



CATCH-UP FRIDAY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM: A READING PROFICIENCY

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Abstract

The "Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program" (CuFEP) faces challenges in addressing reading comprehension and critical thinking among Grade 10 students. The 3Rs were introduced in the CuFEP module. Using different strategies, issues were uncovered, including engagement, access to resources, and outdated materials. Improved support systems can address attendance, motivation, and cooperation, fostering a dynamic classroom experience and empowering students to reach their full potential.

Keywords: *Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program*

Introduction

The Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program in Balubal, Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao Philippines was designed to those pupils who are functionally literary challenged (Gomez et al., 2025a). And, the result would become the eye opener for the educators, school administrator and policymakers for social legislation. The government efforts to improve literacy rates in the Philippines, particularly in the countryside revealed that pupils need help for reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and critical thinking skills (Terry, 2024).

In connection to the aforementioned, the MATATAG Agenda was launched as the new direction of the Department of Education (DepEd) towards improving the quality of basic education in the country. Although, this is the national program translated by the local initiative to reach-out concern on the ground. Thus, the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program anchored therein as a remedial recourse to those academically prioritized, urgently and emergency concern for key reform agenda of the program (Gomez et al., 2025b). To help attain the commitments of the National Government as articulated in the MATATAG Agenda, DepEd has adopted DepEd Order (DO) No. 013, s. 2023, on the adoption of the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP) in the Department of Education. And, this was translated to the different government initiatives. This includes the implementation of the revised curriculum, otherwise known as the MATATAG Curriculum (DepEd Memorandum No. 54, series of 2023). And, this has been done not only to address a few of the academic needs of the pupils but also in the holistic approach addressing the nationwide education concern both spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social well-being of the pupils.

Following the implementation of the National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP), there has been an increased focus on values, health, and peace education. The emphasis on values education, as outlined in Republic Act (RA) No. 11476, also referred to as the Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education Act, remains central. Acknowledging the significant contribution of the youth in nation-building. And, this law highlighted the necessity of cultivating positive values among students based on the tenet that “*character is above all competency.*” Meaning, the 3Rs program initiated within the Catch-up Friday Enhancement Program would become unlikely when values system within the character build-up would not be mechanized by attitude to productivity (Gomez et al., 2025c).

Furthermore, the urgency for peace education has been emphasized by the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results, which highlighted again the persistence of bullying in public schools. Thus, GMRC (attitude) was set-aside by competence (Gomez et al., 2022). Filipino pupils are encouraged to develop peace competencies, empowering them to become advocates for peace education in their own communities yet the shadow of cruelty beseech. Additionally, health education is receiving increased attention to ensure the well-being of the pupils in the nation-building process (DepEd Memorandum No. 001, series of 2024). Thus, to develop good character (attitude), we build a cathedral of competent citizenry in nation-building by allowing the 3Rs initiative to run the system in mechanizing other program to run effectively by humanizing the curriculum according to the culture of the pupils.

With that argument above the vital role of the 3Rs (**R**eading, **wR**iting and **aR**ithmetic) in academia asserts’ that 3Rs goes beyond hobby and skills (Requiso et al., 2022). It is a crucial prerequisite for active participation in a social development and nation-building endeavors where individual person played a vital role. Their argument hinges on the idea that 3Rs is the gateway or gate-guard in acquiring tacit knowledge. They contend that reading is indispensable for both mental, intellectual and cultural enrichment, serving as a cornerstone or building bloc on human existence in the contemporary world of communication (Gomez et al., 2023).

Thus, the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program becomes the flagship on the 3Rs pupil’s daily activity plan, noting roughly 85% of their daily tasks on 3Rs in moving-up (Acedillo, 2023). This statistic underscores the central role of 3Rs, illustrating its importance not only in educational settings but also in the routine of everyday activities. Consequently, 3Rs emerges as a crucial activity, indispensable for both academic endeavors and navigating the intricacies of contemporary existence in the action and interaction of the members in a just and humane society.

Arguably, 3Rs really important to the pupils in getting them better and good communicator in the class, in the family and in the community (Tomas et al., 2021). As reading is important skill for learning it also becomes the gateway on comprehension, analytical, critical and reflective thinking. Though, we know 3Rs took a longwinded process, DepEd schools still struggling in this challenged (Gomez, 2021). Being able to 3Rs the pupil skills practice allows them do better in their own selves, in the family, in the community and for the country (Deluao et al., 2022). And, this would serve them as a little light that will guide them for self-liberation from illiteracy.

