 (P5): "I implement the Marungko Approach and Fuller approach. I also use passages from Phil-IRI materials because we have many available materials."

Participant 6 (P6): "One of my best interventions for addressing literacy gaps is the Marungko Approach or Marungko Method because it focuses on localized letter sounds before introducing the full alphabet."

Theme 7: Meeting each learner where they are: differentiated, small-group, and one-on-one support

Eight of the nine teachers (all except P6) fitted instruction to the learner through grouping by level, one-on-one coaching, peer tutoring, and a reading corner.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "I implement these strategies by grouping learners according to their level and providing appropriate activities based on their instructional needs."

Participant 4 (P4): "I also provide additional practice and conduct one-on-one or small-group activities to help learners understand the lessons better."

Participant 7 (P7): "binibigyan ko rin sila ng additional practice, nagwa-one-on-one po kami, or mayro'n kaming small groups or big groups kapag po talaga kailangan" *(I also give them additional practice, we do one-on-one, or we have small groups or big groups whenever really needed.)*

Participant 3 (P3): "bawat room mayro'n tayong tinatawag na reading corner" *(In every room we have what we call a reading corner.)*

Theme 8: Carving out time: dedicated remediation and catch-up sessions

Seven participants (P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9) described making time for remediation. Examples were a daily 30-minute session after class and a 15-minute morning catch-up (P5), remedial sessions during lunch breaks (P8), and one-on-one practice after class (P1, P9). These sessions were created from teachers' own time and breaks rather than from a formal schedule.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "I conduct a daily 30-minute reading intervention after class, peer tutoring, and the use of flashcards, big books, and picture words."

Participant 5 (P5): "Every morning, before our regular lesson, I also provide 15 minutes of catch-up time for struggling learners."

Participant 8 (P8): "I implemented daily remedial sessions during lunch breaks or enrichment time."

Participant 1 (P1): "Naglaan din ako ng additional time para sa one-on-one reading practice." *(I also set aside additional time for one-on-one reading practice.)*

Theme 9: Building confidence: encouragement, safe practice, and celebrating small wins

Five participants (P1, P2, P7, P8, P9) described an emotional strategy alongside the academic ones. They reassured learners that mistakes were normal (P1), started one-on-one before asking a child to read before the class (P2), and praised small milestones (P8, P9).

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Supporting excerpts

Participant 1 (P1): "kinakausap ko siya nang mahinahon at ipinauunawa ko na normal po lang iyon na magkamali habang natututo" *(I talk to the learner calmly and help the learner understand that it is normal to make mistakes while learning.)*

Participant 2 (P2): "Instead of immediate asking the learner to read in front of the whole class, I started with one on one reading and very simple words."

Participant 8 (P8): "by using interactive games and praising small milestones, the learners became more enthusiastic"

Participant 9 (P9*): "I try to make activities more interactive and give positive reinforcement kahit small progress lang" *(... even if the progress is only small.)*

RQ3: Challenges and Successes Experienced by the Teachers

Challenges clustered into five themes and successes into two. Table 6 presents the seven themes.

Table 6. Themes on the Challenges and Successes Experienced by the Teachers

Theme	Contributing participants	f
Theme 10: Too little time for too many needs	P3, P4, P5, P7, P9	5
Theme 11: One strategy does not fit all: learner diversity and the burden of differentiation	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7	6
Theme 12: Limited materials and support	P3, P4, P5, P7	4
Theme 13: Learner-related barriers: attention, fatigue, frustration, forgetting, and absenteeism	P1, P2, P5, P6, P8, P9	6
Theme 14: Limited follow-up at home	P5, P6, P9	3
Theme 15: Success: slow but real gains in reading and number skills	P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9	6
Theme 16: Success: growing confidence and willingness to participate	P2, P4, P7, P8, P9	5

Note. f = number of participants, out of nine, whose statements supported the theme. It indicates how widely a meaning was shared and is not a statistical result.

As shown in Table 6, learner diversity (Theme 11) and learner-related barriers (Theme 13) were each raised by six participants, and limited time (Theme 10) by five. Limited materials (Theme 12) and limited follow-up at home (Theme 14) were raised by four and three participants, respectively. On the side of successes, six participants described gains in skills (Theme 15) and five described growth in confidence (Theme 16).

Theme 10: Too little time for too many needs

Five participants (P3, P4, P5, P7, P9) identified limited time as a challenge. They found it hard to fit intervention and follow-up into the school day alongside their regular teaching load.

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Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "One of the challenges I encountered was time management because it was sometimes difficult to provide enough time for intervention and follow-up."

Participant 4 (P4): "I also encountered challenges such as limited time, different learning levels among learners, and sometimes a lack of support and resources."

Participant 7 (P7): "Ang challenge lang po talaga is mayro'n lang tayong limited time, so tapos, different din 'yong learning levels ng mga bata at minsan po, lack din po tayo ng support and ng resources." *(The only real challenge is that we have limited time, and the learning levels of the children are also different, and sometimes we also lack support and resources.)*

Theme 11: One strategy does not fit all: learner diversity and the burden of differentiation

Six participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7) said that learner diversity meant no single strategy worked for everyone. P3 added that preparing differentiated instruction and materials was itself a major challenge.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 2 (P2): "These challenges taught me that I cannot always use one teaching strategy for all learners."

Participant 3 (P3): "isa sa hamon ko talaga is 'yong paggawa ng differentiate instruction, ng materials" *(One of my real challenges is making differentiated instruction and materials.)*

Participant 6 (P6): "If a strategy is not suited to a particular learner because of the diversity of learners, I have to develop another strategy or teaching method that will help the learner master the skill."

Theme 12: Limited materials and support

Reports about resources were mixed. P4 and P7 mentioned a lack of support and resources, and P3 noted the cost of some materials to the teacher. In contrast, P3 also credited DepEd for providing manipulatives, and P5 said Phil-IRI materials were plentiful. The gap may therefore lie in the kinds of materials available, or in access to them, rather than in materials as a whole.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 4 (P4): "sometimes a lack of support and resources"

Participant 3 (P3): "luckily ang DepEd binigyan tayo ng mga manipulatives" *(Luckily, DepEd gave us manipulatives.)*

Participant 5 (P5): "I implement the Marungko Approach and Fuller approach. I also use passages from Phil-IRI materials because we have many available materials."

Theme 13: Learner-related barriers: attention, fatigue, frustration, forgetting, and absenteeism

Six participants (P1, P2, P5, P6, P8, P9) described barriers on the learners' side: short attention spans and lack of interest (P5), fatigue after a long school day and frustration (P6, P9), fear of mistakes and quick loss of confidence (P1, P2), forgetting previously learned sounds or numbers (P6), and absenteeism (P8).

Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "At first, the challenge was the learner's lack of interest and short attention span."

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Participant 6 (P6): "struggling Grade 1 pupils are often too tired or frustrated to participate in remedial reading or numeracy activities"

Participant 2 (P2): "mabilis silang ma-lose ng confidence kapag nahihirapan sila" *(They quickly lose confidence when they find it difficult.)*

Participant 8 (P8): "Attendance and low student confidence were the main challenges."

Theme 14: Limited follow-up at home

Three participants (P5, P6, P9) said that follow-up at home was limited. P6 tied this to parents' work and financial constraints, while P5 spoke of encouraging parents to provide follow-up activities (see also Theme 19).

Supporting excerpts

Participant 6 (P6): "Due to their work and financial hardships, many parents are unable to review or teach their children at home."

Participant 5 (P5): "encourage them to provide follow-up activities at home"

Theme 15: Success: slow but real gains in reading and number skills

Six participants (P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9) reported concrete gains. Examples were a non-reader who recognized letters and read CVC words within three weeks and later read simple sentences (P5), and a learner who progressed to reading basic words with less help (P9*). P7 stressed that progress was real but slow.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "after three weeks, the learner started to recognize letters and read CVC words. Eventually, the learner was able to read simple sentences."

Participant 7 (P7): "Although mayro'ng progress, pero mabagal lang talaga siya. Pero habang, kapag consistent naman po 'yong intervention, unti-unti naman siyang nagiging confident tsaka mas nakakasagot." *(Although there is progress, it is really slow. But when the intervention is consistent, little by little the learner becomes confident and answers more.)*

Participant 4 (P4): "Through these interventions, the learner became more confident and showed improvement in solving basic number operations."

Participant 9 (P9*): "nakapagbasa na siya ng basic word and with less assistance po" *(The learner was already able to read a basic word and with less assistance.)*

Theme 16: Success: growing confidence and willingness to participate

Five participants (P2, P4, P7, P8, P9) highlighted growth in confidence and willingness to take part in class, such as a learner who started volunteering to read (P2) and learners who became more enthusiastic through games and praise (P8).

Supporting excerpts

Participant 2 (P2): "Eventually, the learner became more confident and started volunteering to read."

Participant 2 (P2): "the improvement was not only in reading ability but also in the learner's confidence"

Participant 8 (P8): "by using interactive games and praising small milestones, the learners became more enthusiastic"

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RQ4: Coping Strategies of the Teachers

Coping was mostly an individual, in-classroom effort. Table 7 presents the four themes that emerged.

Table 7. Themes on How Teachers Coped With and Overcame Challenges

Theme	Contributing participants	f
Theme 17: Adjusting the approach: flexibility and trying another way	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9	8
Theme 18: Re-engaging learners through play and interactive activities	P5, P6, P7, P8, P9	5
Theme 19: Leaning on others: co-teachers, school head, and parents	P4, P5, P7	3
Theme 20: Patience, perseverance, and a positive outlook	P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9	6

Note. f = number of participants, out of nine, whose statements supported the theme. It indicates how widely a meaning was shared and is not a statistical result.

As shown in Table 7, the most common response was to adjust the approach (Theme 17, eight participants), followed by patience and perseverance (Theme 20, six participants) and by making activities more playful (Theme 18, five participants). Only three participants described turning to others (Theme 19).

Theme 17: Adjusting the approach: flexibility and trying another way

Eight participants (all except P5) described adjusting their approach. When a strategy did not work, they tried another one (P2, P4, P8). P9* first tried to understand why the child was struggling rather than assuming the child could not learn.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 2 (P2): "kapag napansin kong hindi effective ang isang activity for a particular learner, I try another approach" *(When I notice that an activity is not effective for a particular learner, I try another approach.)*

Participant 2 (P2): "a learner's difficulty is not because they are not capable, but because they need a different way of learning"

Participant 4 (P4): "I try different strategies until I find an approach that works well for the learner."

Participant 9 (P9*): "I don't immediately assume na hindi kaya ng bata. I try to adjust the strategy, give them more time and practice, and then meet the learner at their level." *(I don't immediately assume that the child cannot do it. I try to adjust the strategy, give them more time and practice, and then meet the learner at their level.)*

Theme 18: Re-engaging learners through play and interactive activities

Five participants (P5, P6, P7, P8, P9) responded to tired or frustrated learners by making activities more playful, using phonics games, reading wheels, and hands-on or multisensory tasks.

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Supporting excerpts

Participant 6 (P6): "I shift from traditional worksheets to gamified learning. I use phonics games, reading wheels, and manipulatives for Mathematics."

Participant 7 (P7): "Kasi ang importante doon ma-enjoy, matutunan, ma-enjoy at matututo 'yong mga bata nang hindi sila nadi-discourage." *(What is important is that the children enjoy and learn, enjoy and learn, without being discouraged.)*

Participant 8 (P8): "I adapt by simplifying activities and creating hands-on learning resources."

Theme 19: Leaning on others: co-teachers, school head, and parents

Only three participants described turning to others. P4 and P7 mentioned coordinating with parents and other teachers, and P5 described seeking help from co-teachers and the school head and reaching parents through home visits and group chats.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 4 (P4): "I also coordinate with parents and other teachers to provide additional support."

Participant 5 (P5): "I cope with these challenges by seeking help from my co-teachers and from our school head."

Participant 5 (P5): "I also communicate with parents through home visits and group chats to encourage them to provide follow-up activities at home."

Participant 7 (P7): "nakikipag-cooperate din po tayo sa mga parents and sa mga other teachers" *(We also cooperate with parents and with other teachers.)*

Theme 20: Patience, perseverance, and a positive outlook

Six participants (P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9) drew on patience, perseverance, and a positive outlook. This included prayer (P5) and the resolve to "try and try" (P6).

Supporting excerpts

Participant 2 (P2): "The challenges also made me more patient and observant."

Participant 5 (P5): "prayer and maintaining a positive mindset also help me continue addressing the needs of my learners"

Participant 6 (P6): "My most important lesson is, "Do not give up." We have to try and try until we achieve success."

Participant 7 (P7): "ang kailangan talaga is flexibility at saka patience" *(What is really needed is flexibility and patience.)*

RQ5: Insights and Recommendations Drawn from the Teachers' Experiences

Teachers offered shared lessons (Themes 21 and 22) and recommendations (Themes 23 to 25). P6's recommendations were incomplete because the transcript ended mid-answer, and P8 offered lessons rather than explicit recommendations. Table 8 presents the five themes, and Section 3.9 shows how they were translated into proposed outputs.

