

SUCCESS Stories of English Teachers Teaching Reading to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Learners Through an Interpretative Phenomenological ANALYSIS

Marielle A. Batistil¹, John Rey A. Aleria, MA, JD

¹Teacher, Department of Education
riebatistil@gmail.com

²University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City
jaleria@uic.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research provided a thorough understanding of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing education by revealing the lived experiences of English teachers instructing DHH learners across various learning environments. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the study selected eight public school English teachers as informants from within the Surigao del Sur Division during the school year 2024–2025, of which the primary data source consisted of in-depth interviews. The study illuminated how teachers adapted, scaffolded, and innovated their practices to support DHH learners' reading development. Further, six superordinate themes emerged: the emphasis on multimodal and multisensory instruction; the prioritization of visual scaffolding as foundational; the adaptation and simplification of content to meet learners' developmental levels; the creation of inclusive and supportive learning environments; the adoption of flexible and nonverbal assessment methods; and the cultivation of resourcefulness amidst instructional limitations. The findings underscored the significance of using multimodal strategies, visual scaffolding, differentiated content, inclusive environments, flexible assessments, and adaptability in teaching DHH learners. By amplifying the voices of experienced teachers, the study offered critical insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers aiming to build a more inclusive, responsive educational system that fosters the growth and literacy development of DHH learners.

KEYWORDS: *experiences, successful teachers, deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) learners, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) should be adaptive, inclusive, and deeply responsive to the unique needs of every learner, especially those who experience the world differently, such as deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) learners. For DHH learners, ELT often necessitates specialized instructional strategies that accommodate their language needs, including visual learning methods, sign language integration, and multimodal approaches as it refers to the instruction of English as a subject or second language, encompassing the development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (Caupayan & Pogoy, 2021). Specifically in the context of reading instruction, educators encounter significant challenges in supporting deaf and hard-of-hearing learners' development of phonemic awareness, word recognition, and comprehension skills, as traditional reading methods heavily depend on auditory processing.

The complexities of teaching reading to DHH learners necessitate targeted interventions that address their linguistic and cognitive challenges. Furthermore, teaching reading involves systematic instruction in decoding, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension, which are fundamental to literacy acquisition (Prior, 2023). However, for DHH learners, reading development is often hindered by a lack of auditory input, making phonemic awareness and decoding particularly challenging (Shongwe, 2021). Research identifies common reading difficulties among DHH learners, including limited exposure to print, difficulties in understanding sentence structures, and struggles with word recognition and meaning-making (Mokala, 2023). Additionally, challenges such as low motivation, inadequate instructional support, and insufficient accessibility to reading materials in sign language further complicate literacy development (Anaba, 2023).

International studies across Asia reveal the persistent challenges in teaching reading to DHH learners. In Japan, Nakamura (2021) emphasized the need for bilingual reading instruction that connects Japanese Sign Language and written text. Caupayan and Pogoy (2021) found that in Malaysia, despite using interactive and sign-supported strategies, educators struggled with improving reading fluency and comprehension due to the lack of standardized methods and diverse language backgrounds of DHH learners. Takahashi et al. (2018) showed that DHH children aged 5–7 outperformed hearing peers in early reading, but unlike hearing learners whose reading was predicted by phonological awareness (PA), DHH learners' reading predicted their PA indicating the need for

interventions tailored to linguistic and developmental differences. In Saudi Arabia, Alqraini (2022) found that teachers' knowledge in four key reading components phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, vocabulary, and comprehension was positively linked to better reading outcomes, underscoring the importance of professional development and systematic instructional support for DHH education.

International research highlights common challenges in teaching reading to DHH learners, it also underscores the urgent need for targeted professional development and adequate resource allocation in the Philippine context. Despite the enactment of the Filipino Sign Language Act of 2018 (R.A. 11106) which mandates the use of FSL as the primary medium of instruction for deaf education implementation remains difficult, especially in rural areas due to a shortage of qualified signing teachers and FSL interpreters. Lopez (2024) reports a troubling interpreter-to-deaf ratio of 1:1000 in the country. In urban settings like Quezon City, teachers are still uncertain whether their strategies meet the demands of high-level inclusive education (Muega, 2019), and Balanquit (2021) insists that FSL should be fully integrated into the basic education curriculum.

Studies in Cebu City (Delfin et al., 2023; Macabenta et al., 2023) reveal a continued gap in understanding how local teachers cope with the challenges of inclusive education, even as its goals are widely accepted. These findings stress the necessity of exploring the lived experiences of teachers in more remote areas like Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, where limited resources may exacerbate existing issues. A phenomenological approach is thus warranted to delve into how English teachers adapt their instruction to the needs of DHH learners. As Florian and Spratt (2013) argue, teachers' ability to implement inclusive education is shaped significantly by their confidence and competence, which in turn are influenced by ongoing professional development and practical experience. Capturing these personal and context-specific teaching experiences requires an interpretative phenomenological lens to better understand and support inclusive education in under-resourced settings.

