

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



**STRATEGIES TEACHERS USE TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS FOR  
LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN AGONA SWEDRU  
PRESBY A & B PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**COMFORT IMPRAIM**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



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LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN AGONA SWEDRU  
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**A thesis submitted to the school of Graduate Studies in partial  
Fulfillment of the requirement for the award of  
the degree of Master of Philosophy  
(Special Education)**

**Department of Special Education  
Faculty of Educational Studies  
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I, **COMFORT IMPRAIM**, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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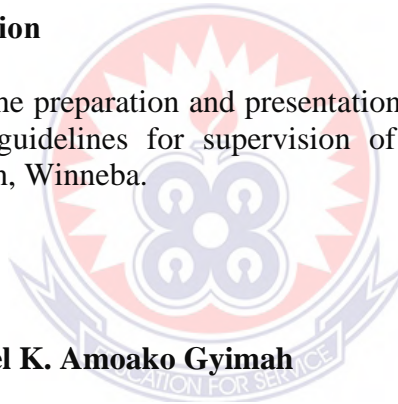
### Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor: **Dr. Samuel K. Amoako Gyimah**

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....



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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my husband, Everistus and my children: Millicent, Mawuttor and Seyeram for their inspiration, financial and moral support.



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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies teachers use to improve reading skills for learners with reading difficulties in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools in the central region of Ghana. The study followed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. A sample size of six teachers was involved in the study. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting teachers from the two schools. Data was obtained through administration of interview guide with study participants. The findings of the study revealed that teachers employed various strategies to address learners' reading difficulties in phonics, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. However, in the teaching of phonics and fluency skills, it was found out that teachers lacked adequate knowledge. The study recommended among other things, that more workshops should be organized for all primary school teachers, particularly in phonics skills to enable them work effectively. Although reading difficulties among primary school learners in Ghana are well documented, limited attention has been given to specific strategies teachers use to improve these difficulties in classroom practice, a gap that this study seeks to fill.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the study

Reading is a vital tool for all academic endeavours since it forms the basis for learning many academic subjects. For example, mathematics and other daily living skills are all acquired when the child has good foundation to know the names of objects and then number. Polloway, Patton, Serna, & Bailey (2013) posited that reading is an essential component of success in most academic subjects and functional literacy is needed for students with intellectual disabilities to achieve independence. Similarly, De Juan, Mendosa, Villafania, & Facullo, (2024) agrees with Polloway et. al. (2013) with the view that reading serves as a primary source of language input and is necessary for developing other skills, including speaking and writing. In addition to the academic and functional benefits that reading provides, Polloway et. al. (2013), Tompkins (2010), Davis (2014) agree that reading also provides opportunities for physical development of fine motor skills. This happens when children open and turn books during reading. Furthermore, many well-paying jobs require reading as a part of job performance. A person is limited in what they can accomplish without good reading and comprehension (Tompkins; 2010). In spite of the vital role reading plays in education and in society as a whole, some children do not acquire the skill in normal development sequence like their peers. Also, in our Ghanaian classrooms, most teachers lack the appropriate materials and skills to effectively teach reading.

Mohammed (2019) and Tompkins (2010) share the view that reading is a complex skill that involves cognitive processes. It ranges from decoding graphic symbols of text to the transactional process of bringing meaning to the text and constructing personal meaning through exchange with the author. It is an active search for meaning

that involves the relationship between thought and language. It is also a cultural process because what counts as acceptable reading practice is culturally defined. Research findings indicate that there are many learners who experience reading difficulties. For some, letters and words create confusion rather than meaning, for others a failure to develop the prerequisite skill and knowledge prevents them from becoming good readers (Johnson, Pool & Carter; 2013). Asumang (2020) has reported that out of 32 pupils tested using the 100 high-frequency words for word recognition at the University Practice School at Winneba, only four pupils attained a mastery level of 80 percent. As stated earlier, proficient reading and writing skills are critical to success in life. If students are not competent readers, they are at risk for academic, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. However, teachers can change the trajectory for children at risk of failure in reading by intervening early and providing explicit, intensive, and extensive reading instruction.

The 2022 P2 National Standardized Test (NST) report produced by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NACCA) of Ghana has revealed that most P2 learners were able to read with fluency and accuracy in some reading subtasks such as oral vocabulary, letter sound identification, and listening comprehension. This performance, according to the report, is an improvement on the 2015 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) findings for the same group of learners. However, the current improvement does not include reading comprehension subtask. For the reading comprehension sub task, majority of P2 learners across the 16 regions of Ghana scored zero. That is, 78.28 % of P2 learners could not answer a single question on the passage they read. The report therefore recommended that teaching and learning especially for literacy should focus more on teaching for understanding rather than just word recognition.

To help solve the reading problem faced by many students, Lee, Gable, and Klassen, (2012) argued that basic literacy skills need to be learned when children are in primary grades. However, they stated that many children with reading difficulties often experience social emotional disorder, also known as conduct disorders, are behind their peers in learning how to read. So those who experience difficulty in reading in early grades will rarely be able to catch up in subsequent years. Currently, the number of students who have learning disabilities and emotional behavioural disorders is rapidly increasing, especially in primary grades. Many teachers however, are not well prepared to use reading remediation strategies when teaching struggling readers in early grades.

Gagen (2007) cited by Lee, Gable & Klassen (2012) argued that reading print is not a natural biologic process but rather a complex process, which requires looking at man-made, arbitrary black letters and words, and matching that written code with our spoken language. To read proficiently one needs to use the brain's natural system for processing sound. These sounds or phonologic processing pathways are essential to proficient reading. If other processes are used, reading will require a great deal of effort and remain difficult. Most problems with reading have nothing to do with intelligence or ability, but rather incorrect processing. Thus, teachers can help students understand that difficulties in reading are often caused by weaknesses in phonologic processing and other fundamental skills. Gagen (2007) cited by Lee, Gable and Klassen (2012) added that problems with reading occur because proficient phonologic processors are not being used. Teachers who work with struggling readers need to understand that effective remediation directly teaches and develops essential skills to raise the student to proficient level. They need to make sure the student understands reading remediation is not teaching easy words and concepts but rather

building necessary skills to help bring the student up to a proficient level. Though there are many remediation strategies for students with reading difficulties, Lee, Gable, & Klassen, (2012) opined that student's effort and attitude is an important factor for a successful remediation as this factor will affect how quickly the students learn. They added that motivated students' progress faster than students with a poor attitude. Therefore, teachers should help the student, especially those with learning disabilities to develop a positive attitude toward remediation. Some older students are frustrated with their frequent failures and have developed low self-confidence and negative attitude towards reading. Before beginning an intensive reading remediation program, teachers need to help the student understand the remediation program. To that end, teachers may explain the effective remediation plan to the student. Effective remediation instruction improves reading skills when teachers provide direct instructions and consider student's responses to remediation.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Reading is one of the major problems for children in basic schools in Ghana. Stakeholders in education have always been concerned about this problem. In recent times the United States Agency for International Development USAID Learning Program has argued that strong reading skills are critical for success in school but reading performance of early grade learners in Ghana has been persistently weak. To address this challenge, the USAID Learning in partnership with the Ministry of Education, rolled out the Transition to English Plus (T2E+) programme 2021 to 2023, which targeted over 5,000 learners across the 16 regions of Ghana.

Despite efforts to promote literacy and reading proficiency in primary schools, many learners continue to face challenges in acquiring and mastering essential reading skills. For example, the 2022 P2 National Standardized Test (NST) report produced

by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NACCA) of Ghana has revealed that out of the 22 districts assessed in the central region, learners in the Agona West Municipality had a mean score of 30.7% for English language, a little ahead of the lowest score of 25.4%. Specifically, in Agona Swedru Presby A & B Primary Schools, the researcher observed that a significant number of learners exhibit difficulties in reading, which adversely affects their academic performance and overall learning outcomes. These reading difficulties manifest challenges with phonemic awareness, vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and fluency, posing barriers to effective literacy development and hindering students' ability to access the curriculum.

Although reading is universally recognized as fundamental to academic success, employability, and independent living, instructional responses to reading difficulties in Ghanaian primary schools remain inconsistent. This gap is particularly evident in how teachers implement remediation strategies for learners who struggle with phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. While previous studies in Ghana largely focused on learners' reading outcomes and assessment results, limited attention has been paid to the specific classroom strategies teachers employ to remediate reading difficulties, particularly within inclusive primary school settings. This study, therefore, focuses on teachers' instructional practices rather than learner performance alone.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to explore the strategies teachers use to improve reading skills for learners with reading difficulties at Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were developed for the study:

1. To examine phonics instructional strategies teachers employ to support learners with reading difficulties.
2. To explore instructional strategies teachers use to improve vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties.
3. To examine instructional strategies teachers adopt to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties.
4. To examine fluency instructional strategies teachers employ to support learners with reading difficulties.

### **1.4 Research questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How do teachers use recommended phonics-based strategies to improve phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties?
2. How do teachers use recommended vocabulary-based strategies to improve vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties?
3. How do teachers use recommended comprehension-based strategies to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties?
4. How do teachers use recommended fluency-based strategies to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The importance of reading skills for learners at all levels of education cannot be overemphasized. As sufficiently discussed at the background to the study section of

this work, reading is an essential component of success in most academic subjects and functional literacy is needed for students with intellectual disabilities to achieve independence. Reading is also seen as a cornerstone of a child's success in school and throughout life. Therefore, the results of the study would reveal how teachers use specific teaching strategies to improve reading difficulties experienced by learners in the areas of phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension in order to be proficient in the use of English language in general. In addition, the study will add to knowledge on existing literature in special education and reading in particular. It would also serve as a source of reference for other students interested in conducting research in a similar area. Finally, the study will benefit parents and other educational stakeholders interested in improving the language skills of learners in the primary school level.

#### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

The following limitations have been identified for this study. The first limitation of this study was the small sample size. Since a case study research approach was utilized in this study, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the six teachers. Also, since this study was conducted in one town in a municipality, the findings are limited to that town and municipality alone. Finally, because the study was limited to experienced and trained teachers, it may be impossible to apply the findings to untrained and inexperienced teachers.

#### **1.7 Delimitation**

The study was delimited to teachers' strategies for improving reading skills for learners with reading difficulties at the Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. The Primary A stream has a unit for learners with intellectual disabilities. The schools are situated in Ankyease, a suburb of Agona Swedru a densely populated community

with low socio-economic status. The four main areas of reading difficulties examined were phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

### **1.8 Organisation of the study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter two discusses literature review, theoretical framework, and strategies for teaching fluency, comprehension, phonics and vocabulary skills. Chapter three discusses the methodology used which comprises the research design, method and instruments of data collection, sampling procedure, data collection procedure, data analysis, the pre-test, validity and reliability and ethical consideration. Chapter four deals with data presentation and data analysis. The presentation and analysis is done in relation to the preconceived themes in the research questions. Chapter five comprises the discussion of the research findings, conclusions and the recommendations of the study, suggestions for further study, the list of references and appendices.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a discussion of the background to the study and the statement of the problem. It also provided the significance, purpose and objectives of the study as well as the research questions, and concluded with the delimitation. The next chapter presents the review of related literature.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature that was reviewed for the study. The literature review begins with the theoretical framework followed by the review of the key themes raised in the research questions.

#### 2.1 Theory underpinning the study

##### 2.1.0 The interactive model of reading

The interactive model of reading is the theoretical framework adopted for this study. It was propounded by David E. Rumelhart in 1977 and cited by Souhila (2014). It describes the reading process and the way linguistic elements are processed and interpreted by the brain. The model combines both surface structure systems such as the bottom up approach of reading which uses phonics to teach early readers words through letter-sound associations and deep structure systems such as the top-down approach to reading to build meaning and memory for all learners. Readers use both knowledge of word structure and background knowledge to interpret the texts they read. Children who encounter an unknown word might use surface systems like graph-phonics or letter-sound, knowledge to decode the word. The interactive reading model recognizes interaction of the bottom-up and top-down processes simultaneously throughout the reading process.

Hlalethwa (2013) cited Norton (2007) and Sethosa (2000) who share similar views on interactive model. They stated that reading is both text-driven and concept-driven. The text and the person interact to extract meaning from the text, with readers understanding the text by simultaneously decoding it and relating it to their previous knowledge. The interactive model emphasises sound recognition, sound-symbol

association and reading comprehension. This model explains that the reader continually shifts his/her attention between the text (i.e., analysis of specific letters and words) and reading comprehension (i.e., thought content of the reading material). The model highlights that the reader will use the top-down approach when the reading material is known and the bottom-up approach when the reading material is not known, and as the reader's skill increases more attention is given to reading comprehension and less to word recognition and analysis of individual letters. The following is an illustration of the interactive reading model by Perfetti, Landi & Oakhill (2005) cited in Souhila (2014).