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Table 8. Themes on the Insights and Recommendations Drawn from the Teachers' Experiences

Theme	Contributing participants	f
Theme 21: Every learner is different, and progress is gradual	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9	9
Theme 22: Catch gaps early and keep monitoring	P1, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9	6
Theme 23: Recommendation: dedicated time, program, staff, and materials	P3, P5, P9	3
Theme 24: Recommendation: a shared support system of parents, school, and community	P3, P4, P5, P7, P9	5
Theme 25: Recommendation: continuous teacher training and sharing of strategies	P3, P5, P9	3

Note. f = number of participants, out of nine, whose statements supported the theme. It indicates how widely a meaning was shared and is not a statistical result.

As shown in Table 8, all nine participants shared the lesson that every learner is different and progress is gradual (Theme 21), and six stressed early identification and regular monitoring (Theme 22). The recommendations for dedicated time and resources (Theme 23) and for training (Theme 25) came from three participants each, and the call for partnership among parents, school, and community (Theme 24) came from five.

Theme 21: Every learner is different, and progress is gradual

All nine participants concluded that every learner has a different pace and different needs, that progress is gradual, and that patience and consistency matter. Many described small gains as real achievements (P2, P5).

Supporting excerpts

Participant 1 (P1): "every learner has different abilities, needs, and learning pace"

Participant 3 (P3): "ang bawat bata, mayro'n talaga silang iba't-ibang kakayahan" *(Every child really has different abilities.)*

Participant 5 (P5): "patience and consistency are the keys to helping struggling learners. No learner is left behind if we give them extra time and use appropriate strategies. Every small progress is a big achievement."

Participant 7 (P7): "kailangan natin ng mahabang pasensya, kailangan natin ng consistency pagdating sa mga routine natin" *(We need long patience, we need consistency when it comes to our routines.)*

Theme 22: Catch gaps early and keep monitoring

Six participants (P1, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9) stressed catching gaps early and monitoring regularly rather than only once. P8 warned that gaps compound over time if not addressed early.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 1 (P1): "mahalaga ang early identification ng learning difficulties" *(Early identification of learning difficulties is important.)*

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Participant 4 (P4): "I recommend conducting regular assessments to identify learning gaps early, followed by targeted activities and remediation."

Participant 8 (P8): "Learning gaps compound over time if they are not identified and addressed early."

Participant 9 (P9*): "malaking bagay po yung regular assessment and monitoring ng progress, hindi lang once or the end of the school year" *(Regular assessment and monitoring of progress is a big help, not just once or at the end of the school year.)*

Theme 23: Recommendation: dedicated time, program, staff, and materials

P5, P9, and P3 asked for a dedicated program, protected time, materials, and support staff. P5 also suggested smaller classes or a separate intervention time within the class program.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "a dedicated reading and numeracy program with assigned support staff, continuous provision of contextualized materials"

Participant 5 (P5): "reducing class size or providing a separate intervention time within the class program so teachers can focus on non-readers and learners who have difficulty with numeracy"

Participant 9 (P9*): "schools should provide more time and resources for remediation, especially for learners who are struggling with basic reading"

Theme 24: Recommendation: a shared support system of parents, school, and community

Five participants (P3, P4, P5, P7, P9) called for stronger partnership among parents, school, and community, including the barangay (P5).

Supporting excerpts

Participant 4 (P4): "It is also important to have the support of parents, teachers, and the school to make literacy and numeracy interventions more effective."

Participant 5 (P5): "stronger partnerships with parents and the barangay"

Participant 7 (P7): "mahalaga po na ma-support din sila ng mga parents, ng teachers, at ng school para po mas maging effective 'yong literacy and numeracy interventions" *(It is important that they are also supported by parents, teachers, and the school so that the literacy and numeracy interventions will be more effective.)*

Participant 9 (P9*): "kailangan din siguro na collaboration between teachers and parents para consistent support ng bata sa both sa bahay at both sa school" *(There should perhaps also be collaboration between teachers and parents so that the child gets consistent support both at home and at school.)*

Theme 25: Recommendation: continuous teacher training and sharing of strategies

Three participants (P3, P5, P9) asked for continuous teacher training and for sharing of effective strategies.

Supporting excerpts

Participant 5 (P5): "regular training for Grade 1 to 3 teachers on intervention strategies"

Participant 3 (P3): "kailangan din ng teachers ng trainings na 'yan para, para mas mapahusay pa 'no 'yong ating pagtuturo" *(Teachers also need those trainings so that our teaching can improve even more.)*

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Participant 9 (P9*): "teachers also need continuous training and sharing of effective strategies"

Comparison of Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 Experiences

Step 4 also called for a comparison across grade levels. Table 9 separates common and grade-specific patterns. P8 answered for Grades 1 to 3 and is included only in the common themes. Because Grade 3 rests on one participant (P5), its column describes one teacher's account and not a grade-wide pattern.

Table 9. Common and Grade-Specific Patterns in the Teachers' Experiences

Aspect	Grade 1 (P1, P2, P6)	Grade 2 (P3, P4, P7, P9)	Grade 3 (P5)
Literacy gaps	Letter recognition and sounds, blending, hesitancy to read aloud, pencil holding, shape recognition	Forming whole words, three-letter syllables, reading simple sentences, letter sounds and syllables	Reading comprehension in Filipino and English; non-readers; learners at Grade 1–2 reading level
Numeracy gaps	Basic counting, addition, understanding basic numbers, forgetting numbers	Addition with regrouping, counting, number recognition, basic operations, simple problems	Number recognition, simple addition and subtraction
Contributing factors	Varied entry levels, weak Kindergarten foundation, short attention span, limited parent time and finances	Different learning paces, limited support at home, difficulty focusing	Absenteeism, limited follow-up at home, effects of earlier modular learning
Typical interventions	Flash cards, pictures, phonics, tactile objects, Marungko, letters-to-syllables-to-words, one-on-one reading	Word drills and syllabication, reading corner, I do–you do–we do, guided reading, manipulatives, small groups, one-on-one	Marungko and Fuller, Phil-IRI passages, daily 30-minute after-class session, 15-minute morning catch-up, peer tutoring, counters, number lines, play-based learning
Main challenges	Fear of mistakes, quick loss of confidence, forgetting, fatigue after a long day, learner diversity	Limited time, preparing differentiated materials, limited support and resources, learner frustration	Lack of interest and short attention span, time management
Coping	Adjusting strategies, gamified learning, calm encouragement, patience	Adjusting to learner level, coordinating with parents and teachers, concrete objects, patience	Help from co-teachers and school head, home visits and group chats, prayer, positive mindset
Successes	Learner became confident enough to volunteer to read	Slow but steady progress and growing confidence	A non-reader read CVC words within three weeks, then simple sentences

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Recommendations	Early identification; learner-centered flexibility; "Do not give up"	Regular assessment and remediation; more time and resources; parent–school collaboration; training and strategy sharing	Dedicated program with support staff; contextualized materials; training; parent and barangay partnership; smaller classes or separate intervention time

Note. Common to all grades: patience and flexibility; concrete and visual materials; assessment-based identification; small-group or one-on-one work; building confidence through small wins; recognition that every learner needs a different approach.