Effective implementation of inclusive education posits that teachers must have access to appropriate resources and continuous professional development. Scruggs and Mastropieri (2017) found that those who receive specialized training are better equipped to address diverse learner needs, including those of DHH learners. Forlin et al. (2014) further emphasized that educators in inclusive settings become more effective when adequately

supported with training and tools—especially crucial when overcoming communication barriers in teaching DHH learner.

However, individual readiness and experiences vary across contexts. Alias and Ramly (2021) highlighted the benefits of collaboration between general and special education teachers in both mainstream and special settings, reinforcing the importance of examining multiple influencing factors. Notably, no prior study has explored these variables in the context of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, prompting the need for this investigation.

The researcher ultimately aims to publish the findings in regional, national, or international scientific journals, contributing to the advancement of inclusive education and English language instruction for DHH learners. The study's insights may inspire further research and inform educational practices and policy. To broaden impact, the findings will be shared through partnerships with schools, DHH advocacy groups, online platforms, and educational institutions, with the goal of empowering stakeholders through research-based strategies for inclusive teaching, curriculum enhancement, and systemic reform.

Theoretical Lens

This paper examines effective reading instruction for DHH learners combining Smith's (2007) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) Theory with Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory. Emphasizing the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Vygotsky's theory underlines the part performed by social interaction, cultural tools, and scaffolding where teachers provide methodically eliminated structured support as learners acquire competency. Techniques like reciprocal teaching, which promotes cooperative communication between teachers and learners, especially help DHH learners who depend on visual and social cues to develop reading skills. Complementing this, IPA provides a qualitative lens through which teachers view and interpret their own experiences in guiding DHH learners. By means of a dual interpretative process, the reflections of the participants and the analyses of the researchers expose ideas on instructional strategies, difficulties, and more general contextual influences. These ideas taken together highlight the importance of reflective practice and organized support in bridging cognitive development with experience to guide inclusive and successful reading instruction.

METHODS

This study used IPA in a qualitative research design to investigate English teachers' lived experiences while teaching reading to DHH learners. Anchored in Bhandari's (2024) definition of qualitative research as the analysis of non-numerical data to understand perspectives and experiences, the use of IPA enabled a nuanced investigation of the personal and professional meanings embedded in teachers' instructional practices. The approach helped to identify emergent and superordinate themes by realizing that individual perceptions, social settings, and past events shape meaning-making (Smith et al., 2022).

The study was carried out in Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, more especially at two public schools: Hinatuan National Comprehensive High School and Hinatuan South Central Elementary School. These sites were chosen deliberately depending on accessibility and the researcher's familiarity with the setting. Purposive snowball sampling was used to select eight English teachers under guided inclusion criteria including a minimum of one year of experience teaching DHH learners, participation in Filipino Sign Language (FSL) training, current engagement with DHH learners, and shown effectiveness in teaching reading to this population.

In-depth, open-ended interviews were used to gather data that let the researcher fully grasp the participants' teaching experiences. The UIC Graduate School and Research Ethics Committee provided ethical clearance; required permissions were obtained from the Surigao del Sur Schools Division and the select principals of the two schools. Participants gave informed permission, and ethical protections including anonymity, emotional well-being, and data protection in line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 were closely followed.

The primary data source for this qualitative study was the in-depth interviews conducted with selected public school English teachers from School A and School B of Surigao del Sur Division. In-depth interviews served as a crucial method in qualitative research, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding ELT for DHH learners.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth, open-ended interviews, which created space for participants to openly share their instructional experiences with DHH learners. These conversations offered rich, detailed

insights into their teaching practices, challenges, and successes. Prior to data gathering, the study received ethical clearance from the UIC Graduate School and the Research Ethics Committee, and formal approval was obtained from the Surigao del Sur Schools Division. Participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the research, and their voluntary participation was ensured through informed consent. Throughout the process, ethical considerations were prioritized where participants' identities were kept confidential, their emotional well-being was respected, and all information was securely managed in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

The analysis began with the transcription of interviews, followed by a careful process of member checking to confirm accuracy. The researcher engaged in repeated readings and close annotation of the data to fully grasp the depth of each narrative. From this, initial codes were developed, leading to the identification of emerging and superordinate themes through an inductive and interpretative lens. This approach not only revealed recurring patterns across participants' accounts but also honored the individuality of each teacher's perspective, ultimately offering a deeper, more human-centered understanding of their pedagogical experiences in teaching reading to DHH learners.