### 2.1.1 Implications of the interactive model of reading to the study

The Interactive Model of Reading is relevant to this study for several reasons: Firstly, this model guides the study with the understanding that reading is not a passive activity, but an interactive one. It emphasizes the importance of the reader's active

engagement with the text. In the context of remediation for learners with reading difficulties, this theory underscores the significance of tailored strategies that actively involve students in the reading process. Secondly, the model helps to pinpoint specific areas where students with reading difficulties might struggle, such as decoding, comprehension, or vocabulary. By understanding the interactive nature of reading, researchers can better identify these problem areas and design targeted interventions. The Interactive Model of Reading encourages the use of various reading strategies, such as predicting, questioning, and clarifying. This theory can guide researchers in selecting and adapting strategies that actively involve students in the reading process, making the remediation process more effective. In relation to the topic of this study, the Interactive Model of Reading aligns perfectly. The model emphasizes that readers actively construct meaning from text. This means that teachers should employ strategies that actively engage students with reading materials, encouraging them to interact with the text and make meaning from it. By aligning the study with this model, researchers can ensure that their interventions are effective and address the specific needs of learners with reading difficulties.

**Tailored Interventions:** The Interactive Model of Reading recognizes the diverse strategies and abilities among readers. By acknowledging this, the study can emphasise the importance of personalized remediation strategies that specifically target the unique reading difficulties of each student. **Assessment and Progress**

**Monitoring:** The Interactive Model of Reading advocates for ongoing assessment of comprehension. This can recommend the implementation of continuous assessment and progress monitoring to ensure that the remediation strategies employed are effective and responsive to the individual needs of each student. Therefore, the Interactive Model of Reading serves as a valuable theoretical foundation for this study

on remediation strategies for learners with reading difficulties. It underscores the significance of active reader engagement, customized interventions, and continuous assessment, all of which are relevant to the research in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools.

## **2.2 Concerns about reading in Ghana**

The overriding aim for the Language and Literacy curriculum in both Ghanaian Language and English language in basic schools is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a good command of the spoken and written word to enable them to:

- Acquire the basic skills that will help them decode any text.
- Read age-level texts easily, fluently and with comprehension.
- Cultivate the habit of reading widely for pleasure and information.
- Acquire a wide stock of vocabulary and understanding grammatical structures as well as linguistic conventions for easy reading, good writing and speaking.
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their first language style in a range of contexts for varied purposes and audience.
- Read with pleasure literary materials and appreciate a great stock of literary repertoire.
- Acquire the skill of self-expression and be able to communicate their ideas to different audiences to achieve the intended purpose.
- Develop and cultivate the skill and ability to read the lines, in-between the lines and beyond the lines; and to find out hidden meaning and ideas.

(NaCCA, Ministry of Education, 2019)

In spite of the aims and the expected outcomes, there are still concerns about the reading skills of Ghanaian students. In a study conducted by Nyarko, Kugbey, Cole, & Adentwi, (2018) to examine the influence of reading proficiency on the academic performance of lower primary school children in Accra, it was found out that reading proficiency was significantly and positively related with children's performance on all standard performance tests after controlling for paternal involvement, maternal involvement, financial situation and age.

Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Ghana Early Grade Reading Program Impact Evaluation, Baseline Report published in January, 2018 stated that though Ghana has made significant progress over the past few decades in getting its children to school, the majority of young learners today struggle with even basic reading skills. Referring to the 2015 national Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), the report pointed out that at least half of school children in the country were unable to read a single word by the end of P2 and only two percent were able to read grade-appropriate text with fluency and comprehension regardless of language. While there are a multitude of factors contributing to low performance among Ghana's children, there is an ongoing, lively discussion among education policy makers and practitioners on the role that language of instruction plays in supporting literacy acquisition in the early grades. USAID/Ghana Evaluating Systems (ES) conducted an independent, quasi-experimental impact evaluation of the Ghana early grade reading (EGR) implemented by USAID/Ghana learning in 2017-2019, which was designed to support mother tongue and phonic-based instruction through a structured pedagogy model. The purpose was to generate evidence to help education policy makers and stakeholders to improve approaches to reading instruction among others

### **2.3 Strategies for improving phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties**

Read Naturally Inc. (2020) citing Adams (1990) defined phonics as a system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters and their pronunciations. This process of converting printed letters or words into spoken letters or words is referred to as decoding. The teaching of phonics is a means to an end; not the end in itself. Phonics is not meant to be the predominant component within a reading program; rather it is one of the essential features. It is critical that students see the relevance of phonics. Phonics instruction should begin with a foundational understanding of phonemic awareness and letters of the alphabet. The instruction should be linked to literature rather than to de-contextualized activities with no relevance. Most students eventually develop sound-letter relationships that help them decode and spell words. Effective phonics instruction focuses students' attention on noticing the letter-sound patterns. Abdul-Razak (2016) has also identified phonics analysis as a method of teaching reading at the basic school level. This method involves developing learner's phonemic awareness, that is, the ability to hear, identify and manipulate English sounds in order to teach/learn the sounds and the spelling patterns they represent.

Research published by the National Reading Panel (NRP) (2005) reaffirmed earlier findings that systematic phonics instruction enhances children's success in learning to read significantly more than instruction that teaches little or no phonics. The report emphasises that systematic phonics remains a crucial component of effective reading programmes. The National Reading Panel (NRP) (2005) report has indicated that an essential part of the reading process for beginners involves learning the alphabetic system. The alphabetic system is the letter-sound correspondences and spelling

patterns, and learning how to apply this knowledge in their reading. The report mentioned systematic phonics instruction as a way of teaching reading that stresses the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use to read and spell words. Phonics instruction is designed for beginners in the primary grades and for children having difficulty learning to read. In teaching phonics explicitly and systematically, the report enumerated several different instructional approaches that have been used. These include synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics, onset-rime phonics, and phonics through spelling.

Although all explicit, systematic phonics approaches use a planned, sequential introduction of a set of phonic elements along with teaching and practice of those elements, they differ across a number of other features. For example, the content covered ranges from a limited to an elaborate set of letter-sound correspondences and phonics generalizations. In addition, the application procedures taught to children vary. Synthetic phonics programs teach children to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words. Analytic phonics avoids having children pronounce sounds in isolation to figure out words. Rather children are taught to analyse letter-sound relations once the word is identified. Phonics through-spelling programs teach children to transform sounds into letters to write words. Phonics in context approach teaches children to use sound-letter correspondences along with context cues to identify unfamiliar words they encounter in text. Analogy phonics programs teach children to use parts of written words they already know to identify new words. The distinctions between systematic phonics approaches are not absolute, however, and some phonics programs combine two or more of these types of instruction. In addition, these approaches differ with respect to

the extent that controlled vocabulary (decodable text) is used for practicing reading connected text. Although differences exist, the hallmark of systematic phonics programs is that they outline a planned, sequential set of phonic elements and they teach these elements explicitly and systematically. The goal in all phonics programmes is to enable learners to acquire sufficient knowledge and use of the alphabetic code so that they can make normal progress in learning to read and comprehend written language.

The National Reading Panel (2005) sought answers to 10 questions which included the following:

- Does systematic phonics instruction help children learn to read more effectively than non-systematic phonics instruction or instruction teaching no phonics?
- Are some types of phonics instruction more effective than others? Are some specific phonics programs more effective than others?
- Is phonics instruction more effective when students are taught individually, in small groups, or as whole classes?
- Is phonics instruction more effective when it is introduced in kindergarten or 1st grade to students not yet reading or in later grades after students have begun to read?
- Is phonics instruction beneficial for children who are having difficulty learning to read? Is it effective in preventing reading failure among children who are at risk for developing reading problems in the future? Is it effective in remediating reading difficulties among children who have not made normal progress in learning to read? (p. 106-107)

Read Naturally Inc. (2020) has stated that there are two strategies to phonics instruction. These are systematic, explicit phonics instruction and incidental, implicit phonics instruction. In the first approach, sound/spelling correspondences are taught directly and systematically while in the second approach, sound/spelling correspondences are inferred from reading whole words and introduced as readers encounter them in text. Read Naturally Inc. quoted the National Reading Panel (2000) meta-analysis conducted to review and evaluate research on the effectiveness of various approaches for teaching children to read. Their findings showed that students who received systematic and explicit phonics instruction were better readers at the end of instruction than students who received non-systematic or no phonics instruction.

Read Naturally Inc. (2020) cited Fry, Fountoukidis, & Kress, (2000) who argued that learning high-frequency words is one of the important emphases of phonics and word recognition. According to Johns & Wilke (2018), various word count studies suggest that proficient readers are able to recognise about 50,000 words at sight. However, beginning readers or struggling readers know a very small percentage of the 50,000 words known by proficient readers. But teachers of struggling readers do not need to teach such large quantity of words for their students to become proficient at the early stages. Johns & Wilke (2018) pointed out that there are thirteen words which account for approximately 25% of all words in school textbooks and that it is very prudent for teachers at the basic level to focus on those 13 words. They include *a, and, for, he, in, is, it, of, that, the, to, was, you*. Johns & Wilke (2018) also suggest that teachers should ensure that students master these words by the end of third grade if they want their students to become efficient and effective readers. An additional dozen of the

most-frequently occurring words (*on, as, are, they, with, be, his, at, or, from, had, I*) were also recommended to be taught alongside the thirteen, all of which are based on the revised Dolch List. The ultimate aim is to let students know all these words by sight or automatically so they would be able to know half or more of the words they encounter in their reading.

Lerner (2003) explained that the phonic strategy teaches word recognition through learning graphemes-phoneme (letter-sound) associations in a language. Hence, children must learn to decode the printed language, to translate print into sounds and to learn about the alphabetic principles of the symbol-sound relationship. This process is known as breaking the code. According to Lerner, children with learning disabilities for instance, usually require systematic, explicit code-emphasis instruction in the elements of the alphabet code. Lerner supports the view that children who learn the sound-symbol system of English read better than children who have not mastered this skill. In Lerner's view a precursor to learning phonics is phonological awareness. This is the child's recognition that speech can be segmented into phonemic units or sounds. In a written alphabet language such as English, the code involves a system of mapping, or seeing the correspondences between letters and sounds. Once a child learns these mappings, she or he has broken the code and can then apply this knowledge to figure out plausible pronunciations of printed words.

Lerner (2003) and the National Reading Panel agree on the effectiveness of phonics instruction along the following lines. That is, systematic phonics instruction makes a bigger contribution to children's growth in reading than other programmes that provide unsystematic or no phonics instruction. That, all systematic phonics programmes are effective in promoting reading achievement and they do not appear to

differ significantly from one another. And that systematic phonics instruction is effective when taught in the kindergarten. It must be appropriately designed for young learners and must begin with foundational knowledge involving letters and phonemic awareness.

## **2.4 Types of phonic approaches**

Several types of phonics instructional approaches as outlined by the National Reading Panel (2005) are stated below.

*Synthetic phonics:* This involves teaching students explicitly to convert letters into sounds or phonemes and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words. For example, the word *bag*, is broken into sounds *b/a/g*. then blend the sounds into the word.

*Analytic phonics:* This involves teaching students to analyze letter–sound relations in previously learned words to avoid pronouncing sounds in isolation. For example, in the word *bug*, children learn that the initial sound is the same as that of *big*, *bat*, etc.

*Analogy phonics:* this involves helping learners to learn keywords with spelling patterns, use parts of words they already know to decode unfamiliar words and apply this strategy when new words share similar patterns in their spelling. For example, learners will recognise they can use the spelling pattern *...at* in the known word *cat* to help them read the new word *sat*.

*Embedded phonics:* This involves, teaching students phonics skills by embedding phonics instruction in text reading. This is a more implicit approach that relies to some extent on incidental learning. For example, when a child is taught the sound for the letters *t*, *p*, *a*, and *s*, they can start to build up the words *tap*, *lap*, *pat*, *sat*, etc.

*Phonics through spelling:* This involves teaching students to segment words into phonemes and to select letters for those phonemes. That is, instructing students to spell words phonetically. For example, the sound /ei / as in *pay* etc. (NRP 2005; 14-15).

Olubusola (2012) conducted a study on synthetic phonics as a tool for improving the reading skills of pupils in Nigeria. The study involved 155 pupils in four schools and four teachers. The quantitative approach used to collect data was multiple source method which involved standardized reading and spelling tests. A focus group discussion and interview of teachers was the approach used to collect qualitative data. The results of the study revealed that the synthetic phonics method led to improved reading achievement of pupils. It also led to an increase in teachers' interest in teaching English. Similarly, Rowe (2013) conducted a study on phonics instruction involving 107 at-risk third graders. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between continued phonics instruction and success on the Ohio Achievement Assessment (OAA) for two out of five years, and demonstrated the positive effect of explicit and systematic phonics instruction on reading achievement.

## **2.5 Effectiveness of phonic approach**

Olugbeko (2016) examined the concepts of phonic method of teaching in basic literacy programme and its effectiveness in increasing the number of literate learners in developing countries. He outlined the following ten advantages as against two disadvantages of using phonic method:

1. Teaching learners with phonics method makes them competent to handle unfamiliar words.

2. It promotes rapidly the learners knowledge of sounds, word blending, word reading and spelling.
3. It enhances whatever that is being taught among the learners through sound and letter correspondence.
4. It stimulates the reading and learning performance of the learners.
5. It provides learners with the skills to become an independent reader.
6. Phonic method helps to overcome the challenges of traditional method of reading letter.
7. It makes sounding of unfamiliar words easier.
8. It helps learners to learn syllable structure easier and better.
9. It helps learners to know spelling and letters formation.
10. It makes learning real and motivating. (p.146-147)

Despite the many advantages of using phonics method, it has the following disadvantages:

1. It encourages memorization without allowing the learners to apply the phonic rules to connect meanings.
2. The method often creates wrong assumption of awareness that learners have a good knowledge or sophisticated phonemic awareness skills needed to enable the comparison of sounds within the various words (Olugbeko, 2016).