Table 9 shows that the grades differed mainly in the specific gaps and in how time was arranged. Grade 1 teachers emphasized letter-sound knowledge and pre-writing skills, Grade 2 teachers emphasized forming words and reading sentences, and the Grade 3 teacher emphasized comprehension and learners who could not yet read. The Grade 3 teacher also described the most fixed intervention schedule, with a daily after-class session and a morning catch-up.

The experiences were also strongly alike. Teachers in every grade relied on patience and flexibility, concrete and visual materials, assessment-based identification of gaps, small-group or one-on-one work, and the building of confidence through small wins. They also shared the recognition that every learner needs a different approach. The similarity suggests that the toolkit and the lessons the teachers described belong to the work of addressing early gaps itself and not to a particular grade level.

Exhaustive Description and Essence of the Experience

Exhaustive description (Colaizzi Step 5)

Grade 1 to 3 teachers at Bayview Elementary School experienced the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy as a daily effort to meet children where they were. They saw learners who began at very different starting points: some could not yet name letters or hold a pencil, some could not blend sounds into words, some counted or added with difficulty, and some reached Grade 3 still reading at an earlier level. Teachers recognized these gaps through assessments such as the CRLA and through close everyday observation, and they understood the gaps as connected to earlier schooling, attendance, attention, confidence, and the amount of support children received at home.

In response, teachers built a practical toolkit. They made learning concrete with flashcards, pictures, counters, and everyday objects. They taught in small steps, from letter sounds to syllables to words and from objects to pictures to numbers. They grouped learners, coached them one-on-one, and used peers to help. They protected small pockets of time before class, after class, or during breaks, and they worked to keep children feeling safe, encouraged, and proud of small gains.

Teachers also carried real burdens. There was never quite enough time; learners differed so widely that no single approach worked; preparing differentiated materials was demanding; some children were tired, easily discouraged, or often absent; and many families could not provide follow-up at home. Reports on materials were mixed, with some teachers describing adequate supplies and others describing shortages.

To cope, teachers mostly turned to themselves. They changed strategies when one failed, tried to understand why a child struggled, made lessons playful again when children were tired, and relied on patience, perseverance, and faith. A smaller number sought help from co-teachers, the school head, and parents. Success, when it came, was gradual: a letter recognized, a word read, a child volunteering to read. Teachers treated these small gains as meaningful.

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From these experiences, teachers drew shared lessons and hopes: every child learns at a different pace, patience and consistency are essential, gaps should be caught early and monitored regularly, and teachers need dedicated time, staff, contextualized materials, training, and stronger partnership with parents, the school, and the barangay.

Essence of the experience (Colaizzi Step 6)

The essence of the teachers' lived experience was condensed into the following statement:

For Grade 1 to 3 teachers, addressing learners' foundational literacy and numeracy gaps was an act of patient, adaptive persistence. Teachers saw each child's starting point, met the child there with concrete and encouraging strategies, stretched their own time and resources to make room for it, and found meaning in small, gradual steps of growth, while hoping for the shared support of colleagues, families, and the school that would make their effort sustainable.

Member checking (Colaizzi Step 7)

Member checking was conducted by distributing copies of the Member-Checking Summary and Response Form, which included a one-page summary of the study's findings. Participants (P1–P9) were asked to review the document and indicate whether the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences, as well as to provide any corrections, clarifications, or additional comments. The forms were handed out in person after data analysis. All participants confirmed that the findings accurately represented their experiences and reported that there were no significant aspects that were missing or misinterpreted. As a result, no revisions were made to the identified themes or to the proposed outputs.

Pedagogical Insights and Practical Outputs (Step 8)

This step is an application phase added by the study and is not part of Colaizzi's original seven steps. It translated the themes into practical instructional recommendations, school-based support mechanisms, and resource considerations for the Proposed Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide and the Administrative Recommendation Matrix. Where a specific frequency or schedule is mentioned, it is taken from what a participant described. The main pedagogical insights that support the Guide were as follows:

- Gaps are cumulative, so early identification and regular monitoring are the entry point of any intervention (Themes 1, 4, and 22).
- Instruction works best when it is concrete, sequenced, and matched to each learner's level (Themes 5, 6, and 7).
- Interventions need protected time and cannot depend on teachers' goodwill alone (Themes 8, 10, and 23).
- Confidence is both a goal and a condition for learning, so safe practice and recognition of small wins belong in the design (Themes 9, 13, and 16).
- Teachers coped mostly alone, so structured support from colleagues, school leaders, and families is a gap to be filled (Themes 19, 24, and 25).

Table 10 links each recommendation to the themes that support it.

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Table 10. Administrative Recommendation Matrix Linked to the Themes