Thus, at Balubal National High School, there's a noticeable issue: it has empirically and phenomenologically observed that some of the pupils have low reading proficiency levels. To tackle this problem, a study was conducted to know the student’s observation on the Catch-Up Friday’s Enhancement Program. By examining the current state of reading comprehension and the educational initiatives led by the Department of Education (DepEd). The study aimed to highlight

the crucial role of reading as a foundational skill for lifelong learning and success in school. Additionally, it aimed to leverage the implementation of Catch Up Fridays Enhancement Program as an urgent measure to enhance students' 3Rs abilities by bridging learning gaps (Gomez, 2025d). Through this research, the aim was to empowering students to become competent, engaged, and responsible citizens equipped with the necessary skills to thrive in today's rapidly changing world. And, allowing them to be competitive in the glocalizing (Global and Local) world of competency.

Methods

The primary data collection method used in this study was a simple phenomenological, ethnographic and anecdotal recording. It has triangulated with the things done by the teacher, student and parents. A flexible framework for gathering in-depth information from the participants was made through simple FGD and conversational dialogue to the participant as participant observer.

The research focused on exploring the Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program in Balubal National High School, Philippines, using open-ended questions to gather insights from pupils, teachers, and parents. The study involved ten Grade 10 students selected based on academic achievements and performance, with the lowest ranked students chosen to help address the program's mission of "No One Left Behind"(NOLB).

Lastly, the study involved recording phenomenological, ethnographic, and anecdotal behavior over 18 months, ensuring accuracy and validity. Documents were tabulated and interpreted, and privacy acts and laws were religiously observed using the IREB (Institutional Review Ethical Board). And, the data were thematically tabulated from the participants, main-themes, sub-themes and significant statement that lead to answer the research problem. And, the study revealed the following findings:

Results and Discussions

Pupil's observation regarding on the Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program. The Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program has received a mixed reaction from the pupils. They appreciated the program, finding revealed on improving their *reading comprehension, critical thinking, self-expression*, and *adds workload stress*. Thus, the following main themes were phenomenologically observed:

Reading Comprehension. This theme applies in the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program as the ability to understand the one that is written, read and mathematically operated by the participant pupils in the 3Rs Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program. Thus, participants stated their observation to wit and said:

.... Ang Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program nga klase nakatabang sa akong pagbasa, pagsabot sa akoang gibasa, ug pirmi nga pagpraktis sa gihatag nga dedikadong oras matag semana. Ug tungud kay naka kat-un ako sa pagbasa madali nalang kanako ma sabut ang akong gi basa labi na kung ang mga pulong nga kasagara gamiton matagaan sa iyang englis nga hubad ngadto sa bisaya nga pinulungan ug malipayon ako."

.... (The Catch-Up Friday Enhancement program class had helped me with my reading, and understand what I read, and constant practice during the dedicated time given to me every week. And, because I learn to read, it is easy now for me to

understand about what I have read especially on the usage of the word being translated into auxiliary language and I am happy)

The theme above elicited a range of responses from pupils, with diverged opinions emerging among participants which boils down on the language scaffolding. This would mean further that while the auxiliary language is used being the facility of communication it must be utilized in partnership to the foreign tongue English in the school-based communication (Gomez, 2025e). Pupil express gratitude for the program engaged by the teacher acknowledging its positive responses on their reading skills and comprehension because phenomenologically observed teachers and pupils are using Multilanguage-based in the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program.

The rigid role of reading schedule in daily activities learners engage in reading approximately higher than 85% of the tasks they undertake each day yielded likelihood and was supported by the findings of Acedillo (2023). Thus, it was phenomenologically observed also that reading holds more than its importance in pupil's educational journey. Serving as the cornerstone of language proficiency and a fundamental skill was made essential for classroom success (Tomas et al., 2021). And, it was also farther observed that the facility of communication can only become effective when the vocabulary power increases then pupils talk descriptively and inferentially.

Thus, it was seen during the phenomenological observation engaged on 3Rs found out beyond essentiality as they utilized this in their everyday walks of life. Thus, confirmed by the participant and said,

... "di man gud ko maka sabut dayon peru tugud kay maka hubad man ko ug binisaya ngadto sa eningles masayon nalang naku dayun e estorya sa iningles nga adunay unud."