## **2.6 Strategies for improving vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties**

The National Reading Panel (2005) refers to vocabulary as the word meanings and vocabulary instruction as the teaching of word meanings. However, the Panel added that vocabulary is often used to refer to both word recognition and word meaning and as such much of reading instruction is focused on words—word recognition, sight

words, word attack skills, word structure, and so on. Vocabulary is undoubtedly important in any language activity. Knowledge of words and their meanings is even assessed as a fundamental component of intelligence or general cognitive functioning. Such knowledge is integral to activities that involve language. The National Reading Panel (2005) agreed with psychologists who argue that vocabulary goes beyond word meanings in the mind. Vocabulary extends to much richer and harder to measure constellation of understandings and experiences. For example, it is argued that someone who knows a lot about horses may develop an awareness of many horse-related words (e.g., saddle, bridle, fetlock, hoof, bit, palomino, sorrel, spavin, mane, yearling), but they also will usually know many kinds of other related information (e.g., animal behavior; how to care for pets; what stables, barns, and corrals are like). However valuable the individual words may be, an understanding of them usually includes more than simple dictionary definitions and carries an awareness of much associated knowledge and appreciations (The National Reading Panel, 2005; p. 23)

The National Reading Panel-(NRP) (2005) reviewed 45 studies on the teaching of vocabulary and its impact on improving students' reading comprehension. Most of the vocabulary studies reviewed by the panel focused on students in Grades 3–8, but there were also some studies in Grades PK–2 and Grades 9–11. It was concluded that such instruction did result in improved reading achievement as measured by reading comprehension tests. One of the teaching approaches identified by the Panel was explicit instruction in vocabulary which includes teaching students the meanings of words, techniques to determine word meanings from context, and the meanings of root words and affixes. These kinds of instruction have been found to provide students with clear and consistent gains in reading

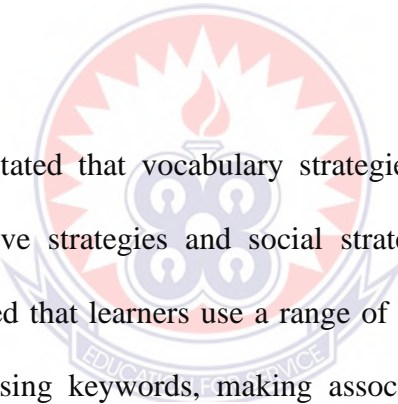
Based on the Panel's positive findings on both direct and indirect vocabulary teaching strategies, the Panel advised teachers to not only allot time for the direct teaching of vocabulary, but teachers should also seek opportunities to enrich vocabulary knowledge throughout the school day within other activities. One such opportunity examined by the Panel concerns introducing new vocabulary that students are about to confront in their reading. Talking to the students about these words ahead of time was found to increase word knowledge and improve students' understanding of their reading of that selection. This was found to be applicable to both language arts and social studies materials.

Asyiah (2017) conducted a study to investigate how vocabulary teaching and learning are perceived by teachers and students, strategies to teach and learn the vocabulary and the influences of students' vocabulary learning strategy on their vocabulary mastery. A mix method design was employed involving one English teacher and 30 junior high school students to reveal issues being investigated. The findings of the study showed that both teacher and students have positive response on vocabulary teaching and learning. Concerning strategies, it was found out that the teacher mostly employed fully-contextual strategy while determination and meta-cognitive strategy were found as the most favoured strategy by students. The study also confirmed that there was a significant relationship between students' vocabulary learning strategy and their vocabulary mastery. Rupley & Nichols (2005) argued that the teaching of reading that focuses on the growth of children's vocabulary results in enhancing students' abilities to infer meanings and to better comprehend what they read. Vocabulary instruction is an on-going process for children because vocabulary is learned by experience. Students with reading difficulties often lack life experiences that cultivate vocabulary that meets the needs of the curriculum. Teachers must

provide vocabulary during instruction. Graves (2016) identified four components that should be included in vocabulary instruction. These include providing rich and varied language experiences, teaching individual words explicitly, teaching word-learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness. In order to provide rich vocabulary instruction, teachers must identify potential words that will be included in the lesson. The teacher must then provide multiple activities that allow the student to be exposed to the words. In an article titled “Multisensory Vocabulary Instruction,” Jones (2020) gave six guidelines for creating vocabulary instruction that is successful. Firstly, Jones suggested that teachers should have structure and organization behind the words presented. Words should not be randomly picked from a basket, but have a commonality. This could include studying word parts, prefixes, and suffixes. Secondly, Jones recommended incorporating multisensory learning from the beginning. This means that with each word used, illustrations and demonstrations should be introduced. Thirdly, teachers were advised to model the activities first. Before any new vocabulary activity is implemented, the teacher should introduce the activity and then model the activity using a common word all students are familiar with. The fourth guideline stated that meanings should be available with all vocabulary work. The fifth guideline emphasized the importance of keeping an ongoing list prominently posted in the room. This is because if the words are visible and accessible to students, they are more likely to see them, think about them, and use them. Finally, teachers are advised to go beyond the definitions of the words. Connotations of words are a great way to look at all meanings of the words.

Lai (2005) investigated the awareness, beliefs and instructional practices with respect to vocabulary learning strategies of Taiwanese English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in senior high school context using a questionnaire to collect data. The results

of the study suggested that English teachers studied were aware of a range of vocabulary learning strategies, including both direct and indirect approaches to vocabulary acquisition. Also, the results revealed a positive correlation between the teachers' beliefs and their overall instructional strategies. Manyak, Manyak, Cimino, & Horton (2019) introduced a model for introducing word meanings. Presenting the word in context is the introductory action in this model. The teacher then provides a kid-friendly definition of the targeted word. Multiple examples should be presented to the student in order to fully grasp the word. Students create examples of the word and use the word. A visual image of the word is discussed. Finally, the teacher should conclude with a thought question, which will allow the student to keep thinking about the word.



Kimkong (2011) has stated that vocabulary strategies generally involve cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies and social strategies. Hedge (2000), cited in Kimkong (2011) argued that learners use a range of cognitive strategies in order to learn words such as using keywords, making associations and learning words in group. He defines cognitive as a mental operation concerned with working on new words in order to understand, categorize and store them in a mental lexicon. It also includes written and spoken repetition, word lists and flash cards, taking notes in class and keeping vocabulary notebooks are among other useful and recommended strategies. In terms of meta-cognitive strategies, students control and evaluate their own learning, by having an overview of the learning process in general. Social cognitive strategies involve asking someone, usually teachers and peers for the synonyms, definitions of a particular unfamiliar word. Hart and Risley (1995) cited in Read Naturally Inc. (2020) has outlined a number of reasons why some students have

a richer, fuller vocabulary than some of their classmates. These include language rich home with lots of verbal stimulation, wide background experience, being read to at home and at school, a lot of independent reading, and early development of word consciousness. The opposite of the above reasons is also true for students who have limited, inadequate vocabulary. With regards to closing the gap for students who have limited or inadequate vocabulary, Read Naturally Inc. referred to National Reading Panel (2000) that concluded that there is no single research-based method for developing vocabulary and closing the gap. From its analysis, the Panel recommended using a variety of indirect or incidental and direct or intentional methods of vocabulary instruction.

Read Naturally (2020) has outlined a number of strategies referred to as “research supported vocabulary learning strategies”. These are vocabulary learning strategies which promise to engage students in actively thinking about word meanings, the relationships among words, and how we can use words in different situations. One of the strategies is to offer student-friendly definitions. This strategy demands that the meaning of a new word be explained to students rather than just providing dictionary definition for the word which may be difficult for students to understand. Other strategies include defining words, sketching the words, which involves making a quick sketch that connects the word to something that is personally meaningful to the student, applying the target words, and analyzing word parts, which involves breaking down words into root words and affixes.

For some categories of students, there are significant obstacles to developing sufficient vocabulary to be successful in school and the obstacles include students with limited or no knowledge of English, students who do not read outside of school, students with reading and learning disabilities, and students who enter school with

limited vocabulary knowledge (Sedita, 2005). To overcome these obstacles, teachers need to engage the best kinds of vocabulary instruction and use technology that accommodates and supports that instruction. Sedita (2005) agreed with the National Reading Panel (2000) analysis of the research on vocabulary instruction found that there is no one best method for vocabulary instruction, and that vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly. Direct instruction means teaching specific words, such as pre-teaching vocabulary prior to reading a selection. It is estimated that students can be taught explicitly some 400 words per year in school. Another example of direct instruction involves the analysis of word roots and affixes (suffixes and prefixes). However, one cannot teach students all of the words they need to learn. Vocabulary instruction must therefore include indirect instruction methods, such as exposing students to lots of new words and having them read a lot. Indirect instruction also includes helping students develop an appreciation for words and experience enjoyment and satisfaction in their use. Vocabulary can also be learned incidentally in the context of storybook reading or in listening to others. Learning words before reading a text also is helpful. Techniques such as task restructuring and repeated exposure (including having the student encounter words in various contexts) appear to enhance vocabulary development. In addition, substituting easy words for more difficult words can assist low-achieving students (Sedita, 2005). Vocabulary instruction experts recommend a multi-component approach to developing vocabulary knowledge. Graves (2016) has advocated a four-part program that includes wide reading, teaching individual words, teaching word learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness.

## **2.7 Strategies for improving comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties**

The National Reading Panel (2005) defined reading comprehension as the act of understanding and interpreting the information within a text. Comprehension is about the construction of meaning more than about passive remembering. It is a form of active and dynamic thinking and includes interpreting information through the filter of one's own knowledge and beliefs, using the author's organizational plan to think about information or imposing one's own structure on the ideas, inferring what the author does not tell explicitly as well as many other cognitive actions. Successful comprehension requires the thoughtful interaction of a reader with a text. The Panel added that reading, like any language activity, is dependent on many levels of language skills. Thus, if a student lacks the phonemic awareness and phonics skills to translate written text into oral language, reading comprehension will be blocked no matter how well the student can think about the ideas.

As an example of how language skills depend on each other as stated above, Asinyor (2020) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of reading fluency skills instruction as a means of improving reading comprehension in senior high school struggling readers. A non-randomized control group pre-test and post-test was used in the data collection process. 120 participants were involved in the study where pre-test and posttest were administered to the participants, measuring three variables namely reading sub skills, comprehension skills and vocabulary knowledge. The reading sub skills involved reading rate, word reading accuracy, real word reading, pseudo word reading and phonemic awareness. The findings revealed that reading fluency skills instruction promoted significant and positive association involving all reading sub skills variables in the experimental group whereas the control group had only one

significant positive association involving reading and word reading accuracy. The experimental group showed significant associations involving three of the comprehension variables namely 'big idea', 'right there', and 'making connections'. However, the control group showed associations involving two comprehension strategies i.e. 'right there' and 'making connections'. The correlation analysis in the study showed that reading fluency skills instruction has a significant and positive connection with reading sub skills improvement. According to Asinyor (2020) this finding indicated that reading sub skills have a higher comprehension predicting ability when compared with comprehension skill/strategies.

Ceprano (2017) is of the view that reading comprehension requires attention to aspects of the micro and macro processes coupled with all applicable levels of thinking. Before readers can move to such levels on Bloom's revised taxonomy namely *remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating*, they need to first acquire facts to work with. Efficient readers are known to select and use multiple skills deemed appropriate for a particular text and their purpose for reading. Such readers have been taught useful skills and strategies for using them, allowed ample time for guided practice, and have been provided with demonstrations of how these are integrated across different kinds of texts for comprehension (p. 56). The following are some examples of strategies that can be used to teach each of the Bloom's taxonomies listed in Ceprano (2017). One of the strategies is to teach reading fluency. This attention is important considering that fluency is positively correlated with comprehension as reported by Asinyor (2020). That is, fluency has a reciprocal relationship with comprehension. The second strategy is to build knowledge of words, their usage and word referents. This is because students' success with comprehension

is closely connected to understanding the meaning of the author's words. Another strategy is to help students grasp the central theme of the text. This is because, being able to discern the main idea and significant details from what is less important increases readers' efficiency with understanding. Other strategies includes guiding readers to summarize text, and teaching them to engage in constructing personal meaning with text through the prompts posed to them and by the ones they pose for themselves as well.

The interdependence of language skills is also demonstrated in a study conducted by Ceprano (2010). Participants of the study were six pre-service teacher candidates (TCs) in field experiences in kindergarten or first grade classrooms at an urban based elementary school to compare the impact of interactive read-aloud and simple read-aloud on children's tier two vocabulary meaning acquisition and usage. In the study, each teacher candidate read a different trade book that contained at least 8 tier two words to four children from the classroom they had been assigned for field work. For two of the children, the selected text was read using 5 elaborations for each of the target words as it occurred. Each child was then asked to retell what had been read. Each child's usage of the target words during the retelling was noted for occurrence and accuracy of usage. Findings of the study revealed the superiority of the interactive approach in promoting not only comprehension but also vocabulary growth. Similarly, Read Naturally, Inc. (2020) opined that in order to read with comprehension, developing readers must be able to read with some proficiency and then receive explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies. With regards to general strategies for reading comprehension, Read Naturally opined that the process of comprehending text begins before children can read, when someone reads a picture book to them. Children listen to the words, see the pictures in the book, and may start

to associate the words on the page with the words they are hearing and the ideas they represent. Thus, in order to learn comprehension strategies, students need modeling, practice and feedback.