Focus and linked themes	Instructional recommendation (for the Guide)	School-based support mechanism	Resource considerations and suggested lead
1. Early and regular assessment Themes: 1 (6/9), 4 (8/9), 22 (6/9)	Assess at the start of the year (for example, CRLA and RMA) and monitor progress regularly, not only once. Record each learner's specific gaps (letter sounds, blending, counting, operations).	Set assessment and review windows in the school calendar. Hold grade-level meetings to review results and assign learners to intervention groups.	Assessment tools, printing, a simple learner-gap tracker. Lead: Teachers; grade-level chairs; school head
2. Structured literacy sequence Themes: 2 (9/9), 6 (9/9)	Move from letters and sounds to syllables, words, and sentences (Marungko and Fuller as used by P5 and P6). Add word drills for three-letter syllables in Grade 2 and comprehension work with Phil-IRI passages in Grade 3.	Agree on a common literacy sequence for Grades 1 to 3 so remediation builds from one grade to the next. Provide model lessons or coaching.	Letter and syllable cards, big books, leveled passages. Lead: Teachers; master teachers
3. Concrete-to-abstract numeracy Themes: 3 (9/9), 5 (9/9), 6 (9/9)	Move from objects to pictures to numerals. Use manipulatives for counting, number recognition, and regrouping. Use familiar songs and play where they help (P3, P5).	Take stock of DepEd-provided manipulatives and organize shared sets per grade level.	Counters, blocks, number lines, locally sourced objects such as bottle caps and sticks. Lead: Teachers; school head
4. Differentiated groups and individual support Themes: 7 (8/9), 11 (6/9)	Group learners by level, give one-on-one coaching to non-readers and learners with numeracy gaps, and use peer tutoring and the reading corner.	Provide ready-to-use tiered activity sets to reduce individual teachers' preparation load. Organize a peer-tutoring scheme.	Leveled activity sets, printing and reproduction. Lead: Teachers; school head
5. Protected intervention time Themes: 8 (7/9), 10 (5/9), 23 (3/9)	Use short, regular blocks such as the daily 30-minute session and 15-minute morning catch-up described by P5, or the 30-minute remedial session described by P8. Be mindful that Grade 1 learners may be tired after a long day (P6).	Build an intervention block into the class program. Explore support staff and class-size options (P5).	Schedule adjustments; support staff; a suitable space. Lead: School head
6. Confidence and engagement Themes: 9 (5/9),	Start reading practice one-on-one before whole-class reading, celebrate small milestones, and use games, reading wheels, and	Encourage classroom practices that recognize progress. Share successful game-based and	Materials for games and multisensory tasks. Lead: Teachers

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13 (6/9), 16 (5/9), 18 (5/9)	multisensory tasks to re-engage tired or discouraged learners.	multisensory activities among teachers.	
7. Home and community partnership Themes: 14 (3/9), 19 (3/9), 24 (5/9)	Send home simple daily practice, such as words to review (P3). Use home visits and group chats to encourage follow-up (P5).	Offer parent orientation on supporting reading and numeracy at home. Strengthen ties with the barangay (P5). Consider parents' work schedules and financial limits (P6).	Simple take-home practice sets; communication channels. Lead: Teachers; school head; PTA; barangay
8. Teacher training and peer support Themes: 17 (8/9), 19 (3/9), 20 (6/9), 25 (3/9)	Train Grade 1 to 3 teachers on intervention strategies (P5), and create regular chances to share what works, even simple activities (P9*).	Use learning action cells or similar sessions on literacy and numeracy intervention. Give school-head support to teachers who are handling large gaps.	Training time and facilitators. Lead: School head; master teachers
9. Materials and resources Themes: 12 (4/9), 23 (3/9)	Ask for contextualized, sufficient materials (P5). Note that reports of availability are mixed (P3 and P5 versus P4 and P7).	Do an inventory of what is available before requesting more, so real gaps are clear. Provide continuous supply of contextualized materials.	Procurement, reproduction budget, storage. Lead: School head; division office

Note. The recommendations are proposals grounded in the teachers' accounts. Numbers in parentheses show how many of the nine participants supported each theme.

Table 10 shows nine areas of action, from early and regular assessment to materials and resources. Each area is tied to at least one theme, so that every recommendation traces back to what the teachers said. The recommendations are proposals to be refined with feedback from school leaders and practitioners and not finished policies.

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DISCUSSION

This section summarizes the principal findings and relates them to the theoretical framework and to the related literature and studies reviewed in the Introduction. It then discusses the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, the conclusions and recommendations, and the proposed outputs.

Summary of Principal Findings

Nine Grade 1 to 3 teachers at Bayview Elementary School described their experiences in addressing learners' basic literacy and numeracy gaps during the first trimester of School Year 2026–2027. Analysis through Colaizzi's method produced 144 significant statements, 55 open codes, and 25 themes across the five research questions.

Gaps observed (RQ1). Learners entered Grades 1 to 3 at widely varying levels because of differences in kindergarten preparation, early attendance, home support, and previous modular learning. Literacy difficulties progressed across the grades: Grade 1 teachers observed challenges in letter-sound recognition, blending, and pre-writing skills; Grade 2 teachers reported difficulties in forming whole words (particularly three-letter syllables) and reading simple sentences; and the Grade 3 teacher described reading comprehension gaps and non-readers. Numeracy gaps ranged from basic number recognition and counting to addition with regrouping, place value, basic operations, and simple word problem solving. The gaps were uneven across skills; for instance, subtraction was observed to be easier than addition with regrouping because of specific classroom routines. Teachers identified gaps using a combination of formal diagnostic tools (CRLA, RMA/MCRLA, Phil-IRI) and daily informal observation, recitation, and oral reading tests.

Interventions used (RQ2). All teachers used low-cost, tactile, visual, and multisensory materials, including flashcards, counters, blocks, picture clues, number lines, bottle caps, and sticks. They employed structured, scaffolded routines (for example, I do–you do–we do), moved from letter sounds to syllables to words, and used established methods such as the Marungko and Fuller approaches and CRA progressions. Instruction was adapted through ability grouping, individual coaching, peer-assisted learning, and reading corners. Teachers personally created intervention windows, such as daily 30-minute after-class sessions, 15-minute morning catch-up periods, and lunch-break practice, and they addressed learner anxiety by normalizing mistakes, starting practice one-on-one, and celebrating small milestones.

Challenges and successes (RQ3). Teachers were constrained by limited time, by wide learner diversity that made uniform instruction impossible and placed a heavy preparation load on them, and by uneven access to materials: DepEd provides manipulatives and standardized reading passages such as Phil-IRI, yet teachers still experienced gaps in specialized, contextualized materials and funding. Learner-related barriers included short attention spans, fatigue after a full school day, frustration, fear of making mistakes, forgetting, and absenteeism, and limited home follow-up was linked to parents' work and financial hardship. Successes were small and gradual gains in skills, such as non-readers advancing to decoding CVC words and simple sentences, accompanied by growth in learner enthusiasm, confidence, and willingness to participate.

Coping (RQ4). Teachers coped mainly by monitoring learner responses and adjusting strategies when an approach was ineffective, treating learning gaps as instructional mismatches rather than learner deficits; by countering fatigue and frustration through gamified activities, phonics games, reading wheels, and interactive tasks; and by relying on inner resilience, patience, perseverance, a positive mindset, and faith. A small subset sought collaboration with co-teachers, school heads, and parents through group chats and home visits.