(I cannot understand immediately but because I can translate the auxiliary (bisaya) language into English it is easy for me to talk in English which has meaning)

Critical thinking. From the eye of the participant observer and the pupil participants the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program, is the ability to analyze information objectively. As phenomenologically observed pupils need enough time to perform their given task. So, in order to harness their hidden talents, skills and potentialities, "time" element must be given to the pupil in a flexible manner. As observed, during the period of the study, when the teacher facilitated the activity on 3Rs; Multilanguage is utilized as facility in the communication. They perform high and enhances their critical mind when the teacher coined the English terms into auxiliary language. That means, their critical thinking come-out when lessons drawn out from their level of thinking and experiences when given enough "time." Thus, the participant pupils said:

... lahi lagi ang pamaagi ni teacher sa among pagklase sa among subject nga gi kuha sa panahon sa tingklase dili lagi pariha karon sa Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program nga sayon ra lagi ug dili pa gyud me ma dali-dali ug ma perihisyo sa pag sabut ug dili lagi libug nga sabtun ang "subject" namo. Ang mga pulong ug ang mga numero madali ra gyud sabtun ug pwedi gani maggamit dayun naku sa akong mga kauban ug sa balay ... nia raman gani ni ang pagpasayon.

(it is different strategy used by the teacher in our class during the regular class days as compared now in the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program that it is easy and we are not pressured by time and space and not difficult to understand

about the subject that we've. The word and numbers that are used it easy to understand and can be grasp immediately and impact, I can use it right away to my friend and at home... this is the way, we make things easy)

Reading the pupils exhortation above, the participant observed that teachers often talk and think quickly, assuming they are considering their pupils' needs. This can lead to a child-centered teaching environment, where the Catch-up Friday Enhancement Program becomes irrelevant. To foster critical thinking and open-mindedness, teachers should buy time and space for students to think and act. This approach allows students to harness their potential and skills, resulting in a different learning experience compared to the regular school year.

Self-expressions. The phenomenological observation of students during the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program revealed a significant theme: pride in expressing emotions, feeling inferior when performing poorly, and being bullied. This leads to feelings of isolation, which can be a psychological shipwreck (Gomez et al., 2024). The study highlights these themes and they said to wit:

... maulaw man gyud ko kay gamay man ang akong mga kuha sa "activities" ug sa "exam." Unya maka dungug pa gyud dayun ko nga murag ako and ilang gi libak. Ga lisud baya ko pag sabut kay paspas kaayo si teacher mag "discuss" ug usahay saba pa gyud ang akong katapad. Busa mo "submit" na lang dayun ko sa akong papel nga wala kuy nasabtan ug kasiguruhan nga insaktu ba ang pagka buhat o ang tubag sa akong papel.

(I feel ashamed when I got low score in my activities and exam. Sometime, I overheard that I am the topic of besmirching and I am overthinking that they have backbite me. I feel difficulty to understand especially the teacher discusses very fast and beside my seatmates are very noisy too. That is why, I have to submit my activity and exam not even understand and not sure if I have answered it correctly)

Add Workload and Stress. Pupils in the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program found the program expensive, repetitive, and boring, preferring more free time and flexibility during Fridays over regular school year sessions. And, they said to wit:

.... Para sa akoo, boring kayo kay katulgon ko sa klasi kay igo ra magbasaha ug daan nga libro baskin unsa na "reading materials" ang among basahon aron lang kami naay mabasa. Kung mag sulat pud me pulos "reflection" nga papel dili gani e uli". Adtu sab ta sa matimatik pulos lang naa sa karaan nga libro ug dili gani ma gamit sa adlaw nga pagkinabuhi busa sumu kaayo ang Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program. Sabagay gamay raman kami dili masaba ug bisan gani dili pa gani kami ga kaatiman kung insaktu ba ang among gi buhat o dili.

(For me, it is very boring, I get sleepy in the class since we've to read and read in the old books and any other reading materials available; so, that we've something to read.)

And, when the FGD continues with a one-on-one conversation and dialogue the participants ventilate their heart aches and workload for their academic thus, they said and to wit:

.... "Usahay kay kapuyan kog apil-apil sa Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program kay ga dugang dugan sa akong huna hunaon labi na kay fourth grading na."

(Sometimes I find it hard to participate in Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program because it adds to my workload, especially since it's already the fourth grading period)

Conversely, pupils have raised issues about the program, suggesting that it contributes to their academic burden and stress levels as also confirmed in the study of Nasr et al (2024). These individuals have seen the Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program (remedial) added pressure rather than beneficial to educational opportunity as corroboratively mentioned by Arnott & Teichert (2023). Their feedback underscores the importance of considering the varied perspectives and experiences of pupils when implementing academic initiatives, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that addresses both the positive outcomes and potential challenges associated with such programs (Pressley et al., 2023). This was mentioned by the participant driven out through socio-economic condition of the family.