Ethical Statement

Approved under Protocol Code GS-ER-03-25-0248 (Expedited Review), this qualitative study adhered strictly ethical standards judged by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Immaculate Conception. Maintaining the values of social value, informed consent, participant vulnerability, risk-benefit balance, confidentiality, justice, transparency, researcher competency, sufficient of institutional support, and community involvement, the review assured that the research presented no damage to participants. It aimed to enhance inclusive education by means of research on the lived experiences of English teachers supervising DHH learners and by supporting reasonable, equitable methods of literacy education. Throughout was voluntary participation, data privacy, emotional well-being, and consent and withdrawal clearly defined procedures taken front stage. Supported by institutional resources and experienced academic mentors, the researcher trained in inclusive education guaranteed methodological soundness. Teachers and stakeholders will be sharing results to guide inclusive policies and professional development, so supporting ethical, responsive, and strong educational research.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the study explored the lived experiences of English teachers who successfully facilitated reading development among Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) learners. The findings are organized into emergent themes and subthemes that reflect the participants’ experiences, instructional practices, challenges, coping strategies, and insights gained from teaching reading in diverse educational settings. Supported by participants’ verbatim accounts and interpreted alongside relevant literature, the discussion highlights how teachers navigated communication barriers, adapted pedagogical approaches, and fostered meaningful learning experiences that contributed to the literacy development of DHH learners, thereby providing valuable implications for inclusive education and reading instruction.

Report of Participant Findings

Table 2

Strategies of Successful English Teachers Teaching Reading to DHH Learn

Code	Teaching Reading Strategy	Description of Experiences in Employing the Strategy in Teaching Reading to DHH Learners
Teacher 1	Sign Language Integration	Utilized “inato” sign language, Filipino/English Sign Language, and formal sign language in daily instruction to ensure better comprehension and engagement of DHH learners.
	Multisensory Reading Approach	Employed a step-by-step strategy: starting from letters, progressing to words, then to sentences, using tactile tools like metacards and flashcards, enhancing retention and decoding skills.
	Use of Visual Aids and Technology	Incorporated YouTube sign language reading videos, charts, diagrams, and images to present content in accessible formats. This helped make learning more engaging and understandable.
	Environmental Modification for Accessibility	Minimized background noise using acoustic materials and rearranged seating to ensure clear lines of sight for better visibility of the teacher and interpreters.
	Differentiated and Inclusive Assessment Practices	Used formal and adapted assessments such as Phil-IRI, CRLA, and diagnostic tests to match learners’ varying levels due to differences in language exposure. Tracked progress and made

Teacher 2	Multisensory Reading Approach	instructional decisions based on results. Employed multiple senses through finger spelling, letter tiles, sand trays, and visuals to reinforce phonics and word recognition. This approach supports retention and comprehension by engaging tactile, visual, and kinesthetic pathways.
	Visual Aid Enhancement	Used enlarged texts, highlighting, color coding, pictures, graphic organizers, and sign language visuals. Visual aids were seen as essential in helping DHH learners access and process reading content.
	Modified Assessment Techniques	Tailored reading assessments based on the learner’s level of understanding, using tools such as picture naming and letter identification. Shortened and spaced sessions were used for learners with limited attention spans.
	Decoding-Based Reading Instruction	Emphasized a step-by-step decoding process—guiding learners from letter recognition to word and sentence reading. This structured literacy approach enabled learners to become independent readers over time.
	Empathy and Learner-Centered Adaptation	Adapted teaching methods based on emotional cues and communication needs. For instance, after recognizing a learner’s silent struggle, the teacher adjusted support and became more responsive to individual learner needs.
Teacher 3	Sign Language Utilization (FSL)	Used FSL consistently as a foundational mode of communication and reading instruction. Videos in sign language were integrated to increase comprehension and learner engagement.
	Multisensory Reading Approach	Applied various sensory stimuli (e.g., textbooks, modules, visuals, technology) to reinforce understanding. Learners were able to grasp content better when exposed to more than one sense.
	Simplified Language and Vocabulary Emphasis	Employed clear and simple language instructions. Used word-for-word teaching and emphasized key vocabulary with visual supports, illustrations, and definitions to aid comprehension.
	Visual and Technological Aids	Enhanced learning through videos and visual materials that support vocabulary and language acquisition. Visual tools increased motivation and captured learner attention.
	School-Family-Community Collaboration	Stressed the importance of involving the school community and family in the teaching process,