Read Naturally (2020) categorized reading comprehension strategies into two main groups. These include strategies for reading comprehension (narrative text) and strategies for reading comprehension (expository text). The strategies for narrative text (text that generally tell a story) are as follows: *Story maps, retelling, prediction and question and answers*. In story maps, teachers help students to diagrammatize the “*story grammar*” of the text to raise their awareness of the elements the author uses to construct the story. Story grammar includes setting, characters, plot, and theme among others. The other strategy under narrative text, retelling, asks students to retell a story in their own words, a strategy which forces them to analyse the content to determine what is important. It also includes encouraging students to go beyond literally recounting a story to drawing own conclusions about it. still under narrative text is a strategy referred to as prediction. Here, teachers ask readers to make a predictions about a story based on the title and any other clues that are available, such as illustration. Teachers can later ask students to find text that supports or contradicts their predictions. The final strategy identified for comprehending a narrative text is questions and answers sessions. This strategy involves asking students different types of questions that require them to find the answers in different ways.

Expository text explains facts and concepts in order to inform persuade or explain. Expository text is typically structured with visual cues such as headings and subheadings that provide clear cues as to the structure of the information. The first sentence in a paragraph is also typically a topic sentence that clearly states what the paragraph is about. Expository text also often uses one of five common text structures

as an organizing principle namely cause and effect, problem and solution, compare and contrast, description, time order (sequence of events, actions, etc.) and so forth.

The report by the National Reading Panel (2005) indicated that the research on comprehension strategies has evolved dramatically over the course of the last two decades. At first, investigators focused on teaching students one strategy at a time. A wide variety of strategies was studied, including imagery, question generating, prediction, and a host of others. In later studies, several strategies were taught in combination. However, implementation in the context of the actual classroom of this promising approach to comprehension has been problematic. Acquiring and practicing strategies in isolation and then attempting to provide transfer opportunities during the reading of text is not the kind of instruction that is required in naturalistic contexts. Proficient reading involves a constant, ongoing adaptation of many cognitive processes. Thus, teachers must be skillful in their instruction and must respond flexibly and opportunistically to students' needs for instructive feedback as they read. To be able to do this, teachers must themselves have a firm grasp not only of the strategies that they are teaching the children but also of instructional strategies they can employ to achieve their goal. Many teachers find this type of teaching a challenge, most likely because they have not been trained to do such teaching. The focus of the review was on four recent and promising studies that addressed the need for specific teacher preparation in the implementation of strategy instruction in naturalistic classroom contexts. In these four studies, teachers were trained to teach strategies, and the focus was on the effectiveness of that training on students' reading. All four studies showed that teachers can be taught to be effective in teaching comprehension to their students in naturalistic reading contexts. These studies indicate that teaching teachers to use comprehension instruction methods leads to

students' awareness of strategies and use of strategies, which can in turn lead to improved reading. Teachers therefore need training to become effective in explaining fully what it is that they are teaching (what to do, why, how, and when), modeling their own thinking processes for their students, encouraging students to ask questions and discuss possible answers and provide solutions among themselves, and keeping students engaged in their reading by providing tasks that demand active involvement. There should be greater emphasis in teacher education on the teaching of reading comprehension. Such instruction should begin during pre-service training, and it should be extensive, especially with respect to preparing teachers to teach comprehension strategies.

Hansen (2016) cited a study by Denton (2014) that compared the effects of guided reading, explicit instruction, and typical school instruction on reading comprehension and other skills. The study was conducted in urban, suburban, and rural schools in the southwestern United States. Students were randomly assigned to one of the three groups and then growth was measured. The guided reading described in Denton's study was similar to that described by Rojas (2014), which defined this type of teaching as guided participation between experts and novices where adults scaffold children's learning activities. In the study, the effects of guided reading on the reading comprehension of students were examined. When the students in the guided reading group struggled with a word or made an error, the teachers would scaffold their response and try to prompt students to choose and use strategies. These strategies were intended to refocus the students on the meaning, syntax, and visual cues from the text. The results of the study showed that guided reading and explicit instruction were superior to typical school instruction for improving reading comprehension.

Frey (2010), cited by Hansen (2016) conducted a study on the specific ways that teachers can scaffold reading comprehension. This study was conducted in eighteen classrooms in one urban district in the United States. In all of the classrooms at least 35% of the student population was English Language Learners (ELLs). The results of the study revealed that when scaffolding, teachers commonly used questions to check for understanding, prompts for cognitive and meta-cognitive work, cues to focus the learner's attention, and direct explanations or modeling. Hansen (2016) opined that these different methods can be adapted to fit different students and reading instruction as they were shown to be useful in helping students master skills taught more rapidly. The importance of using varied scaffolding strategies is further supported by Shang (2015) cited in Hansen (2016) who stated that a considerable number of studies have suggested the advantages of applying scaffolding strategies in reading pedagogy to enhance the ability of inquiry, problem solving, and reading comprehension performance.

O'Rourke (2017) agreed with researchers like Hansen (2016) that guided reading offers a unique experience for readers. She added that this strategy allows readers to be with similar ability students and hence make them feel more comfortable with their abilities if they are striving. Also, if students are exceeding reading expectations, guided reading is a place where they can continue to scaffold their knowledge. Further, student dialogue regarding the common text in their group will further develop their understanding because they can learn from each other and this allows them to further scaffold their understanding. Similarly, Anderson (2016) cited in O'Rourke (2017) conducted a study on the impact of guided reading on comprehension involving a control group and experimental group. It was found out that there was a significant improvement in reading comprehension of the control

group. However, the experimental group had the most improvement in the second half of the school year. O'Rourke (2017) argued that when educators are explicit and efficient with their guided reading instruction, students can gain momentum in their reading achievement. Word recognition can improve along with comprehension. Comprehension is a key component to the reading process. Referring to the 2006 report of the National Reading Panel, O'Rourke argued that the positive outcomes of guided reading apply to all students; good readers and striving readers.

Like any other academic endeavour, it is widely believed that a strong foundation at the early stages is a promise for success at the higher levels of learning. For example, Amekonuwor (2019) conducted a study to determine the extent to which reading difficulties affect the academic performance senior high school students in Methodist Girls' High school in Ghana. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to collect data from 12 English language teachers and 120 students. In a reading test conducted for students, it was revealed that students who had fewer problems with word substitution, omission, addition and mispronunciation were likely to perform academically well. That is, cloze test performance where 67 percent of the students performed below average was an indication of poor academic performance as a result of reading difficulties. It was also established from the study that 90 percent of teachers of English experience problems in teaching reading and 60 percent of teachers did not conduct library lessons at all due to lack of library resources.

Browder, Wakeman, Spooner, & Ahlgrim-Delzell (2009) identified five essential components of reading instruction namely phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. They argued that although instructors encounter many difficulties in teaching students with reading difficulties how to read, and more

challenging reading comprehension, there are some instructional interventions that have been proven by many educators to be effective in helping students with learning disability in particular to improve their reading performance. For instance, Souhila (2014) conducted a study to make English as Foreign Language learners aware of reading dealing with some effective strategies that will help them to overcome their difficulties in reading comprehension. The hypothesis of the study stated that if English students used the strategies of predicting, skimming, scanning, inferring, guessing the meaning of new words, self-monitoring, and summarizing appropriately, they would be able to achieve comprehension in reading easily. To test this hypothesis, questionnaire and test items were administered to participants in order to collect data about their use of these strategies and their ability to achieve comprehension in reading. The data obtained from questionnaire and practical exercises indicated that students' problems in reading can be avoided to achieve comprehension in reading if students use the reading strategies appropriately.

## **2.8 Language experience approach (LEA) to teaching comprehension**

According to De Juan, Mendosa, Villafania, & Facullo (2024), language experience approach (LEA) is a method of teaching literacy based on a learner's existing language experience. It also includes shared experiences such as everyday occurrences, common educational experiences, a school event or hands-on exercises, outdoor adventures and the like. This implies that in the use of this approach, a teacher does not give students explicit instructions and so they have the freedom to explore ideas. De Juan, et al. (2024) conducted a study to examine the efficacy of the language experience approach in developing students' reading comprehension skills. 89 grade 12 students participated in the study. The researchers utilized a quasi-experimental research design namely pretest and posttest as well as questionnaires to

collect data from the students. The pretest was first administered without using the language experience approach, while the post test was executed after using the language experience approach. At the end of the study, the researchers found a substantial change in the students' scores before and after the use of the language experience approach. In addition, the study revealed a significant distinction between male and female sex-disaggregated reading comprehension skills. That is, based on their scores, female respondents had greater comprehension abilities than male respondents.

Sunjoo (2013) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of transactional strategy instruction (TSI) in teaching reading comprehension to a diverse group of second graders. The diversity included various levels of readiness in reading, language status such as English learners and native speakers of English, and various levels of participation by children in a whole-class setting. Part One of this study used teacher action research as its methodology to address reading comprehension and student autonomy. Part Two of this study used participatory action research, involving children as co-researchers, to investigate how second graders perceived Literature Circles as their reading comprehension instruction and to suggest ways to improve Literature Circles. The significance of the study was based on the need to find an effective methodology for teaching reading comprehension to both native speakers of English and English learners in the same classroom. The findings suggest that TSI was effective with students in the primary grades, such as second grade, in teaching reading comprehension and in increasing autonomy in children as learners and as members of Literature Circles. In addition, there were unexpected findings of increased motivation and enjoyment in children, increased teacher-like facilitating and

helping behaviors, and evidence of children informing instruction for the teacher. Participatory action research by children suggested that second graders enjoyed learning through Literature Circles as well as ways to improve Literature Circles.

Njeng'ere (2015) conducted a study on instructional strategies to enhance reading comprehension among primary pupils in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out the instructional strategies adopted by class three primary school teachers and the correlation between the strategies teachers use and pupils comprehension ability. The study was conducted in Nairobi. The data collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and a comprehension test. The findings of the study showed that teachers had limited awareness of reading comprehension instructional strategies. The study further revealed that most teachers did not have specific strategies to assist pupils' comprehension abilities. Huggins & Edwards (2011) also conducted a study on scaffolding to improve reading comprehension. The results showed that graphic organizers which make use of boxes, lines and other devices to categorize and prioritize information for retention and comprehension in the classroom assist in improving reading comprehension.

Ceprano (2010) engaged six pre-service teacher candidates (TCs) in field experiences in kindergarten or first grade classrooms at an urban based elementary school to compare the impact of interactive read-alouds and simple read-alouds on children's tier two vocabulary meaning acquisition and usage. In the study, each TC read a different trade book that contained at least 8 tier two words to four children from the classroom they had been assigned for field work. For two of the children, the selected text was read using 5 elaborations for each of the target words as it occurred. Each child was then asked to retell what had been read. Each child's usage of the target words during the retelling was noted for occurrence and accuracy of usage. Findings

of the study revealed the superiority of the interactive approach in promoting vocabulary growth as well as comprehension.

## **2.9 Strategies for improving fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties**

The National Reading Panel (NRP) defined fluent readers as those able to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. The Panel defined fluency in reading as the ability to recognize word quickly and to read sentences and longer passages in a connected easy manner that indicates understanding of the material. Like other researchers such as Stoffelsma, Wilsenach, & Mutema, (2026), the NRP considers fluency as one of the critical factors necessary for reading comprehension. However, the Panel added that this critical component of reading is often neglected in the classroom.

According to Richek et al. (2002), as cited in Abdulkadir (2023), choral reading is one of the fluent reading strategies used in the experimental applications in their study. It is a fluent reading strategy that occurs when a group of students read a part or all of the text they read together. Choral reading is carried out as read aloud and all students read the text at the same time. A good reader serves as a model for the rest in terms of accuracy, speed and so forth. Abellana & Nueva (2025) have also identified another strategy for teaching reading fluency namely Fluency Development Approach also called Fluency Development Lesson, a useful approach to teaching that involves modelling fluency reading, assisted reading, repeated reading, word study, performance reading and home and school involvement. Abellana & Nueva (2025) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of the Fluency Development Approach in enhancing students' reading accuracy and comprehension, addressing the persistent challenge of low reading proficiency among middle school learners. Pretest and posttest experimental design was used involving 38 frustrated readers of grade 8.

One of the findings was that the students demonstrated measurable improvement in reading accuracy. It was also found out that while the students advanced to the instructional level of reading comprehension, their progress was insufficient to meet the expected proficiency for grade eight. Nonetheless, it was concluded that the results confirm that the Fluency Development Approach had positive influences for reading and comprehension, highlighting the potential of this approach as an effective intervention strategy.