The *Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program* has sparked different reactions. Some pupils like it because it helps them improve their reading, thinking, and expression skills as also mentioned on the findings of Hargreaves & Shirley (2021). They find the structured learning beneficial. On the other hand, some pupils dislike the program due to the extra workload and stress it brings. They feel bored with the repetitive nature of the program and wish for more freedom on Fridays (Csikszentmihaihi, 2020). Reading the same old books and materials can make it difficult to stay engaged and interested in class (Barkley et al., 2020). Especially, this pupil belongs to the generation Z where WIFI is high. To enhance the learning experiences more experiential, it's crucial to include varied and interesting content that keeps this pupil motivated and engaged (Malone & Lepper, 2021). Especially, as to "time and space" where we belong is on the PSYFI generation-AI. This would mean that today's generation their WIFI is low and their PSYFI is high due to their engagement on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Old pedagogies would form part of the blue-print of learning to the neo-paradigm shift on the generation Alpha. Wherein, the 7 minutes of talking is more than enough a noise.

Pupils experiential challenges in the classes found difficult for them to stay engaged and participate fully because of the traditional pedagogies. The feeling of boredom due to reading old books and uninspiring materials can definitely impact their focus and energy levels in class. Additionally, the added pressure of Catch-Up Fridays Enhancement Program they consider it as workload which overwhelm them being in the generation alpha (Hamblin, 2020). It's important to find ways to address these issues, whether it's through collaborative techniques using the Artificial Intelligence as the co-pilot in the more engaging learning experiential without losing being human (Cross, 2021; Corbett, 2022).

Furthermore, reaching out to classmates or forming study groups could provide a supportive environment where one share ideas, discuss challenging topics, and work together to tackle assignments using the multimedia through computer aided instruction and generating ideas, dream, aspiration, sentiments and other forms of activities in the Netscape would help the generation alpha adopt the teaching learning environment (Michaelsen et al., 2023). Collaborating with others not only helps in understanding the material better but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning experiences (Lock & Redmond, 2021). Thus, the challenges to buckle-up are the following:

Lack of Resources. The resources often lead to significant challenges in achieving the Catch-up Friday Enhancing Program such as: 1) Physical and 2) human resources are challenges. The struggle to innovation in meeting this demands, or support is the necessary plan and it needs budgetary requirement. This however, involved in the systemic behavior of the school as a system. Thus, the participants ear-out their views and said:

.... "Kulang among mga gamit sa pagbasa ug uban pang mga gamit nga amo untang maggamit sa among pag tuon. Gusto gani mi nga naay laboratoryo ug mga gamit usab aron kung unsa among estoryahan amo dayon ma "check" didto. Asta unta gani "simulation" room. Waal gyud mi computer nga maggamit para sa among pag tuon. Hinuon mo adtu mi sa gawas aron maki "internet."

(We are lacking of resources for reading and other instructional materials for learning. In fact, we wanted to have the laboratory; so that, what we are talking can be check immediately. And, we wanted also the simulation room. We don't have the computer that can be used for learning. However, we can go outside and have the usage of the internet)

Noticed the discourses above it tells us a shortage of reading materials like textbooks, it is crucial for the pupil to influence the teaching learning environment without the tangible tool. One approach is to explore digital resources and online platforms that offer educational materials as an alternative to traditional textbooks but this can be made available outside the services of the school (Seaman et al., 2021). Additionally, collaborating with local libraries or educational institutions to access their resources it can help supplement the lack of textbooks (Moore et al., 2023). Creating a system for sharing resources within your community can also be beneficial in ensuring that everyone has access to the necessary materials for learning.

Furthermore, organizing book donation drives or seeking support from educational foundations, sponsors and other community counterpart partners in education can aid in acquiring additional textbooks and facilities for learning. It's essential to foster a sense of resourcefulness and creativity within the community to overcome the challenges posed by the shortage of physical and even personnel resources (Busch, & Barkema, 2021). By working together and leveraging various sources of support, can find innovative solutions to mitigate the impact of the scarcity of these learning facility.

However, having a multitude of required readings can often lead to a lack of interest in reading at times. When faced with an overwhelming amount of material to cover, it's understandable to feel unmotivated or disengaged from the content. In such situations, it might be beneficial to prioritize the readings based on their significance or relevance to their studies to maintain focus and interest. Finding, connections between the readings and real-life applications can also help enhance engagement and make the content more compelling.