Teacher 4	Use of Video Lessons with Scripts/Subtitles	especially for DHH learners whose learning extends beyond the classroom setting. Frequently used video lessons with scripts or subtitles to make reading lessons more accessible. Learners were better able to understand stories when they could read and watch simultaneously.
	Peer-Assisted Learning	Leveraged classmates’ support to help explain lessons and assist with activities. Peer collaboration was instrumental in encouraging understanding and inclusion of the DHH learner.
	Visual and Simplified Language Instruction	Used simple words and sentences, visuals, and clear, repeated instructions. Visual tests and matching activities were also implemented for assessing comprehension.
	Strategic Seating and Environmental Adjustment	Ensured the DHH learner sat in front to clearly see facial expressions and board work. This positioning supported lip-reading and visual cues.
	Informal and Adaptive Assessment Approaches	Employed informal checks like simple Q&A, observation of written work, and matching activities, often facilitated by classmates. Instruction and feedback were adjusted based on observed learner responses.
Teacher 5	Visual-Bilingual Approach with Sign Language	Integrated American Sign Language (ASL) or local sign language with written English. Strategies included paired reading with visual storytelling, reading aloud, and sign-supported responses. These helped bridge communication and reinforce vocabulary.
	Scaffolded Visual Learning	Used story maps, sequencing visuals, personalized word banks, sentence frames, and structured written tasks. This method helped learners gradually build independence and deeper comprehension while working at their own pace.
	Customized and Simplified Reading Materials	Adapted materials by using clear visuals, simplified texts, bolded vocabulary, and structured reading prompts. Materials were broken into manageable chunks using visual organizers and sequencing strips.
	Nonverbal Assessments and Written Expression	Employed comprehension checks through vocabulary-picture matching, written responses, and visual sequencing. These strategies avoided reliance on oral skills and provided concrete evidence of understanding.
	Time-Managed, Student-Centered Instruction	Addressed challenges like limited instructional time and learner resistance to writing by

		pre-planning tasks, using guided support tools, and offering flexibility. Emphasis was placed on gradual pacing, accessibility, and learner confidence.
Teacher 6	Visual-Based Instruction	Relied on visual aids like flashcards, large images, educational videos, and drawings. These tools were essential for conveying meaning and helping learners connect with the content.
	Simplified and Chunked Language Input	Broke down complex concepts into manageable parts using simple words, fewer abstract ideas, and supplemental visuals. Modified texts were shortened and supported with video or image explanations.
	Drawing and Visual Expression of Comprehension	Let learners draw their interpretation of words or concepts, which served both as an instructional tool and an informal assessment of understanding.
	Peer-Assisted Learning and Inclusion Strategies	Paired DHH learners with proficient classmates to foster inclusion, support group interactions, and enhance understanding through peer modeling and guidance.
	Multimodal Assessment and Observation	Assessed learning through drawing, matching tasks, pointing, and behavioral cues. Monitored progress based on visual response, group engagement, and individual written or drawn outputs.
Teacher 7	Visual Scaffolding and Pre-Teaching Vocabulary	Used images, real objects, gestures, and written cues to introduce vocabulary and simplify text. Pre-teaching enabled learners to anchor meaning before reading activities.
	Integrated Visual Storytelling	Paired text with images and used sequencing activities to help learners retell stories. Animated videos with subtitles also enhanced comprehension and engagement.
	Simplification and Text Modification	Modified reading materials by using larger fonts, simplified vocabulary, and reduced abstract language. Replaced idioms with clear alternatives and provided key word printouts.
	Drawing, Matching, and Visual Assessments	Assessed understanding through drawing, matching quizzes, comic strip creation, and visual storytelling, minimizing the need for verbal expression.
	Peer Support and Multimodal Instruction	Assigned peer buddies, used gestures and basic sign language videos. Created inclusive learning routines and provided multiple forms of content delivery to ensure access.
Teacher 8	Visual Vocabulary Support	Used visual aids such as vocabulary charts, finger spelling, flashcards, concept maps, and

