

# Teachers' Innovative Reading Strategies and Learners' Literacy Skill

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## **Abstract**

This study examined teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills in the School District of Dumangas II, Iloilo, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it aimed to describe the profile of Grade 1 to Grade 3 teachers, determine the extent of their use of innovative reading strategies, assess the level of learners' literacy skills, test differences across selected profile variables, and determine the relationship between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills. The respondents consisted of 62 elementary teachers selected through purposive sampling. A researcher-developed questionnaire that was validated by experts and pilot-tested yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.822, indicating acceptable reliability. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, rank, Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis H test, and Spearman's rho at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that most teachers were 40 years old and below, held bachelor's degrees, occupied Teacher I–III positions, taught in small schools, and were evenly distributed across Grades 1 to 3. Overall, teachers' innovative reading strategies registered a high level of implementation, with the strongest emphasis on the integration of songs, rhymes, and chants, as well as the use of technology, while differentiated instruction received the lowest mean. Learners' literacy skills were at the Approaching Mastery level, with only minimal variations across profile groups. No significant differences were found in teachers' innovative reading strategies or learners' literacy skills when grouped according to profile variables. However, a moderate positive and significant relationship was found between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills, indicating that increased use of innovative strategies is associated with improved literacy outcomes. The study highlights the importance of sustaining and enhancing innovative, learner-centered reading instruction to further improve literacy achievement.

**Keywords:** Innovative Reading Strategies, Literacy Skill, Elementary Learners

## **Introduction**

Reading is a fundamental skill that greatly influences learners' academic achievement and lifelong learning, particularly during the early grades. In primary education, the development of literacy skills—such as phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—is crucial, as these competencies serve as the foundation for all future learning. Teachers play a central role in nurturing these skills through the use of effective and innovative reading strategies that respond to learners' varying abilities and learning contexts (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Innovative reading strategies refer to creative, learner-centered, and research-based instructional approaches that aim to increase learner engagement and improve reading performance. These strategies include phonics-based instruction, guided reading, interactive read-alouds, differentiated instruction, and the integration of multimedia and contextualized learning materials. Studies have shown that teachers who consistently apply innovative reading strategies are more successful in improving learners' literacy skills, especially among beginning readers in Grades 1 to 3 (Pressley, 2006; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2017).

Learners' literacy development is influenced not only by instructional strategies but also by teachers' pedagogical competence and responsiveness to learners' reading levels. Effective reading instruction enhances comprehension, critical thinking, and motivation, all of which are essential for sustained literacy growth (Duke & Pearson, 2002). In the Philippine context, the Department of Education places strong emphasis on early literacy through initiatives aligned with the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) framework, underscoring the need for innovative classroom practices to address persistent reading difficulties among young learners.

Despite these efforts, challenges in early literacy remain evident in many public elementary schools. Hence, this study examined the relationship between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills among 62 Grade 1 to 3 teachers in the School District of Dumangas II, Iloilo, during School Year 2025–2026. The findings aim to provide empirical evidence that may serve as a basis for strengthening reading instruction and improving early literacy outcomes.

This study specifically sought to determine the level of teachers' innovative reading strategies in terms of phonics-based instruction, guided reading, interactive read-alouds, differentiated instruction, and the use of instructional materials; assess learners' literacy skills in terms of phonemic awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension; and identify whether a significant relationship exists between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills. The results are intended to support improvements in reading instruction, teacher training programs, and early literacy initiatives in public elementary schools.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive–correlational research design to determine the relationship between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills. The respondents consisted of 62 Grade 1 to Grade 3 elementary teachers from public schools in the School District of Dumangas II, Iloilo, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Total enumeration was used, as the number of Grade 1 to 3 teachers in the district was manageable, allowing all eligible teachers to participate.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed survey questionnaire adapted from related studies and aligned with the objectives of the research. The instrument consisted of two main sections: teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills as perceived by the teachers. The questionnaire underwent content validation by experts in reading and literacy education and was pilot-tested to establish reliability prior to its administration.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills, while Spearman's rho correlation was employed to determine the relationship between the two variables. Ethical

considerations were strictly observed throughout the study, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of responses.

## Results

The profile of the 62 Grade 1 to 3 elementary teachers showed that more than half were 40 years old and below, while the rest were above 40 years old. Most teachers held bachelor's degrees, occupied Teacher I–III positions, and were assigned to small schools. Teachers were evenly distributed across Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3.

Overall, teachers' innovative reading strategies obtained a high level of implementation, with a grand mean of 4.17. The integration of songs, rhymes, and chants ranked highest, followed by the use of technology in reading instruction. Storytelling and interactive read-alouds also received high ratings, while differentiated instruction ranked lowest, though it still fell within the high level.

Learners' literacy skills recorded an overall mean score of 78.0, interpreted as Approaching Mastery. Literacy scores showed minimal variation across teacher profile variables, indicating relatively consistent learner performance regardless of age, educational attainment, position, grade level taught, or school size.

Results of the Mann–Whitney U test and Kruskal–Wallis H test revealed no significant differences in teachers' innovative reading strategies or learners' literacy skills when grouped according to profile variables. Correlation analysis using Spearman's rho revealed a moderate positive and significant relationship between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills, suggesting that increased use of innovative strategies is associated with better literacy performance.

## Discussion

The high level of implementation of innovative reading strategies indicates that teachers in the School District of Dumangas II actively employ creative and learner-centered approaches in early reading instruction. The frequent use of songs, rhymes, chants, and technology reflects teachers' awareness of the importance of engaging and interactive methods in developing phonological awareness and motivation among young learners. Although differentiated instruction ranked lowest, its high rating suggests that teachers continue to address individual learner differences despite constraints such as time, class size, and limited instructional resources.

Learners' literacy skills being at the Approaching Mastery level indicate that learners have acquired foundational reading competencies but still require continued instructional support to reach full mastery. The absence of significant differences across teacher profile variables suggests consistency in instructional practices across the district, possibly due to shared curricular standards and professional development programs. The significant positive relationship between teachers' innovative reading strategies and learners' literacy skills highlights the critical role of innovative teaching practices in improving literacy outcomes and underscores the need to sustain and further enhance such strategies.

## Conclusions

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

Most Grade 1 to 3 teachers in the School District of Dumangas II are young, hold bachelor's degrees, occupy

Teacher I–III positions, and are assigned to small schools, indicating a relatively uniform teacher profile. Teachers’ innovative reading strategies are implemented at a high level, with strong emphasis on songs, rhymes, chants, and the use of technology, reflecting a commitment to learner-centered instruction.

Learners’ literacy skills are at the Approaching Mastery level, suggesting the need for continued instructional support to achieve full mastery.

There are no significant differences in teachers’ innovative reading strategies or learners’ literacy skills across teacher profile variables, indicating consistent reading instruction practices within the district.

A moderate positive and significant relationship exists between teachers’ innovative reading strategies and learners’ literacy skills, confirming that greater use of innovative strategies contributes to better literacy outcomes.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Teachers: Continue and expand the use of innovative reading strategies, particularly differentiated instruction, to better address diverse learner needs.

For School Administrators: Provide continuous professional development programs focusing on innovative reading strategies, instructional technology, and effective classroom practices.

For the District Office: Ensure the availability of instructional materials, reading resources, and technological tools to support interactive and learner-centered reading instruction.

For Future Research: Conduct longitudinal or experimental studies to examine the long-term impact of innovative reading strategies on learners’ literacy development.

For Policymakers: Formulate policies that promote continuous teacher training and the integration of innovative instructional approaches in early-grade reading programs.

## References

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