Moreover, incorporating interactive study methods such as group discussions, peer teaching, coaching and mentoring or relating the readings to personal experiences can make the process more enjoyable and meaningful. Breaking down the readings into smaller sections or setting specific goals for each session can prevent feelings of being overwhelmed and enhance comprehension and retention of the material. By finding ways to make the required readings more interactive and relatable, the computer aided instruction can overcome the challenges of disinterest and approach them with a renewed sense of curiosity and engagement.

Attendance concern. The study used this concept as the participation, retention and the survival of the participating pupil during their course of study and as confirmed during the Catch-Up Friday Enhancement Program. And, they juxtaposed the regular classes days and this program assessed to wit:

.... Basta sa panahon sa “regular” nga “school days” maka absent lang ko kung wala akoy pamasahi ug balon para sa akong pagkaon. Usahay, tungud kay mo tabang man gud ko sa akong Mama O kang Papa sa trabaho aron maka kwarta labi na sa miyerkules o sa Biyernes. Musalig laman gyud mi sa labada ni mama o labor ni papa. Busa mo timbang ko sa akong ginikanan aron maka dugang sa abut sa pag abut sa semana. Kay sinemana man ang bayad sa among trabahoan. Naay pud panahon nga ma “late” ko dili na dayon ko mo sulud kay maulaw man gyud ko ila man dayon ko sura-surahon. Ma “late” ko kay mo baklay pa ako paduon’g sa “school.” Usay kay kapoy akong lawas labi na sa panahon human sa trabaho kung Pakyaw.

(... that’s it during the regular school days I do my absences when I don’t have the fare and allowance for my food. Sometimes, because I am helping my father and mother for cash for work especially during Wednesday and Friday. Because we are only dependent for the washing of the clothes and chartering through forced labor. I have to help my parents to add income for weekly chartered pay from the employer. There was also a time that I come to school late because I need to walk from a distance and did not attend anymore my class because they’ll bully me. Sometime it is already tire because of being fatigue helping my parents to charter a forced-labor for the cash for work.

Above is a typical experience of every pupil in a public school. Though the tuition fees are free but other miscellaneous expenses really alarming. The statement above boils down on the socio-economic condition in every Filipino family where it was seen by the pupils in Balubal National High School. Despite on the effort made by the teacher, administrator and the school in general without the scaffolding made by the parents through their involvement, the effort made by the school would become a dream and hallucination. It will become an empty reality.

Challenges. The learner’s frustration with a common classroom activity: watching a movie followed by a reflection; watching movies not engaging; reading instructional materials that already left behind by “time and space;” the uninspiring methodologies and strategies of the teacher; and a learning environment does not “fit and start” by the generation Alpha. From the lens of the pupil the teacher does not teach them because the strategy is not engaging. And, this will trigger absenteeism because they feel pointless and boring (Tomas et al., 2021).

When intervention made during the negative response of the pupils it found out the the responses of the learners provided two distinct learning approaches during “Catch-Up Friday” sessions at Balubal National High School. The first response highlights collaborative learning, peer teaching, mentoring and coaching where pupils find value in assisting each other, alternating between reading and listening, and correcting errors together with their Catch-Up mates. Secondly, engaging specific tasks like watching a film, creating reflection papers, or analyzing reading materials independently, guided by the class adviser. Both approaches demonstrate the students’ adaptability and resourcefulness in navigating their learning experiences, whether through peer collaboration or individual study, to make and create their educational opportunities during these dedicated Catch-Up Friday Program.

EXHAUSTIVE DISCUSSIONS

The Catch-up Friday program at Balubal National High School, Cagayan de Oro City, Mindanao, Philippines, was studied in improving students' reading proficiency. The literacy-challenged pupils struggle in reading comprehension and critical thinking, adding stress and anxiety due to a lack of engaging content resources and outdated materials. Issues with attendance and motivation: pupils feeling disengaged due to repetitive activities and insufficient resources. Exploring personalized approaches to meet students' needs are challenges to the "Catch-Up Fridays" team for more relevant, engaging, and supportive parents and students alike.

Conclusions

The "Catch-Up Fridays" Enhancement Program helps parents, students, teachers, and the administration. Although the opportunity and challenges, as it seeks to elevate reading comprehension and critical thinking among literacy-challenged students. But factors on physical facilities and amenities are driving esteem to attendance and motivation to the pupils. To truly harness the potential of this initiative, a thorough reevaluation of its structure and support systems is essential. Thus, the annual Investment Plan and the Project Procurement Management Plan must be done aligning the School Initiatives.

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