Researchers generally agree that fluency develops from reading practice. However, what is left to be agreed upon is the form of practice that is effective. Two main approaches to teaching fluency have been identified. One approach, the guided repeated oral reading, encourages students to read passages orally with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from the teacher. It includes five strategies namely repeated reading; paired reading, where students in pairs read aloud to each other; shared reading, where a teacher explicitly models the strategies and skills of proficient readers; neurological impress, a kind of paired reading where a student and teacher read the same text simultaneously but the teacher reads slightly faster and louder; and assisted reading, where a struggling reader is supported by a proficient reader such as a teacher or peer in order to provide immediate feedback to build fluency skills. The other approach, independent silent reading, encourages learners to read silently on their own, inside and outside the classroom, with minimal guidance and feedback. It includes all efforts to increase the amounts of independent or recreational reading. Section 2.0 below outlines the findings and conclusions by the National Reading Panel Report (2000) on fluency.

## **2.10 Guided oral reading as a strategy for teaching fluency**

According to Reading Rockets (2026) there are two instructional approaches to teaching reading fluency, namely guided repeated oral reading and independent silent reading. Guided oral reading encourages students to read passages orally with systematic and explicit guidance and feedback from the teacher whereas independent silent reading encourages students to read silently on their own, inside and outside the classroom, with minimal guidance or feedback. Several specific examples of techniques that involve rereading with feedback have been given. One example is a situation where an adult or peer reads with the student by modelling fluent reading and then asking the student to read the same passage aloud with encouragement and feedback by the adult or peer. Another example is where a student listens to a tape of a fluent reader reading text at the student's independent level and at a pace of about 80-100 words per minute. The student first listens to the tape and practices along until he/she attains fluency. A third example is where a student reads with a peer partner in turns. In this scenario, a more fluent reader is normally paired with a less fluent reader where the former provides encouragement and feedback.

Musti-Rao, Hawkins, & Barkley (2009) evaluated the effects of peer mediated repeated reading with struggling, urban, fourth grade students. All students in the study were determined to be reading below grade level based on the school's diagnostic testing. Students were paired together and took turns practicing reading a passage for ten minutes. Performance of participants was measured weekly on unpracticed passages to determine if the gains made on practice passages was transferred to unrehearsed passages. At the conclusion of their study, the researchers found out that all students showed growth in their oral reading fluency, as measured in words correct per minute, but failed to transfer these gains to unrehearsed passages.

Students, on average, had a mean change of 39.8% in their words correct per minute, and were able to meet the criteria of 118 words per minute on practice passages.

Padeliadu & Giazitzidou (2018) conducted a study to identify the most effective instructional strategies for reading fluency development through a synthesis of eight relevant meta-analyses. Through the synthesis, the role of repeated readings appeared to be prominent in reading fluency instruction. In specific, repeated readings were found to be more effective when they were used in combination with the strategies of self-monitoring, goal setting and model reading. In addition, provision of preview and cue seemed to have a decisive role in fluency instruction.

As part of a larger research study that was seeking to answer the question of whether or not students with persistent reading difficulties made gains in the areas of decoding, spelling, fluency, and comprehension using an intensive intervention designed to promote oral reading fluency and accurate decoding, Denton (2012) conducted a study to describe the current research base and identify research needs related to response to intervention (RTI) frameworks in primary-grade reading. Research is reviewed on early reading instruction and intervention, the implementation of multitiered reading interventions, and the determination of intervention responsiveness. Areas identified as in need of research include (a) the conditions under which early reading interventions are most effective in RTI contexts, (b) multitiered interventions for students with limited English proficiency, (c) reading instruction for students who make limited progress in Tier 3 intensive interventions, (d) criteria for determining intervention responsiveness, and (e) the effects of fully implemented RTI frameworks. Although RTI research may be expensive and difficult

to implement, it may contribute to improved reading outcomes for many students who are otherwise at risk of serious negative life consequences.

Oueini, Bahous & Nabhani (2008) conducted a study over a three-week period with 53 five- to six-year-old kindergarten children from economically disadvantaged homes learning French as a second language in Lebanon. The read-aloud strategy consisted of two teachers reading story books to children and explaining unfamiliar words. The teachers engaged children in meaningful discussions about the text, involving logical and critical thinking. Data were collected through observations, conferences with children and children's writing samples. Findings revealed that there were substantial gains in children's vocabulary and comprehension skills. Students were able to use the new vocabulary words and engage in analysis and synthesis as they participated in of the read aloud-stories.

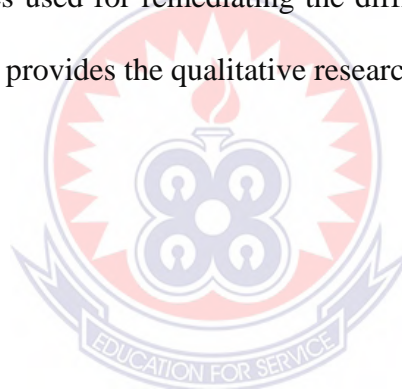
### **2.11 Independent silent reading as a strategy for teaching fluency**

The NRP supported the widespread agreement in research literature that when teachers encourage students to engage in wide, independent silent reading, it increases reading achievement. However, the Panel opined that these agreements were based on correlation studies which do not imply causation. In order to address the issue of causation, the Panel examined the specific impact of such encouragement on fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. The Panel found out that even though encouraging students to read more is intuitively appealing, there is still not sufficient research evidence to support the idea that such efforts reliably increase how much students read or that such programmes result in improved reading skills. The Panel therefore emphasized the need for further research in this area to establish the

causal relationship between independent silent reading practices and fluency including other reading skills.

## **2.12 Conclusion**

This chapter began with a brief discussion of the interactive model of reading which forms the theoretical framework for this study. The chapter ended with a detailed discussion of related literature on the various strategies used by teachers to remediate reading difficulties among students in basic schools. Unlike other research studies that focus on one or two components of reading, this study focused on four specific components of oral English namely phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension as well as the strategies used for remediating the difficulties associated with each of them. The next chapter provides the qualitative research methodology for this study.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative research approach, the case study design, population of the study, sampling technique and sample size, as well as instrumentation for the study. Creswell (2008) cited by Hlaethwa (2013) defined qualitative research as a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of the participants, asks broad and general questions, collects data consisting largely of words or text from the participants, then describes, analyses and conducts an enquiry in a subjective, biased manner. Qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, and the meaning that people assign to them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). In this study, qualitative research method was found to be most appropriate because it enabled the researcher to ask teachers broad and general questions. This method also helped to observe and describe in detail what strategies teachers used to remediate reading difficulties of their students.

#### 3.1 Research approach

This study used qualitative approach. Qualitative research places emphasis upon exploring and understanding “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p.4). Qualitative methods are usually described as inductive, with the underlying assumptions being that reality is a social construct, that variables are difficult to measure, complex and interwoven, that there is a primacy of subject matter and that the data collected will consist of an insider's viewpoint (Rovai et al., 2014). Rovai et al. (2014, p.4) make the point that this approach towards

research values individuality, culture, and social justice which provides a content and context rich breadth of information which, although subjective in nature, is current.

This study used the qualitative research approach because data was collected in the field at the site (Agona Swedru Presby A & B Primary Schools). The participants were not brought into a lab (a contrived situation), nor the research instruments posted to them to complete. Besides, the research questions sought to find “*what*” and “*which*” which according to Kusi (2012), is best analysed qualitatively. The choice of the qualitative research approach was influenced by the argument of Tsadidey (2018) that qualitative research seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population. Again, I wanted to give the respondents the opportunity to respond more elaborately and in greater detail to questions, hence the choice of qualitative approach. More importantly, the choice of the qualitative research approach was motivated by the argument of Pallant (2020) that it has the ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue.

### **3.2 Research design**

A research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. In other words, the research design indicates the general plan: how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p, 28).

The research design used for this study was a case study. Creswell (2014) explains a case study as a qualitative design, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Yin, 2013). The justification for the choice of the design was based on Yin (2013) who argues that case study research is, particularly useful when the phenomenon of interest is of a broad and complex nature and hence is best studied within the context in which it occurs. Moreover, the design provided the opportunity for me to interact with the participants in their socio-cultural context to understand the phenomenon under study. In short, the case study research design helped me to have an in-depth understanding of the strategies used by teachers to remediate reading difficulties of students of Swedru Presby A & B Primary School by interacting with them in the socio-economic setting in which the programme operated. Again, the design was able to answer the ‘*how*’ and ‘*what*’ research questions by collecting views, opinions, feelings and experiences of the participants (Kusi, 2012).

### **3.3 Population**

McMillan & Schumacher (2014), postulate that population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria in research. Population can also be defined as a group of individuals with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested. The population for the study was all teachers Swedru Presby A & B Primary Schools. Target population is the group of individuals that the research draws conclusions from. Thus, the target population is the unit(s) for which the information is required and actually studied. For the purpose of this study, the target population was twelve (12) English teachers

in Swedru Presby A & B Primary Schools. The accessible population was six teachers of Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools.

### **3.4 The study setting**

The settings for this study were two basic schools at Agona Swedru in the Agona West Municipality namely Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. The schools were chosen because they met the study requirements in terms of presence of students with reading difficulties, and presence of experienced trained teachers

### **3.5 Sample size**

A sample is a subset of a population that is used to represent the entire group as a whole (Cherry; 2022). The sample size can be selected from a larger group of persons, identified as the population, or can simply refer to the group of subjects from whom data are collected (McMillan and Schumacher (2014). A sample is those who the researcher selects to actually represent the population and participate in the study. The choice of a sample suggests that it is difficult for researchers to study the entire population, and it is more practical and economical to work with samples rather than with large target populations. Therefore, conclusions drawn from the sample reflects the population. In this study six (6) teachers were selected to participate in the study. The choice of the sample size of six teachers was based on the principle of saturation, where the researcher was convinced that the sample size selected would produce adequate data for the study. In this case, the focus of data saturation is on the depth and quality of data and not about the quantity of data (Sarfo et al. 2021). In other words, the sample size of six teachers was considered adequate because qualitative case study research prioritizes depth of insight over representativeness. Thus, the

homogeneity of participants' instructional roles and richness of interview data provided sufficient information to address the research questions.

### **3.6 Sampling technique**

Sampling is the process by which researchers select a population of the target population to represent the entire population (Aniwaba, 2020). Sampling allows researchers to draw conclusions about a larger population by examining a smaller, manageable subset. It involves selecting a subset of individuals or items from a larger population to make inferences about that population. Sampling is seen as the scientific procedure that researchers take to choose participants for their study. Purposive sampling, also known as selective sampling is a technique in which researchers rely on their own judgment in choosing members of a population to participate in the study. De Vos et. al (2002) explained that in qualitative research, non-probability sampling is used almost without exception. In purposive sampling technique, the researcher groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. Amoani (2005) opined that the basic assumption in purposive sampling technique is to handpick the cases to be included in the study. A common strategy is to pick cases that are judged to be typical of the population with the assumption that errors of judgment in the selection processes will counterbalance each other. McMillan and & Schumacher (2014) also describe purposive sampling as a type of sampling procedure where a researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. This is usually done on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population; a judgment is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. The criteria of inclusion in this study were; (1) must have taught for at least five years, and (2) must be willing to participate in the

study. The five years inclusion criterion was based on the motivation that five years were enough for any teacher to gather enough experiences regarding teaching learners with learning challenges

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

The instrument used for data collection was semi-structured interview guide. This qualitative research method was prepared based on the objectives and the research questions that were formulated to guide the study.

#### **3.7.1 Interview guide**

“A semi-structured interview is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. However, the questions are not set in order or in phrasing” (George, 2022 p.1). The semi-structured interview was preferred because it allowed the respondents to construct their own words and express themselves at length, but offered enough room to prevent aimless rambling (Kusi, 2012). Secondly, the researcher got the opportunity to seek clarification through probing and expanding the responses of interviewees to ascertain their feelings and experiences. In addition, the interviewer was flexible, in terms of the order in which the issues were considered, and this made the interviewees develop ideas and spoke more widely on the issues raised by the researcher (Denscombe, 2017).

The following are sample interview questions as shown in Appendix A. Research question 1 focused on the strategies teachers use to improve phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties, and some of the interview questions were as follows: *How do you motivate learners who have difficulties in reading to acquire phonics skills? How do you attend to individual needs of children with difficulties in acquiring phonics skills?* Research question 2 focused on strategies teachers use to improve

vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties. Some of the interview questions included the following: *What materials or resources do you use during vocabulary lessons? How do you sustain the attention span of your learners during vocabulary lessons?* Research question 3 sought to explore strategies teachers use to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties, and some of the questions included: *How do you motivate your learners with reading difficulties to enjoy comprehension lessons? How often do you conduct exercises during comprehension lessons?* Finally, research question 4 sought to examine strategies teachers use to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties. Some of the questions asked were: *How do you address the individual needs of your learners during lessons in fluency? How often do you conduct exercises in fluency? Which teaching and learning materials do you use to teach fluency?*

### **3.8 Procedure for data collection**

An introductory letter (refer to Appendix E) was obtained from the Head, Department of Special Education, University of Education, Winneba. This was meant to officially introduce the researcher to the participants of the study. The purpose of the study and the plans to collect data were discussed with the participants. There was a consensus with the respondents on where and when to start the data collection process. At any time before the interview sessions commenced, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants and what was expected of them. Permission was sought from the participants, and approval was given before audio-taping the interview for the purposes of transcribing. Smartphones were used to audio-record interviews. Inter-observer reliability was deployed where two interviewers were

involved. This was to ascertain the degree of agreement between the two observers. The data was then played and transcribed for analysis soon after the sessions.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

McMillan & Schumacher (2014) described qualitative data analysis as being primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among them. Qualitative researchers prefer using the conceptualized approach of data analysis over the other traditional methods of qualitative data analysis because the inductive approach allows research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies. The process of the inductive analysis begins with collecting all the data together in order to gain meaning from the created patterns from the collected data. It starts from the specific and moves to the general. For this study, the following steps were followed in analysing the data as suggested by Creswell (2018). First, the researcher organised the data into file folders and developed a table of sources to help organise the materials by type, location and participant. The researcher then transcribed the data obtained through interviews and document reviews into text data. Secondly, the researcher divided the text into segments of information and labeled them with code-words or phrases that accurately described the meaning of the text segment. Finally, the themes which emerged and patterns by reducing the list of codes to get five to seven themes that would help write a qualitative report.