Insights and recommendations (RQ5). The core insight was that every child progresses at an individual pace, requiring early identification, continuous progress monitoring, long-term patience, and regular celebration of small gains. Teachers recommended structured and protected intervention time, assigned support staff, continuous capacity building and strategy sharing, reduced class sizes, contextualized instructional materials, and active school–home–

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community (barangay) partnerships. The essence of the experience was patient, adaptive persistence. Differences between grades lay mainly in the specific gaps and in how time was arranged, while the toolkit and the lessons were shared across grades.

Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to Theory and Literature

RQ1: Gaps observed

All nine teachers reported both literacy and numeracy gaps, which supports the decision to study the two together. This is consistent with Chang's (2023) report of a relationship between early literacy skills and later mathematics achievement and with Jabanes and Futalan's (2025) finding of a relationship between literacy and numeracy difficulties. The literacy gaps the teachers described map onto the two components of the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986): decoding difficulties in Grades 1 and 2, and comprehension difficulties in Grade 3. The numeracy gaps map onto the strands of mathematical proficiency of the National Research Council (2001), with the teachers' accounts concentrating on counting, number recognition, and procedures, and on simple problem solving.

Theme 1. Teachers did not see learning gaps only as a failure to master grade-level content. They saw them as the product of earlier schooling, attendance, and home support. This is consistent with the RTI view that learners need different levels of support (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006) and with local findings that learner outcomes are influenced by access to materials, parental involvement, and socioeconomic conditions (Santiago & Mustacisa, 2024). P5's description of Grade 3 learners who were still non-readers suggests that gaps left unresolved in the early grades accumulate across the grades.

Theme 2. The gaps moved from letters and sounds in Grade 1, to word-building and sentence reading in Grade 2, to meaning-making in Grade 3. This is consistent with the Simple View of Reading, in which reading comprehension depends on both decoding and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), and agrees with earlier reports of decoding and comprehension difficulties among elementary learners (Duzon & Paragas, 2023).

Theme 3. The gaps ranged from basic number concepts to operations and problem solving, which correspond to the numeracy skills in the National Research Council's (2001) account of mathematical proficiency. That subtraction came more easily than regrouping in addition shows that learners' difficulties were uneven across skills, so teachers had to look at the specific skill and not only at the final answer. Talento (2024) likewise identified difficulties in number recognition, place value, and basic operations among elementary learners.

Theme 4. Teachers combined formal and informal evidence. This matches the emphasis of DepEd (2022) on using assessment information in planning learning recovery, and the view that assessment need not be limited to formal tests. That some teachers named standardized tools while others relied on observation alone suggests that the use of formal tools was uneven across classrooms.

RQ2: Interventions used

The teachers' toolkit of concrete materials, sequenced instruction, grouping, and extra time is consistent with the systematic and explicit instruction emphasized by Castles et al. (2018), with the structured interventions reported by Hall et al. (2023) and Dumamba-Salilama (2024), and with the use of manipulatives and contextualized instruction reported by Cocos (2025). The teachers' reliance on differentiation agrees with Diron and Baldonado (2025) and, in its attention to context, with Sardoma and Accad (2025). In terms of the RTI framework (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006), teachers carried out its core steps of identifying learners who need support, providing more focused help, and changing the approach when a learner did not respond. In the accounts gathered, however, they did so largely on their own initiative and not through a formal tiered structure.

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Theme 5. The shared toolkit shows that teachers across grades relied on materials that make abstract ideas visible and touchable. This agrees with the literature on the use of counters, blocks, and number lines to help learners see mathematical relationships, and with findings that manipulatives and contextualized instruction help learners with fractions and word problems (Cocos, 2025).

Theme 6. The step-by-step sequences reflect the structured, explicit teaching that Castles et al. (2018) and Dumamba-Salilama (2024) emphasized, and the concrete-to-abstract progression of the CRA approach. P6's explanation that the Marungko method introduces localized letter sounds before the full alphabet shows a teacher choosing a method for how well it fits learners' language context, in line with findings that instruction considering learners' language backgrounds supports literacy development (Casingal et al., 2025).

Theme 7. These practices correspond to what the RTI framework describes as providing different levels of support according to need, and to the use of small-group teaching, peer support, and guided practice discussed in the literature (DepEd, 2024). Diron and Baldonado (2025) reported that differentiated instruction can improve reading comprehension, and Sardoma and Accad (2025) found gains from reading models tailored to school context, which supports the teachers' reliance on adjusting instruction to learners and settings.

Theme 8. The remediation sessions were created from teachers' own time and breaks rather than from a formal schedule, which shows commitment and also the strain that remediation places on teachers. This is consistent with the observation in the literature that remediation requires additional planning, preparation, and monitoring on top of regular teaching duties.

Theme 9. Teachers treated confidence as part of the intervention and not as a by-product. Starting with one-on-one reading and praising small gains reduced the risk of embarrassment for learners who were already afraid of making mistakes (see Theme 13). The strategy echoes the idea of productive disposition in the National Research Council's (2001) account of mathematical proficiency, which includes learners' belief in their own efficacy, although the teachers applied it to reading as well as mathematics.

RQ3: Challenges and successes

The challenges of time, resources, learner diversity, and home support echo the constraints reported by Besoña (2025), Villamor and Arante (2022), Rivera (2022), and Santiago and Mustacisa (2024). The mixed reports on materials suggest that the problem may lie in access to suitable materials more than in their absence, which is consistent with Henkel et al. (2024) and Sari (2025), who emphasized that the success of teaching approaches depends on context, resources, and teacher readiness. The successes the teachers described were small and gradual, as the studies on targeted interventions would lead one to expect (Hall et al., 2023; Myers et al., 2022). What the present findings add is how those gains were experienced: as meaningful, and as inseparable from growth in confidence.

Theme 10. Time was the most concrete constraint, and it appeared in the same sentences as learner levels and resources, which shows that teachers experienced these as one bundle of constraints rather than as separate problems. This agrees with findings that the implementation of literacy and numeracy programs is affected by time and resources (Besoña, 2025).

Theme 11. Differentiation was both the solution and a burden. The same practice that made interventions responsive (Theme 7) demanded preparation time, which links this theme to Theme 10. Rivera (2022) similarly discussed the increased workload and complexity experienced by teachers during periods of educational disruption.

Theme 12. The mixed finding cautions against treating a lack of resources as a uniform problem. It points to the value of taking stock of what is already available before requesting more, a point taken up in the Administrative

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Recommendation Matrix. Villamor and Arante (2022) likewise reported limited resources and insufficient training as factors that affect consistent intervention.