Chunked and Simplified Reading Inputs	simplified texts to connect English words with their visual and signed representations. Reading materials were broken into manageable parts using short texts, guiding visuals, and graphic organizers to support comprehension of sequencing, cause-effect, and main ideas.
Performance-Based and Visual Assessments	Utilized story maps, image sequencing, video-recorded signed responses, and matching tasks. These assessments allowed learners to demonstrate understanding beyond written forms.
Technology-Enhanced Learning Tools	Employed online videos, digital slides, animated sequence tools, and captioned materials due to remote instruction setup. These were central to instruction in the absence of verbal communication.
Adaptation through Resourcefulness and Feedback	Overcame the lack of training in FSL by seeking peer support and learner feedback. Adjusted instruction based on responses and adopted visual metaphors to explain figurative language and abstract ideas.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 shared rich insights drawn from her experiences in teaching learners who are DHH. She emphasized several effective strategies that have shaped her approach to inclusive education. Among the core strategies she highlighted were employing a multi-layered and multisensory approach to scaffold reading skills, utilizing visual aids, sign language, and accessible media to strengthen instruction, adjusting the learning environment to meet the unique sensory and visibility needs of DHH learners, nurturing her own professional growth and commitment to inclusive education through teaching experiences, and experiencing breakthrough moments with learners that affirmed her sense of purpose as an educator.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 shared rich experiential insights from teaching learners who are DHH. She emphasized several transformative strategies that shaped her commitment to inclusive education. Central to her approach were utilizing multisensory and tactile strategies to build foundational reading skills, employing visual aids and customized materials to enhance access and comprehension, adapting to the unique pacing and attention levels of DHH learners, developing deep empathy and emotional connection through teaching, and finding personal transformation in witnessing breakthroughs in her learners’ literacy development.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 emphasized that the integration of FSL and multisensory strategies enables clearer comprehension and greater engagement for DHH learners. She shared how using sign language, alongside various multisensory materials, helps learners easily grasp concepts and stay connected to the lessons. Teacher 3 also highlighted the importance of simplifying language and emphasizing key vocabulary, explaining that clear instructions and focused keywords empower DHH learners to navigate reading texts with greater confidence. Additionally, she noted that visual technologies and videos significantly boost learner' interest, participation, and reading comprehension, making learning more dynamic and accessible. Witnessing the success of DHH learners, particularly when they achieve proficiency in reading, fills Teacher 3 with pride and reaffirms the transformative power of inclusive education. Through her teaching experiences, she has developed deeper empathy, a stronger commitment to inclusion, and a profound appreciation for deaf culture, further strengthening her dedication as an educator.

Teacher 4. Teacher 4 shared valuable insights from her experiences teaching learners who are DHH, emphasizing key strategies that have shaped her approach to inclusive education. One of the most effective tools she found in supporting DHH learners' reading engagement was the use of video lessons with scripts, subtitles, and peer explanations. This method provided a multisensory experience, enabling learners to engage with content more effectively. In addition, Teacher 4 highlighted the importance of simplifying language, using visuals, and positioning learners strategically within the classroom to help them access reading materials more easily. She made sure to seat learners in a way that maximized their visual access to the board and her facial expressions, which were essential for understanding the lessons. Peer support also played a significant role in fostering inclusion, enhancing comprehension, and addressing behavioral challenges. Classmates' explanations helped make lessons more interactive and accessible for DHH learners. Teacher 4 also expressed how small learning gains from her learner brought meaningful fulfillment to her as an educator, especially when learner demonstrated understanding with the help of peers and scripts. Furthermore, teaching DHH learner inspired Teacher 4 to become more patient, creative, and eager to pursue additional training in special education, reinforcing her commitment to inclusive practices.

Teacher 5. Teacher 5 shared insightful experiences drawn from her work with a learner who is DHH. She highlighted several effective strategies

that have shaped her approach to inclusive education. One key element she emphasized was the use of a bilingual and visual-based approach tailored to the unique communication styles of DHH learners. By integrating both sign language and written language, she made reading more accessible and effective. Teacher 5 also focused on scaffolded visual learning techniques, such as story maps, graphic organizers, and sentence frames, which built comprehension step by step. These tools helped the learner break down complex ideas and gain a clearer understanding of reading materials. In addition, Teacher 5 adapted her teaching materials by incorporating visuals, prompts, and glossaries, which reduced cognitive load for her learner and boosted his confidence in expressing his ideas. She noted that breakthrough moments, such as when a learner independently wrote or completed a summary, showcased the impact of patient, structured instruction. Lastly, Teacher 5 reflected on how teaching DHH learner transformed her into a more flexible, empathetic, and student-centered professional. These experiences deepened her commitment to providing the best support for all learners, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and empathy in teaching.

Teacher 6. Teacher 6 shared valuable insights from her experiences working with a DHH learner. She emphasized that visual aids and simplified instructional materials are foundational to teaching reading to DHH learner, making abstract concepts more accessible and tangible. One strategy she highlighted was the use of drawing and matching tasks, which allowed the DHH learner to express his understanding non-verbally. These tasks helped the learner build conceptual knowledge by engaging him in activities that reinforced the meaning of words and ideas through visual representation. Teacher 6 also noted that peer support plays a crucial role in creating inclusion and improving reading comprehension in mixed-ability classrooms. By fostering an environment where classmates could help explain materials and share insights, the overall learning experience became more interactive and supportive. For Teacher 6, small, visual-based breakthroughs were incredibly rewarding, as they confirmed learner learning and provided emotional fulfillment. These moments, such as a learner successfully interpreting a concept through a drawing or visual summary, demonstrated the effectiveness of her patient, tailored approach. Finally, Teacher 6 reflected on how teaching DHH learner helped her grow as a teacher. It built her creativity, patience, and sense of purpose in reaching every learner, inspiring her to continuously adapt her teaching practices to meet the diverse needs of her learners.