### **3.10 Trustworthiness of the study**

Kakar, Rasheed, Rashid, & Akhter (2023) argues that the most important factor that influences the rigour of qualitative research investigations is trustworthiness. Kakar et al. (2023) outlined the following criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of

qualitative research being put forward by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as one of the most popular and generally accepted. The strategies include credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

### **3.10.1 Credibility**

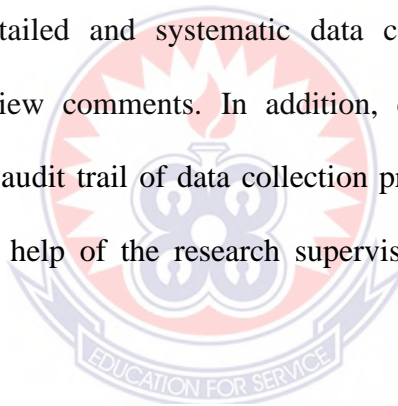
According to Kakar et. al. (2023) credibility shows the truth of data and respondents' views and their interpretations. To ensure credibility, the researcher had a prolonged engagement with pupils, teachers and parent who participated in the study. This prolonged engagement with the study participants led to cordial relationships and eventual trust building. By virtue of the trust building developed through a prolonged interaction with the participants, the researcher was able to collect reliable data for the study. Prolonged engagement is a technique used to ensure credible data and interpretation of findings. Other strategies employed to ensure credibility were continuous observation of participants in their natural environment and peer debriefings with research supervisor and colleagues to help control perceptions and biases of the study as proposed by Kakar et. al. (2023).

### **3.10.2 Transferability**

Transferability or applicability refers to the degree to which the results of a qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts, groups, people and settings (Kakar et. al.; 2023). In this study, transferability was achieved through a thorough and extensive description of the research process for others to replicate. Also, there was adequate background information about the study participants, the research context and settings that allow others to assess the transferability of the study.

### **3.10.3 Dependability**

Dependability is the consistency of data over similar contexts. That is, if the findings of one study are replicated in a similar population, condition or context, the study findings are dependable (Kakar et. al. ; 2023). Using the criteria by Kakar et. al. (2023) in this study, dependability was achieved through the establishment of appropriate enquiry choices. This included the review of interviewer bias, to ensure early closure and at the same time prevent the provision of unreliable data due to boredom and fatigue on the part of the participants as a result of long interview sessions. Also, information from extensive literature helped the researcher to develop appropriate questions that elicit appropriate responses for the research questions. There was also a detailed and systematic data collection procedure, extensive transcription of interview comments. In addition, dependability was ensured by maintaining a detailed audit trail of data collection process, analysis procedures and interpretation with the help of the research supervisor who served as the external auditor.



### **3.10.4 Conformability**

Conformability, also known as neutrality refers to the fairness of results which consist of the purity of original responses of participants and free from every kind of biases (Kakar et. al.; 2023). In this study, triangulation strategy was adopted to achieve conformability. This strategy was recognized by (Kakar et. al.; 2023) as one of the most central strategies for strengthening trustworthiness, and it is helpful to improve credibility and transferability as well. In order to ensure confirmability of this study, the researcher carried out peer reviews to aid in verification and conformation or disconfirmation of themes in the data collection process. In the peer review process,

several postgraduate students in the field of special education and who were familiar with qualitative research methods were invited to assist. The formulation of research themes went through a series of reviews to arrive at the final themes that align with the research questions. Again, the researcher went back to the study participants to authenticate the transcribed comments of their interviews. Another crosscheck of the transcribed data and related inferences was made with the participants to ensure that the final data was a true reflection of what the participants provided.

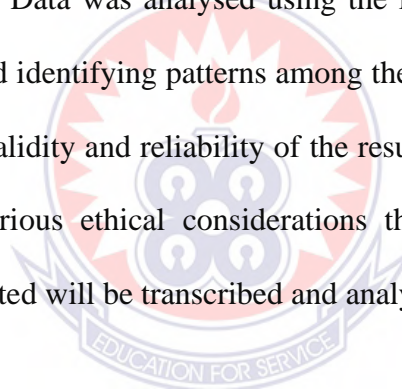
### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Wa-Mbaleka (2019) has identified different broad ethical issues in qualitative research but for this study, the researcher found it appropriate to consider the ethical considerations of informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, reciprocity and avoidance of harm. In terms of informed consent, researchers initially obtained a formal permission from the headteacher of the two schools to carry out the study. Teachers who participated in the study were also informed that their participation was voluntary. The participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the process whenever they wished. Participants were also informed of their right to decide not to answer questions that they felt they were not comfortable with. With regards to privacy and anonymity, the researcher respected these ethics by not discussing with anyone the specifics of what was heard or said during the study period. To protect the privacy of participants, the researcher used pseudonyms and labels of alphabet letters in recording information. The researcher adhered to the code of reciprocity by showing appreciation to participants for spending their time, effort and other resources to ensure successful data collection process. De Vos et. al. (2006) stated that subjects can be harmed in a physical or emotional manner. In the social sciences,

harm to subjects will be mainly of an emotional nature, which is difficult to predict and to determine, with far-reaching consequences for respondents. To avoid harm to the participants, the researcher informed them beforehand about the impact of the investigation and offered them opportunities to withdraw if they so wished.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter has dealt with a description of the qualitative case study approach selected for the study and the justification for selecting the approach. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample population of the study. The mode of data collection employed was semi structured interviews and reviews of personal and official document. Data was analysed using the inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among them. The chapter concluded with a description of how validity and reliability of the results were achieved as well as an explanation of the various ethical considerations that were adopted. In the next chapter, the data collected will be transcribed and analyzed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

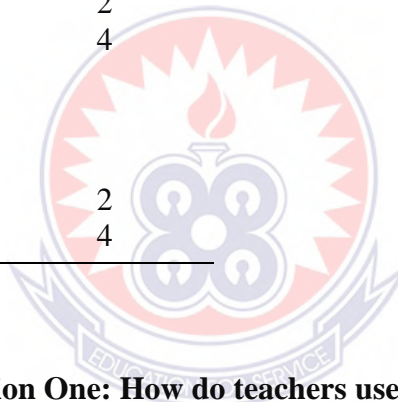
#### 4.0 Introduction

The study explored strategies teachers use to improve reading skills for learners with reading difficulties at Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. This chapter discusses and analyses data that were obtained from the fieldwork. Using the qualitative approach, the data was discussed and analyzed under the four main themes derived from the four research questions. The analysis was under two main sections. The first part presented the demographic profile of the participants for the study. The second part focuses on findings from the thematic analysis with respect to each research question. Systematically presented, the first theme deals with the strategies teachers use to teach phonics to learners with reading difficulties. The second theme presents the strategies teachers use to teach vocabulary to learners with reading difficulties. The third theme presents the strategies teachers use to teach comprehension to learners with reading difficulties. Finally, information was elicited from the participants about the strategies they use to teach fluency to learners with reading difficulties. Again, under each theme, various sub-themes were developed for further discussions. A summary of the research findings concludes the chapter. The next section describes the demographic characteristics of participants.

#### 4.1 Demographics of participants

The table below outlines the background information of the participants of the study.

Characteristics	Number
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	2
Female	4
<i>Class taught</i>	
Basic 4	3
Basic 5	2
Basic 6	1
<i>Experience</i>	
10 -15 years	2
15- 25 years	4
<i>Qualification</i>	
Diploma in education	2
Bachelor of education	4



##### 4.2.1. Research Question One: How do teachers use recommended phonics-based strategies to improve phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties?

This section describes in detail the themes that emerged from the study on strategies teachers use to improve phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties. The results are based on interviews with six teachers who participated in this study. Three themes namely the use of rhymes, colourful letter sound, and teaching sounds of the alphabet emerged.

### **A. The use of rhymes**

The use of rhymes is known to facilitate the teaching and learning of language. In this study, rhymes were employed by the teachers to manage the reading difficulties of children. These were gathered from the narrations below;

*Most times, I make use of rhymes during my teaching sessions and when I am remediating challenges learners have with phonics. My regular use of rhymes has assisted the pupils to understand phonics skills because they (the pupils) are able to make sense out of the formation of letters into words (Teacher A).*

Another teacher aptly stated;

*I always make use of rhymes. My learners enjoy it. Anytime I introduce it they are eager to learn. Through it, I am able to teach the sounds of the letters and words. It really helps (Teacher C)*

It is clear from the comments that the use of rhymes was one of the strategies adopted by the teachers in remediating reading difficulties of the children of Swedru Presby A & B. The teachers use them because it makes learning interesting and fun to the children. Besides, the children are able make sense of the formation of letters and these influences understanding.

### **B. Colorful Letter/word Sound (phonics)**

The use of letter sound emerged from the study as one strategies used by teachers of Swedru Presby A & B use to teach children with reading difficulties. These are explicitly indicated in the narrations below;

*Phonic is a strategy or method used to teach learners with reading difficulties. I use colourful sounds letter cards to facilitate word recognition. This helps children to associate sounds with printed letters and leads to independence in unlocking new words. In phonics instruction, children study the shapes and sounds of alphabet letters*

*so they can identify them on the page when reading. This skill helps children decode, or breakdown, new words into shorter sounds, which can be blended together to form words. (Teacher B)*

Similar responses were shared by another participant when he expressed:

*I assist the pupils to muster the sound of the letters of the English alphabets. With such knowledge, the learners are able to blend them to form several other words. This helps them in during reading. (Teacher C)*

Further, another teacher added by stating that:

*I am privileged to know how to use phonics, look and say, whole word methods and letters. All I need is to know how best to apply them when teaching these children because already they have a limitation in their reading abilities. With these instructional methods — rhymes and sounds letter cards, I can proudly say pupils enjoy phonics lessons and they really benefit immensely, something that must be encouraged.*

*The look and say, phonics and whole word strategies are what I adopt during the teaching and learning process. I ensure my pupils understand them very well and encourage them to apply them during pronunciation and reading exercises. The regular application of these strategies makes the pupils improve their reading abilities gradually.*

**(Teacher D)**

It is clear that teachers use colorful letters and word sound as a strategy to assist learner with difficulties in phonic skills acquisition. The strategy is able to assist learners form mental images of the shapes of and form of the letters and link them with the sound. The regular use of this strategy results in learners noticing the shape of a lot of letters with the corresponding sound.

### **C. Teaching the sound of the alphabets**

Comments from the respondents revealed that some learners had difficulties blending the sounds to form a complete word; hence they taught the learners the sound of the alphabets. These are revealed in the following comment;

*I teach pupils how to pronounce sounds of letters of the alphabet. However, it is really difficult to blend the sounds to form some complete words. This is so because some words are not spelt the way they sound; words like phone, sugar and Wednesday. (Teacher E)*

Additionally, another teacher made the following remarks:

*Sometimes, I teach pupils how to use the sound of letters and later form words. I tell pupils how to sound a letter and form a word using the same letter. This makes pupils understand faster first by identifying the letter and sound, and reading comes last after formation of letters according to their sounds. (Teacher F)*

Generally, the responses were that usage of rhymes and sounds letter cards were among common instructional methods used by the teachers in teaching phonics skills. It is clear that those who struggle with reading need enhanced teaching, and for many struggling readers, and particularly readers with dyslexia and other aspects of reading difficulties, the phonics element is most important. This is because phonics method is a multi-sensory strategy. This finding is in line with the interactive model of reading, particularly the bottom-up approach to teaching reading. The study further found that the use of rhymes and colorful letter cards as instructional strategies aided and inculcated phonics skills among learners with reading difficulties, and they enjoyed it.

#### **4.2.2 Strategies teachers use to motivate students to acquire phonics skills**

To ensure maximum cooperation of the students during the remediation process, several motivating themes were employed. These included the use of sound games,

two letter words sound ball, letter cards, word cards, and rhymes are evident in the responses of the participants. The following narrations highlighted the said strategies

#### **A. Sound Games, Two Letter Words Sound Ball**

According to the participants, they made use of sound games and two letter sound balls to motivate the learners for maximum cooperation. These were revealed in the following narrations.