Theme 13. These barriers explain why teachers valued playful and low-pressure approaches (Themes 9 and 18). They also show that intervention was shaped by learners' energy and emotions as well as by their skills. P6's observation that struggling Grade 1 learners were often too tired for remedial sessions suggests that the timing of intervention matters, a point carried into the recommendations.

Theme 14. P6 explained the limited follow-up in terms of parents' work and financial hardship, and P5 spoke of encouraging parents to provide follow-up activities (see also Theme 19). This agrees with studies linking learner outcomes to parental involvement and socioeconomic conditions (Santiago & Mustacisa, 2024), and with the literature noting that families differ in time, resources, and ability to give academic support.

Theme 15. Success was modest and gradual rather than dramatic, and as P7 said, it depended on consistency. This matches studies that reported positive results from structured, targeted interventions in reading and mathematics (Hall et al., 2023; Myers et al., 2022). P5's account of a learner moving from letter recognition to sentence reading in a few weeks is also consistent with the emphasis on structured intervention in decoding and fluency (Dumamba-Salilama, 2024).

Theme 16. For the teachers, success had two parts, skill and confidence, and the two were intertwined. Confidence built through safe practice (Theme 9) went together with improvement in reading, and small gains in confidence were treated as meaningful in themselves (see Theme 21).

RQ4: Coping

Teachers coped mostly through adjusting their approach, playful activities, and personal resources such as patience and faith, and only a few turned to colleagues, the school head, or parents. This contrasts with the collaboration among teachers, families, schools, and communities that Wolf et al. (2022) described, and it suggests that the support systems envisioned in national programs such as the ARAL Program (DepEd, 2024) were not yet strongly felt at the classroom level. Olabiyi et al. (2025) noted that the long-term success of national programs depends on consistent implementation and support, which is the same concern that the teachers voiced in their recommendations.

Theme 17. Adjustment was the most common coping response. It reflects the monitor-and-modify cycle of RTI, in which instruction is changed when a learner does not respond (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). P2's view that a learner's difficulty comes from needing a different way of learning, and not from a lack of capability, treats the gap as a mismatch of method rather than a deficit in the learner.

Theme 18. Playful activities were used to re-engage learners, which links this theme to the learner-related barriers of Theme 13. The literature reviewed noted that games, pictures, and interactive activities can make learners more comfortable with reading and encourage participation. Gigante (2024) found that phonics-based activities improved learner engagement, and Bangoy et al. (2024) highlighted the usefulness of audio-visual materials.

Theme 19. The pattern suggests that teachers relied heavily on their own flexibility and resilience, with limited use of formal support systems. This reading reflects what participants chose to mention in answering the question and was treated with caution. It contrasts with the emphasis of Wolf et al. (2022) on collaboration among teachers, families, schools, and communities, and with the attention of DepEd (2024) to capacity-building for teachers.

Theme 20. Patience, perseverance, and faith served as inner resources when external support was limited (Theme 19). Patience was among the words that recurred across interviews regardless of grade level, and it reappears in the shared lessons of Theme 21.

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RQ5: Insights and recommendations

The teachers' call for early identification, regular monitoring, protected time, partnership with parents and the community, and continuous training agrees with the priorities of DepEd's learning recovery efforts (DepEd, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025). It also turns the theoretical frameworks into practical terms: the RTI framework points to monitoring and responsive support, the Simple View of Reading to targeting the specific reading difficulty, and the Mathematical Proficiency Framework to attending to understanding and not only to answers.

Theme 21. This shared lesson summarizes the experience of the whole group. It is consistent with the RTI recognition that learners need different types and amounts of support, and with the finding of the studies reviewed that no single intervention works for every learner. Treating small gains as achievements shows how teachers sustained themselves in work where change is slow.

Theme 22. These recommendations match the emphasis of DepEd (2024) on identifying learners by their actual learning needs before intervention, and on progress monitoring. P9*'s remark that monitoring should not happen only once or at the end of the year implies a concern that monitoring may otherwise be occasional.

Theme 23. These recommendations are system-level and echo Themes 8, 10, and 12: the problems teachers met in practice were turned into requests for structural support. They agree with the observation of Olabiyi et al. (2025) that the long-term success of national reading programs depends on consistent implementation and support.

Theme 24. This recommendation mirrors Theme 14. Where teachers saw limited follow-up at home, they proposed shared responsibility rather than more demands on parents. Wolf et al. (2022) similarly found that collaboration among teachers, families, schools, and communities can give learners more consistent support.

Theme 25. The request for training and strategy sharing connects to Theme 19: if teachers coped mostly alone, structured chances to learn from one another may fill that gap. It is consistent with the attention of DepEd (2024) to capacity-building for teachers, and with Villamor and Arante (2022), who identified literacy and numeracy intervention as an area for teacher development.

Implications

The findings add a teacher-centered perspective to a literature that has focused mainly on learner outcomes. They suggest that effective intervention depends on the conditions that surround it, namely time, materials, training, and support, as much as on the strategies themselves. For school leaders, the main implication is that teachers' flexibility and goodwill cannot carry intervention alone and need to be matched by structures that protect time, supply suitable materials, and connect teachers with one another and with families.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The study drew on the experiences and perspectives of nine teachers at a single school, and it did not aim to generalize to all elementary teachers; transferability rests on the detailed description of the setting, participants, and context. The study did not statistically measure the effectiveness of interventions and used no pre-test and post-test comparisons, so the successes reported reflect teachers' own accounts. Grade 3 was represented by only one teacher, so Grade 3 findings and the Grade 3 column of the grade comparison are tentative. P6's recommendations were not captured because the answer to the final interview question ended mid-sentence; P8 offered lessons rather than explicit recommendations; and the transcript of P9 contained speech-to-text errors, so only clearly interpretable segments were coded. The views of learners, parents, and school heads were not gathered, and the observation that teachers coped mostly alone reflects what participants chose to mention in their answers. Finally, the Intervention Guide and the Administrative