Teacher 7. Teacher 7 shared profound insights gained from her experiences teaching a DHH learner. She emphasized that pre-teaching vocabulary and using consistent visual supports are key strategies in building comprehension for DHH learner. These approaches provide the learner with the foundational understanding needed to tackle more complex material, ensuring that he grasps essential concepts before engaging with the main content. Teacher 7 also highlighted the effectiveness of combining images, short texts, and visual storytelling to scaffold DHH learner's ability to understand and retell information. By integrating visual elements with brief written content, the learner was able to make connections between words and images, which facilitated both comprehension and memory retention. In addition, Teacher 7 used visual storytelling and non-verbal tasks to empower her DHH learner to demonstrate his understanding without relying on spoken language.

Teacher 8. Teacher 8 shared valuable insights from her experience teaching with a DHH learner, emphasizing the importance of visual scaffolding using simplified texts, charts, and vocabulary aids. These tools are essential for improving comprehension, as they provide clear, accessible information that is easier for DHH learner to process and understand. She also stressed the significance of chunking materials, using concept mapping, and incorporating finger spelling to promote a deeper understanding of text relationships. These strategies help break down complex concepts into manageable parts, allowing learner to grasp key ideas step by step. Teacher 8 highlighted the powerful role of visual technology and multimedia outputs, such as signed videos and animations, in empowering DHH learner to express his knowledge creatively. These tools not only make learning more engaging but also provide diverse ways for the learner to demonstrate his understanding beyond traditional text-based methods.

Findings. Upon completion of thematic analysis and interpretation of results, six super-ordinate themes emerged. These super-ordinate themes can be linked to the research questions of the study and can be connected to the literature about the success stories of English teachers in employing strategies for teaching reading to DHH learners.

Super-ordinate Themes

1. Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers emphasized the power of multimodal and multisensory instruction
2. Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers prioritized visual scaffolding as a

foundational component of reading instruction

3. Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers adapted and simplified content to meet learners at their level
4. Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers created inclusive and supportive learning environments
5. Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers adopted flexible and nonverbal assessment methods
6. Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers became adaptive and resourceful amidst limitations

In presenting the six super-ordinate themes, the information included specific data from the in-depth interviews.

Upon reflecting on their strategies, teachers emphasized the power of multimodal and multisensory instruction. The teachers consistently integrated visual, tactile, and kinesthetic strategies to meet the varied learning preferences of DHH learners. Teacher 1 incorporated daily multisensory drills, utilizing flashcards, sand trays, and real objects to strengthen vocabulary retention and reading fluency through consistent repetition. Teacher 8 made extensive use of captioned videos, animations, and visual storytelling to support remote learning, ensuring that learners had accessible content despite auditory limitations. Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 enhanced comprehension by combining sequencing activities with tangible objects, helping learners connect concepts more concretely.

Teacher 4, Teacher 5, Teacher 6, and Teacher 7 reinforced learning through finger spelling and tactile games that made abstract ideas more accessible. Their collective experience revealed that multimodal approaches are essential, not supplementary, for DHH learners, who depend heavily on sight, touch, and movement to build linguistic and cognitive skills. These practices not only improved language acquisition but also boosted learner engagement and motivation. By weaving together visual, tactile, and kinesthetic methods, the advisers ensured that learning was dynamic, memorable, and attuned to the learners' sensory strengths. Their success highlights the need for continual innovation and creativity in teaching strategies, ensuring that all learners, especially those with sensory differences, receive equitable and effective instruction.

Upon reflecting on their strategies, they prioritized visual scaffolding as a foundational component of reading instruction. Recognizing the primacy of

visual input for DHH learners, the teachers systematically embedded visual scaffolding into every stage of literacy development. Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 utilized visual vocabulary charts and sequencing strips to support word recognition and story organization. Teacher 8 creatively employed flashcards, concept maps, and simplified visual texts to reinforce comprehension and thematic understanding. Teacher 4 and Teacher 5 integrated story maps and pictorial storytelling techniques to aid learners in predicting outcomes and sequencing events accurately. Teacher 6 incorporated visual peer feedback activities during editing and headline writing workshops, encouraging learners to engage critically with each other's work using visual cues.

Teacher 7 organized collaborative sessions where visual aids and illustrated texts were central to discussions. Through these deliberate methods, learners were empowered to decode language, organize ideas, and retell stories without relying on auditory input. The advisers' reliance on visuals anchored comprehension in concrete, accessible forms and nurtured independence in reading and writing tasks. Their practices demonstrate that visual scaffolding is not merely a supportive technique but a necessary foundation in DHH education, ensuring that learners navigate complex texts confidently and meaningfully despite linguistic barriers.

