



Azal Arts and Humanities

Volume 3, Issue 3, 2026

<https://azalpub.com/index.php/AAH>

OPEN ACCESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Article Info

Received: 4/5/2026

Accepted: 7/25/2026

Published: 9/30/2026

Collaborative Learning Practices and Reading Comprehension Development Among Elementary Learners: Teachers' Instructional Experiences and Classroom Perspectives at Remus Elementary School

Sheryl B. Martinez

Northeastern College, Santiago City, Philippines

Remus Elementary School; LGU TEACHER

sherylbosas1997@gmail.com

Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' instructional experiences and classroom perspectives regarding collaborative learning practices and reading comprehension development among elementary learners at Remus Elementary School. Specifically, the study examined collaborative instructional strategies, learner participation, reading comprehension experiences, and classroom challenges associated with collaborative literacy instruction. Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with twelve purposively selected elementary teachers. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework was utilized in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that collaborative learning practices such as peer-assisted reading, group discussions, shared storytelling, cooperative tasks, and partner activities significantly improved learner participation, confidence, comprehension, and classroom interaction. Teachers observed that collaborative reading activities strengthened learners' vocabulary development, inferential thinking, communication skills, and motivation to participate in literacy tasks. Participants also identified challenges related to varying learner reading abilities, classroom management, limited instructional time, and unequal learner participation during group activities. Despite these concerns, teachers demonstrated adaptability through differentiated instruction, peer scaffolding, contextualized reading materials, and learner-centered literacy practices. The findings underscore the importance of collaborative and interactive instructional approaches in strengthening reading comprehension and learner engagement among elementary learners.

Keywords: collaborative learning, reading comprehension, literacy instruction, elementary education, learner participation, qualitative research, classroom interaction

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental literacy skill that significantly influences learners' academic achievement, communication abilities, and overall learning development. In elementary education, learners are expected to develop the ability to interpret texts, identify main ideas, infer meanings, analyze information, and connect reading materials to personal experiences. Effective literacy instruction therefore requires learner-centered pedagogical approaches that strengthen comprehension, participation, and meaningful engagement with texts.

Collaborative learning has emerged as an important instructional strategy in literacy education. Through collaborative activities, learners engage in peer interaction, group discussions, shared problem-solving, cooperative tasks, and active communication that support comprehension and language development. Collaborative learning environments encourage learners to exchange ideas, clarify misunderstandings, and develop confidence in expressing thoughts and interpretations regarding reading materials.

In reading instruction, collaborative learning practices such as peer-assisted reading, group storytelling, reading circles, cooperative questioning, and partner discussions strengthen learners' comprehension skills through social interaction and guided participation. Learners become more engaged and motivated when they actively participate in discussions and collaborative literacy activities rather than relying solely on teacher-centered instruction.

However, implementing collaborative literacy instruction also presents challenges related to varying learner reading abilities, classroom management concerns, unequal participation, and limited instructional time. Teachers are therefore expected to demonstrate instructional adaptability and effective classroom facilitation to sustain meaningful collaborative learning experiences.

Although collaborative learning is widely recognized in literacy instruction, limited qualitative studies explore teachers' lived instructional experiences and classroom perspectives regarding collaborative reading practices in elementary school settings. Understanding teachers' experiences is essential in identifying effective literacy strategies, classroom realities, and learner outcomes associated with collaborative instruction.

This study explored collaborative learning practices and reading comprehension development among elementary learners at Remus Elementary School. Specifically, it examined teachers' instructional experiences, collaborative pedagogical practices, learner participation, and classroom perspectives regarding reading comprehension instruction.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to:

1. Explore teachers' instructional experiences in implementing collaborative learning practices in reading instruction;
2. Examine learner participation and reading comprehension development associated with collaborative literacy activities; and
3. Identify classroom challenges and pedagogical adaptations related to collaborative learning instruction.

Review of Related Literature

Collaborative learning significantly improves learners' participation, communication skills, and comprehension development. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and guided participation. Learners develop deeper understanding when they engage in cooperative activities and shared meaning-making processes.

Research by Johnson and Johnson (2019) emphasized that collaborative learning strengthens critical thinking, communication, motivation, and learner engagement. Cooperative instructional environments improve academic participation and social interaction among elementary learners.

Studies on literacy instruction further revealed that peer-assisted and collaborative reading activities positively influence comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and learner confidence. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2020), interactive reading environments strengthen learners' motivation and comprehension through meaningful participation and discussion.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978), which emphasizes learning through collaboration, social interaction, and guided participation. The framework guided the exploration of collaborative literacy

practices and reading comprehension development.