*Well, I motivate learners who have difficulties in acquiring phonics skills through the use of sound games and two letter words sound ball. I use these materials in teaching them phonics skills (Teacher A)*

*Since children like to play, I resorted to the use of sound/two letter word sound balls to teach phonetic to my students (Teacher B).*

It is clear from the comments that sound games and two letter sound balls used by the teachers to successful motivate the learners during the remediation of their reading challenges using the phonic approach. The children enjoyed the approach since it appeared to them as if they were playing.

#### **B. The use of letter cards and word cards**

Apart from the use of sound games and two letter sound balls, the use of letter cards and sound cards also featured prominently in the motivating strategies of the teachers. These are revealed in the following comments;

*Learners who have difficulties in acquiring phonics skills through the use of letter cards and word cards. When I use it, they feel that they are having fun and thus they are happy to attempt pronouncing the words (Teacher B).*

Another participant added

*I motivate learners who have difficulties in acquiring phonics skills through the use of a combination of sound games, two letter words sound ball, letter cards, and word cards, etc. (Teacher C)*

*The use of word cards, sound games and two letter word sound balls are what I use more often to motivate my learners. Even though is a form of learning, the children feel motivated with it. They learn it with fun (Teacher D)*

From the comments, it can be seen that the use of letter sound balls, letter cards and sound cards are used by the teachers to motivate the learners during the remediation of reading challenges using the phonic approach. How these tools were used made the children enjoyed the lessons, hence it motivated them to learn.

### **C. Teaching of rhymes, and clapping**

Teaching of rhymes and clapping for students who perform well during class discussion were also revealed by the respondent as one of the motivating strategies used. According to **Teacher D**, *he motivates learners who have difficulties in acquiring phonics skills by teaching the learners rhymes, and clapping for them when they pronounce simple letter sounds.*

**Teacher E** opined that, *she motivates learners who have difficulties in acquiring phonics skills by teaching the learners sounds of the alphabets, and how to use them in words. I also motivate them by praising and giving them some gifts like biscuits and toffees.*

It is clear from the comments that teachers rhyme, clapping and sometimes giving gifts to motivate the learners. These are extrinsic motivators and are able to boost learners' enthusiasm to perform more.

### **4.2.3 Activities of teachers during phonics lessons to cater for individual needs**

Learning abilities differ from person to person. Whiles some learners capture concepts faster, others are considered slow learner. In recognition of this the respondents (teachers) devised activities and cater for the needs of the learners. Three themes

emerged. They were remedial teaching and repetition of processes, model pronunciation, and use of ability-based tasks.

### **A. Remedial teaching and repetition of lessons**

Comments from the participants revealed that they resorted to remedial teaching and repetition of lessons to ensure the diverse needs of learners, especially the slow ones are well served. These are aptly inferred from the narration below.

*Phonetics is a skill that requires constant practice. So, in order to perfect the phonetics skills of learners with reading difficulties, I give them more time to practice. I also offer remedial teaching and repetition of important processes of lesson (Teacher A)*

Another participant added

*I ensure lessons that were seemingly not successful are repeated. You know, not all the children are fast learners. Sometimes, you teach and upon evaluation, you realize that the responses are not what you were looking for. With that I make time to teach such lessons again (Teacher D)*

From the comments, it is evident that the use of remedial teaching and repetition of lessons were one of the key means by which the diverse need of the students were attended to.

### **B. Model pronunciation**

Another theme emerged on how the diverse needs of the learners were served was model pronunciation. In the words of **Teacher B**, *I do give them model pronunciation of sounds guide them to imitate and repeat. This strategy is used five times a week*

According to **Teacher E**, he does a lot of things. *He teaches and assigns tasks to individual based on their abilities.* He also offers remedial teaching. He also gives them model pronunciation of sounds”. These activities are done at least twice a week.

### **C. Use of ability-based tasks**

*Depending on the abilities of my children during lesson, I assign them tasks. For example, I can give slow readers two paragraph of text to read and give fast readers about four of such. This ensures that the children are not overburdened nor underserved (Teacher E)*

One teacher (**Teacher F**) reported:

*Learning to read comes with massive exposure to phonics and more vocabulary. This is accompanied with knowledge and skills of sound and letter identification that will later build on reading skills. So, I engage in phonics lessons to cater for individual needs in groups, preferably, based on their abilities*

It is evident from the comments that the use of remedial teaching and repetition of processes/lessons, model pronunciation, use of ability-based tasks were used to cater for the diverse needs of the learners.

#### **4.2.4 Materials used by teachers during phonics lessons**

The use of teaching and learning materials make the teaching and learning process effective. Respondent indicated that they made regular use of teaching and learning materials during phonic lesson. It emerged that participants used both print and electronic media as teaching and learning materials.

##### **A. The use of print media**

Participants indicated that they use print media such as letter cards, word cards as pointer as teaching and learning materials to facilitate their instruction. These were clearly revealed in their comments.

One teacher said; *“Honestly, I cannot effectively teach phonics lessons if I don’t use teaching materials. So, I use sound ball, letter cards, word cards, pointers, etc. whenever I am teaching. I also engage the children in pick and read activities”* (Teacher A).

*“Personally, I am determined to make the children grasp phonics skills. I use sound ball, phones, and alphabet cards anytime I teach phonics lessons”* (Teacher B)

##### **B. The use of electronic media**

It was gathered from the participants that electronic media specifically radio and phones is used as teaching and learning material to facilitate lessons. This was explicitly stated in their submissions.

*“As a professional teacher, I am expected to use teaching and learning materials during lessons. So, I use phones and alphabet cards as well as radio during phonics lessons”.* (Teacher C)

*“Well, I know my responsibilities as an effective teacher. I know all that. I have to use teaching and learning materials. Indeed, I use alphabet cards, word cards, and radio/audio recordings during phonics lessons”.* (Teacher E)

It is clear from the comments that the use of electronic media is able to facilitate the teaching and learning process. The appropriate selection and effective usage are able to assist teachers teach and learners to understand.62

#### **4.2.5 Research Question Two: How do teachers use recommended vocabulary-based strategies to improve vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties?**

Below are the themes related to research question two which sought to find out the strategies teachers employ to assist pupils with difficulties to improve their vocabulary skills. Two themes emerged; they were teaching of new vocabulary and the use of graphic organizers.

##### **A. Teaching of new vocabulary**

Participants revealed that one of the ways they use to teach vocabulary to remediate the reading difficulties of learners was to teach new vocabulary in meaningful sentences by using meaning cards and flash cards. These are revealed in the following comments;

*I resort to teaching new vocabularies at the beginning of every reading exercise. To ensure students understand the new vocabularies and are able to use them, I assist them to use the new vocabularies in sentences. Taking the pupils through the new vocabularies ensures that minimal challenges are encountered regarding pronunciation and contextual understanding of the keywords.*

*I try to let my pupils learn to pronounce keywords before the actual reading exercises. The pupils get obstructed and demotivated when their flow of reading is hindered by their inability to pronounce*

*difficult words. So, to prevent that i teach them the new or key vocabularies before they start reading. (Teacher C).*

The words of one teacher were;

*“I always teach new vocabularies so that they have vocabulary bank. My students lack English vocabulary which prevents them from comprehending a text. Yeah, they are not well exposed to English language. It’s a challenge”. (Teacher E)*

From the comments, it is clear that teachers teach learners new vocabulary in an attempt to improve the learner’s vocabulary. The teachers appear to do so because of the seemingly positive influence on the children’s reading comprehension.

#### **4.2.6 Strategies teachers use in motivating learners’ reading difficulties to acquire vocabulary skills**

Motivation is a key factor to teaching and learning. Therefore, this section sought to explore how teachers motivate learners with difficulties in reading to acquire vocabulary skills. Two themes emerged namely, identification of unfamiliar words, and encouraging children to read every day.

##### **A. Identification of unfamiliar words**

Comments from the participants revealed that they guided and encouraged students to familiarize themselves with new words the encounter during reading. This is evidenced in the following;

*I ask learners to write down new words. I also ask them to identify unfamiliar words in sentences. Again, I use action words to the vocabulary. I am able to do all these with the use of meaning cards. With that one side of the card contain the word and the other side contain the meaning” (Teacher A).*

*I give each learner a list of new words or vocabulary a day before to rehearse. My strategy even ensures that children have something to learn at home instead of idling about. When I give them the vocabularies, they learn to pronounce them during reading lesson”*

**(Teacher B).**

From the comments, it is clear that identification of unfamiliar words is one of the strategies teachers use to motivate with reading difficulties to acquire new vocabulary skills. The acquisition of new vocabularies is important as it ensures that students read text without much struggle. The fact that they sometimes give the new words to students to study at home encourages continuation of learning of the students while at home.

### **B. Encouraging children to read every day**

Comments for the participants indicated that they encourage the learners to read on their own both in and out of school. This is hinted in the following;

*I encourage learners to read 1, 2, 3 and letter words every day. It's worth mentioning that I do it based individuals' differences in terms of their abilities”. It does end here only in school. At home, I tell them to try and read anything they see”* **(Teacher C)**

One participant **(Teacher D)** had this to say:

*Reading is very important and, as such, it comes through having reading skills, especially vocabulary knowledge and skills. For this reason, I list vocabulary to study every day.*

Similar responses were given by earlier interviewees; one participant **(Teacher E)** reported that:

*Learning to read comes with massive exposure to more vocabulary. This is will build on reading skills of learners. In this regard, I give each learner a list of new words to study and rehearse at home a day*

*before reading lesson. I task them to pronounce these words during reading lesson.*

The comments of **Teacher E** are supported by the verbatim quotes from another teacher (**Teacher F**) who stated that:

*Reading is a skill that requires constant practice. So, in order to perfect the reading skills of learners, I give them more words to practice at home. For students to be perfect and fast readers, it is important for the learners to practice the task since practice will make them perfect.*

From the comments, it is clear that teachers ensure that students read or learn in the house by giving them take home reading exercises. The knowledge students gain from the exercise is used in their next reading lessons. This, apart from aiding smoother reading could also encourage learner to attach seriousness to take home reading assignment since one way or another, the knowledge will be used.

#### **A. The materials used by teachers to help learners acquire vocabulary skills**

The researcher probed further from teacher participants about the materials used by them in helping learners to acquire vocabulary skills. Comments from the participants revealed that teachers use a lot of instructional aids such as word cards and audio recordings to encourage learners to acquire vocabulary skills.

#### **B. The use of word cards**

According to comments from the participants, they regularly used word cards to assist learners acquire vocabulary skills. The word cards contained key vocabularies. They are shown to students who are assisted to pronounce them. This is explicitly stated in the following narrations

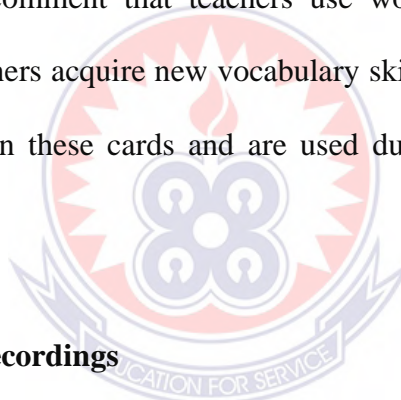
*Learning is interesting and meaningful if a teacher uses instructional materials during lessons. In this regard, I use word cards and pictures while teaching new vocabulary (Teacher B)*

*Sometimes, I write poems on card boards. I use them in teaching word buds. Other times too I write short sentences on the card. This helps me in teaching sequence of vocabulary pronunciation. (Teacher C)*

Another participant stated;

*I use word cards, and pictures in teaching vocabulary skills. I write vocabularies on these cards and ask pupils to read them. The use of these materials aid learners to acquire vocabulary skills (Teacher E)*

It is clear from the comment that teachers use word cards as teaching learning materials to assist learners acquire new vocabulary skills. Poems, short sentences and keyword are written on these cards and are used during the teaching and learning process.



### **C. The use of audio recordings**

Apart from word cards, the use of audio recordings was also highlighted by the participants. They mentioned that they sometimes played audio recordings to make the lessons interesting and interactive. This is revealed in the following narrations;

*You mean encouraging learners to acquire vocabulary skills? The lesson should be interesting and interactive. So, I play audio recordings of words and pupils listen to it. I task them to listen to the words and repeat them (Teacher D)*

*I use both electronic and print media to present vocabulary lessons to pupils. For instance, I use audio recordings of poems to teach new words. I also write vocabularies on word cards, flash cards which*

*pupils read. The use of instructional materials makes a lesson interactive and interesting. Children enjoy lessons. (Teacher F)*

From the comments, it is clear that the teachers make use of audio recordings in addition to word cards. With that, part of the lesson, be it pronunciation of keywords, short sentences or poem are recorded and played during the lesson. That could even serve as model reading for the children.

#### **4.2.7 Strategies teachers use to sustain the attention of learners in learning vocabulary skills**

This theme revealed three major subthemes namely the use of poems and rhymes and the use of pictures / word cards. These are done every time there is an English lesson

##### **A. The use of poems and rhymes**

Participants revealed that they make use of poems and rhyme as a strategy to sustain learners' attention. It was gathered the two are able to make lessons interesting to the learners. This is revealed the comments below;

*In my class, children learn vocabularies through songs, poems and rhymes. In fact, it is interesting to them when they learn vocabularies by singing, and reciting poems and rhymes. I do this every time we have a lesson. It sustains their interest and attention in vocabulary lessons. (Teacher D)*

*I try as much as possible to make the lesson interactive and interesting every time I have a period with them. I present lessons through songs, poems and rhymes. I also show pictures of new words and their meanings. (Teacher E)*

It is clear that teachers use poems and rhyme to sustain learners' interest as they are able to make lesson interesting and lively. The actions enacted along the poem and

rhyme recital makes children active for the lesson. Moreover, the children are able to learn vocabularies as well to build their word bank.