Upon reflecting on their strategies, they adapted and simplified content to meet learners at their level. Understanding the barriers DHH learners face with traditional texts, they meticulously modified materials to optimize accessibility. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 simplified dense readings by eliminating idiomatic expressions, reducing syntactic complexity, and embedding visual guides. Teacher 8 strategically chunked reading passages into smaller, manageable units, complemented by images and graphic organizers that clarified cause-and-effect relationships. Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 scaffolded reading tasks through stepwise progression, allowing learners to build confidence with shorter, simplified passages before tackling more complex material. Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 emphasized key information by bolding essential terms and using enlarged fonts, making texts visually digestible and easier to navigate.

Teacher 7 fostered gradual skill development through progressive exposure to increasingly challenging materials, always adapted to learners needs. These adaptations were not superficial but thoughtfully designed to maintain the integrity of the content while ensuring accessibility. Their approach

underscored the belief that comprehension precedes complexity and that learners thrive when materials meet them where they are developmentally and linguistically. By intentionally simplifying content, they empowered DHH learners to experience success, build resilience, and advance confidently in their literacy journey.

Upon reflecting on their strategies, they created inclusive and supportive learning environments. They carefully shaped environments where DHH learners could thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 strategically reduced auditory distractions, rearranging seating to optimize visual access and ensuring learners had clear lines of sight to teachers, peers, and visual materials. Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 assigned peer buddies, promoting peer interaction and social support within the classroom. Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 facilitated group peer review sessions, where collaboration was used not only as a learning tool but also as a means to foster community and mutual trust. Teacher 7 emphasized regular team-building exercises and reflective gatherings, cultivating a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose among learners. Teacher 8 engaged families and co-teachers, building a broader support network around each learner. Through these actions, the advisers made inclusion not just a classroom practice but a culture, ensuring that learners felt seen, heard, and valued. These practices created safe, supportive spaces where learners could take risks, express themselves, and grow without fear of marginalization. Their efforts underscore that fostering an inclusive environment goes beyond accommodations—it requires intentional community-building that addresses the academic, social, and emotional needs of every learner.

Upon reflecting on their strategies, they adopted flexible and nonverbal assessment methods. Recognizing the limitations of conventional verbal assessments, the teachers creatively diversified how learner learning was evaluated. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 emphasized visual storytelling assignments, allowing learners to demonstrate narrative comprehension through drawings, comic strips, and storyboards. Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 implemented matching activities and visual editing sessions where learners collaborated in visually-driven tasks to showcase language skills. Teacher 5 developed assessment practices centered around drawing-based reflections, image sequencing, and signing-based video submissions. Teacher 4, Teacher 6, and Teacher 7 emphasized performance-based assessments, evaluating skills through presentations, peer-reviewed projects, and other visual outputs.

These approaches provided learners with multiple avenues to express understanding, highlighting strengths often overlooked in verbal-centric evaluations. By designing assessments around learners' preferred communication modes, the advisers not only measured academic achievement more accurately but also fostered a greater sense of empowerment and confidence among learners. Their work proves that flexible, multimodal assessment strategies are essential for truly inclusive education, ensuring that learner success is measured holistically and fairly.

Upon reflecting on their strategies, they became adaptive and resourceful amidst limitations. Facing the dual challenges of limited formal FSL training and constrained resources, the teachers cultivated a culture of creativity, resilience, and continuous learning. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 sought informal mentorships and relied on learner feedback to fine-tune their approaches. Teacher 8 leveraged digital resources like YouTube videos, captioned presentations, and online materials to bridge communication gaps. Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 adapted instruction using visual metaphors, improvised materials, and technology-enhanced content delivery.

Teacher 4 and Teacher 6 facilitated peer-learning sessions, exchanging effective strategies among teachers and learner leaders. Teacher 7 led efforts to source diversified materials, from digital archives to community-driven resources. Through these inventive practices, they consistently centered learner needs, innovating beyond structural limitations. Their resilience in adapting to challenges reflects a profound commitment to equity, creativity, and student-centered growth. Their example underscores that effective teaching is less about having perfect resources and more about having the vision, flexibility, and passion to build meaningful learning experiences despite constraints.

Implications for Educational Practice. The findings of this study underscore the critical directions needed to enhance reading instruction for DHH learners, focusing on the application of multimodal, scaffolded, and adaptive teaching practices. Participants highlighted the effective use of multimodal and multisensory instruction, the prioritization of visual scaffolding, the adaptation of content to meet learners' developmental levels, the creation of inclusive learning environments, the implementation of flexible assessments, and the cultivation of resourcefulness amidst limitations.

In terms of educational practice, the use of multisensory and multimodal instruction suggests that institutions may need to formally integrate these approaches into instructional design, especially when catering to DHH learners. Incorporating visual, kinesthetic, and tactile elements alongside traditional methods could revolutionize classroom teaching demonstrations, making lessons more engaging, accessible, and effective for learners who rely on alternative modes of communication. Teacher training programs might emphasize the structured inclusion of sensory-rich strategies in reading curricula, ensuring that these practices become a standard part of pedagogy for diverse learners.