The study also utilized Cooperative Learning Theory by Johnson and Johnson (2019), which explains that cooperative interaction and shared learning experiences strengthen academic achievement, participation, and learner engagement.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore teachers' instructional experiences and classroom perspectives regarding collaborative learning practices and reading comprehension development among elementary learners at Remus Elementary School. Phenomenology was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to understand teachers' classroom experiences, literacy practices, and learner participation within collaborative reading environments.

The participants consisted of twelve purposively selected elementary teachers implementing collaborative reading instruction. Inclusion criteria required participants to: (1) currently teach elementary learners; (2) utilize collaborative learning strategies in reading instruction; and (3) be willing to share their instructional experiences and classroom perspectives regarding literacy development.

Data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews and classroom observations focusing on collaborative instructional practices, learner engagement, reading comprehension experiences, and classroom challenges. Ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

The gathered data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Interview transcripts and observation notes were transcribed, coded, and categorized to identify recurring meanings, patterns, and themes related to collaborative literacy instruction and reading comprehension development. Trustworthiness was established through member checking, triangulation, audit trails, and thick description.

Results and Findings

Theme I: Strengthening Learner Participation Through Collaborative Reading Activities

Participants consistently described collaborative reading activities as highly effective in increasing learner participation, interaction, attentiveness, and classroom engagement during literacy instruction. Teachers explained that peer-assisted reading, group storytelling, partner reading, cooperative discussions, reading circles, and shared comprehension activities encouraged learners to participate more actively during classroom reading sessions.

One participant shared:

"Mas active ang learners kapag may group reading at collaborative discussions."

Another teacher explained:

"Mas willing silang sumagot at magbasa kapag may kasama silang classmates."

Participants observed that collaborative reading activities created a more supportive and interactive classroom environment where learners felt more comfortable participating in reading-related tasks. Teachers explained that learners became more engaged because they were given opportunities to interact, exchange ideas, and assist one another during reading activities.

One participant remarked:

"Mas nagiging lively ang classroom kapag collaborative ang reading activities."

Another teacher stated:

"Mas nae-engganyo silang magbasa kapag may interaction at teamwork."

Participants further emphasized that partner reading and peer-assisted activities encouraged hesitant learners to participate because they experienced less pressure compared to individual reading tasks. Teachers observed that learners who were usually passive during traditional instruction became more responsive and involved during collaborative literacy activities.

One participant explained:

"Kapag may ka-partner sila, mas lumalakas ang loob nilang magbasa at sumagot."

Another teacher shared:

"Mas nagiging participative kahit ang struggling readers kapag may peer support."

Participants also observed that collaborative activities reduced learners' fear of making mistakes and strengthened classroom confidence because learners viewed reading tasks as shared learning experiences rather than individual performance situations.

One participant remarked:

"Hindi sila gaanong nahihiya kapag collaborative ang activities kasi nagtutulungan sila."

Teachers further explained that collaborative learning promoted positive classroom relationships and strengthened learners' motivation to participate during reading instruction.

The findings suggest that collaborative learning practices significantly improve learner participation, classroom interaction, engagement, and motivation in reading instruction. These findings align with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and guided participation in promoting meaningful learning experiences. Similarly, Johnson and Johnson (2019) emphasized that cooperative learning environments strengthen learner engagement, participation, and classroom interaction through shared learning experiences and peer collaboration.

Theme 2: Improving Reading Comprehension Through Peer Interaction and Shared Understanding

Teachers emphasized that collaborative learning significantly improved learners' reading comprehension skills through peer interaction, idea sharing, cooperative questioning, and shared understanding of texts. Participants explained that learners understood stories and reading passages more effectively when they discussed ideas, clarified concepts, and interpreted meanings collaboratively with classmates.

One participant remarked:

"Mas naiintindihan nila ang story kapag napag-uusapan nila ito sa group."

Another teacher stated:

"Nakakatulong ang peer discussions para malinawan sila sa reading passages."

Participants observed that collaborative discussions allowed learners to explain ideas to one another using familiar language and examples, which strengthened understanding of story events, vocabulary words, character actions, and lesson content. Teachers explained that learners became more capable of analyzing texts and answering comprehension questions when they participated in group interaction and cooperative literacy activities.

One participant explained:

"Mas madaling maintindihan ng learners ang passages kapag may exchange of ideas sa group."