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Recommendation Matrix are proposals grounded in teachers' accounts and remain to be refined with feedback from school leaders and practitioners.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. **Foundational gaps compound hierarchically.** Literacy and numeracy gaps in the early grades are cumulative. Unresolved letter-sound recognition and basic number concept difficulties in Grade 1 compound into severe decoding, computational, and comprehension deficits by Grade 3. Early diagnostic assessments (CRLA/RMA) combined with daily observation are critical for catching gaps before they compound.
2. **Pedagogical practice relies on adaptive flexibility.** Effective intervention relies on structured, scaffolded, and multisensory approaches (Marungko, Fuller, CRA, I do–you do–we do). Teachers who frame learning gaps as an instructional mismatch, rather than a learner deficit, are more adept at adjusting strategies to fit diverse learning needs.
3. **Intervention effort is sustained individually.** Teachers bear the primary operational and emotional burden of learning recovery. They carve out remediation time from their personal hours and rely heavily on personal resilience, patience, and improvised materials. Without structural support (protected time, dedicated staff, and class size adjustments), teacher-led intervention faces significant sustainability challenges.
4. **Learner confidence is integral to academic progress.** Addressing foundational gaps is as much an emotional process as a cognitive one. Reducing learner anxiety, providing safe one-on-one spaces, and praising small progress directly facilitate the acquisition of academic skills.
5. **Recovery requires a multi-system support ecosystem.** Classroom intervention cannot fully overcome gaps without external alignment. Sustainable learning recovery depends on institutionalized support schedules, continuous professional collaboration, and active partnership with parents and local community (barangay) stakeholders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

For school administrators and school heads.

- **Establish protected intervention windows.** Design class schedules that incorporate official, protected time for remediation (e.g., dedicated 30-minute daily catch-up blocks) so that teachers do not have to conduct interventions during lunch breaks or after school hours.
- **Implement administrative resource alignment.** Conduct school-level inventory audits to ensure equitable distribution of DepEd-provided manipulatives and reading kits (CRLA, Phil-IRI) across all K–3 classrooms.
- **Strengthen community and barangay partnerships.** Collaborate with local barangay leaders and community stakeholders to create community-based reading centers or quiet study spaces that assist working parents with home follow-up.

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For teachers.

- **Institutionalize early and continuous progress monitoring.** Conduct systematic diagnostic assessments at the start of the school year and implement simple weekly progress-tracking routines to modify interventions dynamically.
- **Integrate playful and low-pressure routines.** Use gamified activities (e.g., reading wheels, phonics games) and structured peer tutoring to reduce learner fatigue and maintain engagement during remediation.
- **Foster collaborative peer support.** Establish regular Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions to share successful localized teaching strategies, low-cost instructional materials, and classroom management techniques.

For parents and guardians.

- **Maintain consistent home practice routines.** Engage children in simple, daily 10-to-15-minute reading and counting activities (e.g., reading environmental print, counting household objects) to reinforce classroom lessons.
- **Enhance teacher–parent communication.** Maintain open lines of communication with teachers through parent–teacher conferences and class communication channels to monitor progress and attendance.

For the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Bataan and DepEd policymakers.

- **Provide targeted K–3 professional development.** Organize continuous training programs focusing on differentiated instruction, small-group management, CRA mathematics approaches, and localized literacy methods (Marungko/Fuller).
- **Consider structural staffing and class size policies.** Evaluate policy options for assigning learning support aides or teaching assistants to schools with high numbers of struggling learners, or reducing K–3 class sizes to optimize early-grade intervention.

For future researchers.

- **Expand sample and methodology.** Conduct broader mixed-methods or longitudinal studies across multiple schools and division levels to evaluate the quantitative impact of specific intervention models.
- **Include stakeholder perspectives.** Include the direct perspectives of school heads, parents, and learners to construct a holistic view of foundational learning recovery.

Proposed Outputs

To translate the phenomenological findings into practical, actionable tools, two outputs are proposed: the Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide (Table 11) and the Administrative Recommendation Matrix (Table 12).

Output 1: Proposed Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide

This guide synthesizes the practical classroom strategies, materials, and pedagogical routines identified by the participants into a structured framework for early-grade teachers.

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Table 11. Proposed Grade 1–3 Literacy and Numeracy Intervention Guide

Grade level	Targeted gap area	Recommended intervention strategy	Exemplar materials and methods	Session timing and routine
Grade 1	Letter-sound recognition, blending, basic counting	Localized phonics and tactile numeracy progression	• Marungko Method (localized sound-first approach) • Flashcards, picture clues • Real-life counters (bottle caps, sticks)	• Morning catch-up (15 mins) • Daily low-pressure sound drills • One-on-one letter tracing
Grade 2	Syllabication (3-letter syllables), sentence reading, addition with regrouping	Guided reading corners and CRA mathematics	• Syllable wheels, word drills • Structured routine (I do, you do, we do) • Concrete-Representational-Abstract (blocks to numerals)	• Small-group remediation (20–30 mins) • Differentiated reading groups • Hands-on math manipulation
Grade 3	Reading comprehension (Filipino/English), word problems, non-readers	Scaffolded passage reading and peer tutoring	• Phil-IRI passages, big books • High-performing peer buddies • Storytelling, guided questioning	• Post-class / dedicated block (30 mins) • Paired peer reading • Guided comprehension discussion

Output 2: Proposed Administrative Recommendation Matrix

This matrix addresses the operational, resource, and time constraints experienced by teachers by offering school-level administrative solutions aligned with teacher findings.

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Table 12. Proposed Administrative Recommendation Matrix

Identified teacher challenge	Classroom impact	Administrative action/policy recommendation	Resource/support required	Responsible party
Time constraints and schedule overlap	Remediation encroaches on personal breaks, lunch hours, or teacher preparation time.	Institutionalize a dedicated 30-minute school-wide daily reading and numeracy catch-up block into the master schedule.	Approved Master Class Program with protected intervention time.	School Principal, Master Teachers, Curriculum Coordinators
Burden of differentiated preparation	Teacher burnout from independently designing multi-level materials.	Organize Grade-Level LAC Sessions for collaborative material development and resource sharing.	DepEd-provided CRLA/RMA kits, digital material repositories.	School Head, Grade Level Chairs, K–3 Teachers
Learner fatigue and absenteeism	Struggling learners are too exhausted after regular class for late remediation.	Shift intervention schedules to morning catch-up slots and integrate gamified learning tasks.	Interactive activity sheets, phonics games, reading wheels.	Class Advisers, Subject Teachers
Limited home follow-up and support	Lack of skill reinforcement at home due to parents' working schedules.	Establish "Parent Literacy Orientations" and partner with the local Barangay to form Community Reading Spaces.	Simple home-reading activity cards, barangay facility partnership.	School Head, Guidance/Parent Coordinator, Barangay Officials
Need for strategy sharing and training	Teachers cope in isolation without a formal platform for pedagogical support.	Conduct targeted professional development workshops on CRA approaches and advanced diagnostic handling.	In-Service Training (INSET) budget, expert resource speakers.	—

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