The emphasis on visual scaffolding implies that reading instruction frameworks should systematically include visual supports such as graphic organizers, visual vocabulary charts, sequencing strips, and captioned videos. These tools can make language learning more concrete and manageable for DHH learners, aiding both comprehension and retention. Institutions may consider embedding visual scaffolding as an essential component of reading programs, ensuring that learners receive continuous and meaningful visual cues to support language acquisition.

The adaptation and simplification of instructional content point to the necessity for differentiated instruction training. Teachers must be prepared to adjust texts by simplifying language, chunking information, and removing idiomatic expressions to align with the developmental needs of DHH learners. Educational programs may provide workshops or professional development modules that specifically address strategies for content adaptation to promote equitable access to complex materials.

Creating inclusive and emotionally supportive environments indicates that schools must prioritize community-building activities and foster positive peer interactions in classrooms. Structures that support collaboration, group learning, and mutual respect can enhance both the academic and socio-emotional development of DHH learners. Teacher preparation programs and in-service training may need to incorporate modules that focus on building inclusive classroom cultures as a fundamental part of effective pedagogy.

The use of flexible and nonverbal assessments implies that educational systems should broaden their assessment practices to include visual storytelling, comic strip creation, matching activities, and performance-based tasks. Such

methods can better capture the learning progress of DHH learners, who may express understanding more effectively through visual and nonverbal means. Institutions could design alternative assessment guidelines that recognize diverse forms of knowledge expression, ensuring that evaluation processes are inclusive and representative of learners' strengths.

Finally, the emphasis on resourcefulness amidst systemic limitations suggests that schools and educational leaders should support and encourage teacher innovation. This could involve providing access to community resources, technology tools, and opportunities for peer collaboration. Establishing professional learning communities focused on adaptive teaching strategies may empower teachers to creatively address challenges, enriching the educational experiences of DHH learners.

REFERENCES

- Anaba, T. A. (2023). Challenges of learners in the esl classroom the case of hearing-impaired students in st. John's integrated shs.
- Bachtsis, R., Perifanou, M., & Economides, A. A. (2024). Challenges Faced by Students with Special Needs in Primary Education during Online Teaching. *Education Sciences*, 14(3), 220.
- Bhandari, Pritha (2024). What is Qualitative Research? Methods and Example <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/>
- Caupayan, J., & Pogoy, A. (2021). Unheard stories of deaf students in online learning: A phenomenological study. Available at SSRN 3856133.
- Lopez, O. (2024). What Inclusive Education means for Deaf Learners in the Philippines: Considerations in Designing a Deaf-Inclusive Educational Model Policy Brief #2 Published by <https://www.preventionweb.net/media/95762/download?startDownload=20240908>
- Lynch, W. (2023). The Impact of Trust and Leadership for IEP Team Outcomes: A Phenomenological Study of the Perceptions of Parents/Guardians and Special Educators (Doctoral dissertation, Concordia University Irvine).
- Macabenta, J. M., Manubag, C. V., Tabañag, J. C., Cabanilla, A. J., Villegas, N. B., & Villegas, T. M. (2023, April 21). Inclusive Education: Lived Experiences of 21st century Teachers in the Philippines. *Issuu*. https://issuu.com/ijraset/docs/inclusive_education_lived_experiences_of_21st_cent/s/23036238
- Mokala, N. T. (2021). Teachers' narratives of their teaching experiences of

- learners with hearing impairment in a special school in Gauteng. University of Johannesburg (South Africa).
- Muega, M. (2019, May). (PDF) Inclusive Education in the Philippines: Through the Eyes of Teachers, Administrators, and Parents of Children with Special Needs. ResearchGate.
- Mulyatmo, Carolus et al (2022). Experiences of Educating Blind and Deaf Children in the Study of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. <https://endless-journal.com/>
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332961690_Inclusive_Education_in_the_Philippines_Through_the_Eyes_of_Teachers_Administrators_and_Parents_of_Children_with_Special_Needs
- Prior, S. (2023). Capturing the educational experiences of deaf learners in mainstream secondary: Using their voices to inform practice (Doctoral dissertation, UCL (University College London)).
- Sharma, U., Forlin, C., Loreman, T., & Earle, C. (2006b). Pre-service teachers' attitudes, concerns and sentiments about Inclusive Education: An International Comparison of Novice Pre-service teachers. *International Journal of Special Education*, 2(2). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ843609.pdf>
- Shongwe, Z. B. (2021). A Narrative Inquiry of the Journey and Educational Experiences of Deaf Learners and Their Teachers at a High School for the Deaf in Swaziland (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Faculty of Humanities, School of Education).
- Takahashi, Noboru et al (2023). Development of literacy skills for Japanese deaf and hard-of-hearing children. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>