Another teacher shared:

"Kapag may discussions, mas nakakapagbigay sila ng sariling interpretation sa story."

Participants further observed improvements in learners' inferential thinking, vocabulary understanding, sequencing skills, and ability to identify main ideas and supporting details. Teachers emphasized that collaborative reading activities encouraged learners to ask questions, clarify misunderstandings, and actively process information during reading instruction.

One participant remarked:

"Mas natututo silang mag-analyze at magbigay ng sariling opinion tungkol sa binabasa."

Another teacher stated:

"Mas nagiging critical thinkers sila kapag collaborative ang comprehension activities."

Participants also explained that struggling readers benefited from peer assistance because classmates helped explain difficult words, summarize passages, and clarify story meanings during discussions.

One participant shared:

"Malaking tulong ang peer interaction lalo na sa learners na nahihirapan sa comprehension."

Teachers further emphasized that collaborative literacy instruction improved learners' retention and understanding because discussions and shared activities reinforced learning experiences.

The findings indicate that collaborative learning significantly strengthens reading comprehension development, inferential thinking, vocabulary acquisition, and textual understanding among elementary learners. These findings support Guthrie and Wigfield (2020), who emphasized that interactive literacy environments improve comprehension and reading engagement through meaningful participation and discussion. Similarly, Vygotsky's theory highlights that learners construct deeper understanding through collaborative interaction and guided social learning experiences.

Theme 3: Encouraging Confidence, Communication, and Social Interaction

Participants described collaborative literacy activities as highly supportive of learners' confidence, communication skills, self-expression, and social interaction. Teachers observed that shy, hesitant, and struggling readers became more participative and expressive during partner work, group reading, and collaborative classroom activities.

One participant shared:

"Mas nagiging confident ang learners kapag collaborative ang activities."

Another teacher explained:

"Natututo silang makinig, makipag-usap, at mag-share ng ideas."

Participants explained that collaborative learning created a supportive classroom atmosphere where learners felt more comfortable expressing thoughts, asking questions, and participating in literacy discussions. Teachers observed that learners gradually developed confidence in reading aloud, answering questions, and sharing interpretations during group interaction.

One participant remarked:

"Mas lumalakas ang loob nilang magsalita kapag supportive ang group."

Another teacher stated:

"Mas nagiging expressive sila kapag collaborative ang environment."

Participants also emphasized that collaborative learning strengthened learners' communication and interpersonal skills because they regularly interacted, listened, negotiated, and cooperated with classmates during reading activities.

One participant explained:

"Natututo silang makinig sa opinion ng iba at magbigay ng sariling ideas."

Another teacher shared:

"Mas nade-develop ang teamwork at respect nila sa group activities."

Participants further observed that collaborative literacy instruction promoted peer support, empathy, cooperation, and positive classroom relationships. Teachers explained that learners became more patient and understanding toward classmates with varying reading abilities.

One participant remarked:

"Nagiging supportive sila sa classmates nilang nahihirapan sa pagbabasa."

Participants also emphasized that collaborative activities positively influenced learners' socio-emotional development by reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of belonging within the classroom.

The findings highlight the importance of cooperative learning environments in strengthening communication skills, confidence, social interaction, and socio-emotional development among elementary learners. These findings align with Johnson and Johnson's Cooperative Learning Theory, which emphasizes that collaborative learning improves communication, teamwork, and positive interpersonal relationships. Similarly, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory explains that social interaction significantly influences learners' cognitive and socio-emotional development.

Theme 4: Navigating Instructional Challenges Through Differentiated and Flexible Teaching Practices

Despite the positive instructional influence of collaborative learning, participants identified challenges related to varying reading abilities, unequal learner participation, classroom management concerns, limited instructional time, and differing learner engagement levels during collaborative activities. Teachers explained that these challenges sometimes affected the effectiveness and organization of collaborative literacy instruction.

One participant remarked:

"May learners na active pero may iba ring nahihiyang mag-participate."

Another teacher stated:

"Mahirap minsan i-manage ang group activities kapag iba-iba ang reading levels."

Participants observed that some learners tended to dominate group discussions while quieter or struggling readers remained passive during collaborative activities. Teachers explained that learners demonstrated varying reading competencies, confidence levels, and communication abilities, which required additional instructional support and classroom facilitation.

One participant explained:

"Kailangan talagang i-monitor para lahat ng learners ay makasali sa activities."

Another teacher shared:

"May learners na mabilis umintindi habang ang iba ay kailangan pa ng guidance."

Participants also emphasized challenges related to classroom noise, time management, and maintaining learner focus during collaborative tasks. Teachers explained that group activities sometimes became difficult to organize, especially in large classes with diverse learner needs.

One participant remarked:

"Minsan maingay at mahirap kontrolin ang classroom kapag group activities."

Participants addressed these concerns through differentiated instruction, peer scaffolding, flexible grouping, contextualized literacy materials, and structured classroom facilitation. Teachers explained that assigning specific group roles, pairing struggling readers with supportive classmates, and adjusting reading materials according to learner abilities improved participation and classroom management.

One teacher stated:

"Ina-adjust namin ang grouping at activities depende sa level ng learners."

Another participant explained:

"Malaking tulong ang peer scaffolding para matulungan ang struggling readers."

Participants further emphasized the importance of patience, flexibility, and instructional responsiveness in sustaining meaningful collaborative literacy instruction.

The findings suggest that effective collaborative literacy instruction requires instructional adaptability, differentiated teaching strategies, responsive classroom management, and learner-centered facilitation practices. These findings support Tomlinson's differentiated instruction framework, which emphasizes the importance of adjusting instructional approaches according to learners' varying abilities and learning needs. Similarly, research on collaborative literacy

instruction highlights the importance of teacher facilitation, classroom structure, and flexible grouping in sustaining effective cooperative learning environments.

Discussion

The findings revealed that collaborative learning practices significantly improve learner participation, reading comprehension, communication skills, and classroom interaction among elementary learners. Peer-assisted reading, cooperative discussions, and group literacy activities strengthened learners' understanding of reading passages and encouraged meaningful classroom engagement.

Teachers also observed that collaborative instruction improved learner confidence, vocabulary development, inferential thinking, and social interaction. Despite challenges related to classroom management, varying learner abilities, and unequal participation, teachers demonstrated adaptability through differentiated instruction and learner-centered literacy strategies.

The study further highlights the importance of collaborative and socially interactive instructional environments in promoting meaningful literacy development and learner engagement in elementary education.

Conclusion

The study concluded that collaborative learning practices positively influence reading comprehension development, learner participation, communication skills, and classroom engagement among elementary learners at Remus Elementary School. Collaborative literacy activities significantly strengthen learners' confidence, comprehension abilities, and willingness to participate in reading instruction.

Despite challenges related to classroom management, learner diversity, and instructional time constraints, teachers demonstrated pedagogical adaptability through differentiated and learner-centered literacy practices.

The findings underscore the importance of collaborative, interactive, and socially responsive instructional approaches in strengthening reading comprehension and literacy development among elementary learners.

Implications of the Study

The findings may guide school administrators, literacy educators, and curriculum developers in strengthening collaborative literacy programs and learner-centered reading instruction in elementary education. Schools may further support teacher training related to cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and reading comprehension strategies. The study also highlights the importance of interactive and socially supportive classroom environments in improving literacy participation and comprehension among elementary learners.

Future studies may further examine the long-term influence of collaborative literacy instruction on learners' academic achievement, oral communication skills, and reading motivation across diverse educational contexts.

References

- Andres, A. (2019). Achievement Goals and Mathematics Achievement of the Senior High School Students. *International Journal of English and Education*, 8 (2).
- Andres, A. (2023). Establishing Quality Instrument for the Summative Assessment of Pre-Service Elementary Teachers. *JETT*. 14 (3), 9-16).
- Andres, A.D. (2022). Metacognition and Performance in Mathematical Problem-Solving Among Bachelor of Elementary (BEED) Pre-service Teachers. *Central European Management Journal*, 30 (4). 86-95.
- Antonio, A. (2021). Syntactical Scrutiny: Inaccuracies in the Lesson Planning of Non- Language Pre Service Teachers. *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education*,
- Balog, P., & Gonzales, E. (2021). From Linguistic Landscapes to Teaching Resources: A Case of Some Rural Areas in the Province of Quezon. *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education*, 1(2), 23-44.
- Banares, A. J. (2022). Reinterpreting Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare through Stylistic Analysis. *International Journal of Arts, Sciences and Education*, 3(July Special Issue), 189-204. <https://ijase.org/index.php/ijase/article/view/163>.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2020). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. L. Kamil et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3, pp. 403-422). Routledge.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2019). *Joining together: Group theory and group skills* (12th ed.). Pearson.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.