### **B. The use of pictures / word cards**

Comments from the participants also indicated that they made use of word cards and pictures as a means of sustaining the interest of learners. According to the participants, when children see pictures or word cards, they find the lesson interesting and thus tend pay attention throughout the lessons. These are highlighted in the narrations below;

*First, I pronounce the vocabularies which are written on word cards. This is modeling. Then I ask them to repeat the words. I show pictures of the meaning of words. This sustains their attention in learning vocabulary skills. (Teacher B)*

*It is all about usage of materials. I write vocabularies on words cards. I show pictures. Pupils are able to associate pictures with the words. (Teacher C)*

*Simply, I pronounce the new words and ask pupils to repeat them. I write vocabularies on word cards and illustrate their meanings with pictures. (Teacher F)*

From the comments, it is gathered that the use of pictures and word cards are one of the strategies to sustain the attention of learners in learning vocabulary skills. The use of the cards facilitates teachers' model reading and pronunciation as they have the words already printed on the cards. The inclusion of pictures to words and sentences enables learners to form association thereby facilitating their reading.

#### **4.3.7.1 Strategies teachers use to address the individual needs of learners during vocabulary lessons**

This theme sought to find out how teachers address the needs of the individual learners to make teaching and learning effective. The data revealed that, teachers conduct remedial teaching and vocabulary drills for the individual learners.

##### **A. Remedial teaching**

The use of remedial teaching was indicated by the participant as useful in addressing the need of the individual learner. According to the participant, that approach is able to assist the learners acquire more vocabulary and help them do more reading. These are exemplified in the statements of teacher 'A' that *I do remedial teaching. Acquiring vocabulary skills demands constant reading and practice. I give more examples of vocabularies in sentences.*

Further, it was clarified by Teacher B when she commented that *there are a lot of things which I do to address the individual need of learners during vocabulary lessons. Most importantly, I construct sentences with examples of vocabularies or new words.*

It is clear from the comments that individual needs are addressed through remedial teaching by the teachers. A remedial teaching is done to assist the slow learners to read more and acquire more vocabulary.

##### **B. Cooperative learning**

Other participants indicated that they resort to cooperative learning in their attempt to serve the needs of all the learners. This, according to the participant is done by pairing relatively proficient students with the emerging students.

*In my case, I engage the pupils in cooperative learning. I group them into ability. I make sure those who have a repertoire of vocabularies pair with those who do not have. I make them share. This is scaffolding. (Teacher C)*

*Vocabularies are building blocks for reading, writing and comprehending texts. So, learners should have a repository of words. I ask pupils to have a vocabulary bank in which they add ten new words on daily basis. I ask each learner to make sounds of the words, pronounce the words and construct sentences with the words. When I am done with these, I asked children to learn what their colleagues have learnt. Thus, they end up exchanging ideas and learning what their friends know (Teacher D)*

From the comments, it is clear that teachers use cooperative learning to address the needs of the learners during vocabulary lessons. They usually pair good readers with struggling ones in anticipation that the latter will learn from the former.

### **C. Tailor made teaching**

Tailor made teaching also emerged as one of the strategies used by the teachers. According to the participants, based on the abilities of the learners, they are given tasks to suit their need.

One teacher said:

*My desire is that all learners acquire vocabulary skills and become proficient in the English Language. But I try as much as possible to cater for individual need of learners. So, I give simple words that are within the abilities of slow learners. (Teacher E)*

Another participant added;

*A lot of things! I teach and assign tasks to individual learners based on their abilities. I conduct remedial teaching too. This is a planned and individualized teaching (Teacher F).*

It is clear from the comments how teachers taught vocabulary skills to learners with reading difficulties through learner-centered instructional strategies. They used a blend of instructional techniques, instructional media, assessment and remediation procedures. It unfolds from the results that teachers used instructional techniques — songs, poems, rhymes, and instructional aids such as word cards, and audio recordings to develop the vocabulary skills of pupils. The results further revealed that the use of these instructional techniques and media as well as assessment and remediation procedures make vocabulary lessons interactive and interesting to learners. The next presents a discussion on strategies used by teachers in teaching comprehension to learners with reading difficulties.

#### **4.2.8 Research Question Three: How do teachers use recommended comprehension-based strategies to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties?**

Research question three sought to explore the strategies used by teachers to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties. Data was gathered through interviews. Four themes, namely *explanation and demonstration, use of graphic organizers, peer-assisted reading strategy, think aloud and ability grouping* emerged. These are discussed below.

##### **A. Explanation and demonstration**

The participants mentioned that they use explanation and demonstration to teach comprehension in their attempt to remediate reading difficulties. This strategy according to them eases students' understanding to the text. This was explained in the following comments.

*One of the strategies I use is to build students' background knowledge through explanation and demonstration. Pupils who do*

*not have enough background knowledge and life experiences have nothing to connect the new information with, which makes the new information hard to understand. They have no frame of reference for the new information. They do not have previous knowledge to build upon. For learners to understand the text, I need to “connect them to prior knowledge and the world around them. This is exactly what I do. I am able to build their knowledge and understanding of texts by adding to what they already know (Teacher C).*

Another teacher stated

*Comprehension occurs through incorporating the use of background knowledge, past experience, and word meaning knowledge. I think reading comprehension takes place when a student is able to relate to the story and gains understanding and is able to have an opinion about the characters or details about the characters. It is important to check on students’ background knowledge and building upon it. I think it's also a good way to start stories and reading is to tap into the background of the student just, so you know where they are at and part of my understanding that I need to build that background before we go to new story or a story that students are getting for the first time (Teacher A)*

From the comments, explanation and demonstration was used to improve reading comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties. Teachers resorted to this strategy to assist learners connect new information to what they already know. Explanation is also done on new vocabularies to facilitate learners’ understanding of the text they read.

## **B. The use of graphic organizers**

It was gathered that participants made use of graphic organisers during the teaching and learning of reading comprehension skills. This, according to them was necessary

for building the background knowledge of the learners. These are revealed in the comments below.

*I use graphic organizers to help students build background knowledge. "I do try to use like draw on their background knowledge through like graphic organizer." I think the use of graphic organizer is an effective strategy. Graphics organizers help student organize all that information, so they can come to a common understanding or a personal understanding. It helps them sequence events. It helps them tell the differences between characters. So, kids can get a better understanding of what happened between two characters and over all increases their concept or comprehension about the story. Again, graphic organizers present what the students bring to the reading in terms of their background experience, what knowledge they have, and they are related to what they are going to read, what they think the story is about in terms of predicting, and they actually read it, once again discuss how it is related to what they know. It helps them organize their ideas, provide an opportunity for them to go back and reread the text, think more deeply about the text and really analyze it.*

**(Teacher B).**

Furthermore, the participant explained how the graphic organizers assist student understand text and read them correctly

*Again, I think graphic organizers are effective strategy for students. I think by breaking down paragraphs like that for this student and really talking about it. It definitely makes them understand what they read. For example, we were reading a story. What we're doing was, the story's already broken into three parts, and then as we were reading each of the parts, we have a graphic organizer that we start with and we talk about what's the main idea of that paragraph and then two details that go with it. Then we go to the middle, so we have a beginning middle and end paragraph, and then again, we do the same thing. Then, we write it on the graphic organizer as we are*

*doing that so that then we can have a retell of the story, make sure they comprehend the story (Teacher B).*

From the comments, teachers used graphic organizers as a strategy to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties. The graphic organizers are used to segment reading. That is, texts are broken into sections, explained and learnt. Then all segments are combined and the text is re-read.

### **C. Teaching of vocabularies**

The data revealed that the teachers used pictures and word cards to assist student learn new vocabularies. This, according to them was to facilitate students' smooth reading.

The following narration explicitly indicates these.

*I teach vocabulary and show pictures in order to help students to build background knowledge. I teach the vocabulary and pre-teach background information. I use my phone, and we will look at pictures when I'm teaching the vocabulary. They will have understanding of whatever we're reading. So, I am trying to do that pre-teach of stuff. Sometimes, I stop students and explicitly direct them to focus on the current story. I stop them and pull them back to the story that they are reading and say, "No we are talking about this story." So, they can use that background knowledge in appropriate times and off intention that are not relevant to what the comprehension is going on in the story (Teacher C).*

Related to the teaching of vocabulary is the use of story mapping. This according to the respondent is able to assist the student understand the text, reorganize and summaries lesson. This is revealed in the follow comments.

*I also use story mapping. It is kind of like graphic organizer. Story mapping gives them like an organized retelling of the story, so that they are kind of summarizing it and organizing it chronologically at the same time. It is giving them an opportunity to identify the*

*characters, plot, setting, problem, and solution. The students read carefully to learn the details. When students know where to start, they can easily develop topic sentences, they can easily develop meaning from a story mapping. They can easily understand main idea* **(Teacher B).**

Another participant added:

*I also make us of story mapping. Students are able to recall information quicker if they are story mapping. The visual nature of story mapping assists my students. I am into multimodality. So, I think with kids being able to see like not only read it, but they need to see it they need to orally talk about it. Sometimes we might act out so whole-body learning through using story mapping* **(Teacher C)**

Another teacher shared that

*I think it helps them improve their comprehension by matching the details with the main idea, sequencing events, adding “what if”, and being able to predict. It is an effective strategy that helps to improve students’ reading comprehension.* **(Teacher A)**

#### **D. Peer-assisted reading**

Participants also used peer assisted learning as a strategy to improve comprehension skills. They believe that students find it engaging listening to their peers and learning from them than their teacher, hence the application of the peer reading strategy. The following narration explicitly reveals how the strategy was used.

*I guess you are familiar with peer-assisted learning strategy. It is effective for increasing the students’ reading comprehension. I think sometimes students are more able to listen to their peers than to listen to you all the time. And it just kind of motivates them if they see that their peers or their classmates are coming up with these ideas and are able to do these things. Then it kind of makes them want to be able to do it. With this strategy, students “talk with one another, hearing what each other thinks, hearing what they have to say,*

*hearing each other's personal connection to the texts.” The peer-assisted strategy assists students to coordinate, discuss, and reflect information that has been in the book and share with one another, and feel more confident about what is going on in terms of general understanding of the text and the content. (Teacher B)*

A participant further revealed the importance of the strategy by indicating that....

*The peer-assisted reading strategy helps students by providing them with a chance to learn from each other through close reading which is also a strategy. With close reading, they can get to hear peers pronounce and they get the support of peers when they are practicing words. And it allows them to hear the word as it should be pronounced. For example, there is a student in my class who will not know words and struggles with sight words that are used in close reading. And when they are given the opportunity to practice those words, they demonstrate over time that they comprehend the sight words better. It gives them confidence and, once again, with practice they seem to improve over time. I think being able to have to explain, being able to say your thoughts to somebody else, and have them understand what you are saying. (Teacher D)*

It is clear that peer assisted learning strategy is used by teachers to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties. The teachers use it because they believe students are comfortable listening to their peers hence able to learn from each other. The strategy is also able to build the confidence of the learners as they take reading cues from their peers.

#### **F. Discussing the text**

Discussing of text also featured as one of the strategies for improving comprehension skills. Participants mentioned that they made stops throughout the text and explain to the learners to facilitate understanding. This is aptly demonstrated in the following.

*Discussing the text with students is another effective strategy I mostly use. It helps increase students' reading comprehension. I describe this strategy as "Stopping throughout the text. If we were reading something, I stop and we discuss part of that." It is an effective strategy, "Oh! Yeah! That it is. And it is make more sense (Teacher E).*

*I have been discussing the text with my students more often. This strategy helps my students by allowing them to work together and learn from each other. And then also just them hearing themselves say it out loud I think helps them. It is a strategy of looking back in the text making. So, they can find out if they comprehend it correctly. It is looking back and finding the evidence in the text (Teacher B).*

It is clear from the comments that discussion of text is one of the strategies teachers use to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties. The approach involves explanation of the text to the students before actual reading. And that makes them appreciate what they read as they able to find evidence from the text.

#### **G. The use of cloze procedure**

The use of cloze procedure was one of themes highlighted in the strategies for improving comprehension skills. The essence of using this strategy was to assist the learners to think of the context clues that are within the story. This is revealed in the comments below;

*I use cloze procedure to teach reading comprehension to my students with learning disability. Using the cloze procedure makes students think of the context clues that are within the story. So that they could figure out what word might go there. Also knowing a verbs or words that make sense to whatever the sentence is that you want them to fill in the cloze word procedure. So, they have to be able to pull from what they have learned. "Oh! Do I need to put this type of a noun or*

*this type of a verb or this type of an adverb or an adjective to make sense to the story?” (Teacher C).*

*I make use of cloze procedure. Using that procedure definitely helps to improve their understanding of what the text is asking them for. The students are able to think through the story and figure out what makes sense and what does not (Teacher E)*

From the comments, teachers use cloze procedures to teach comprehension to students with reading difficulties. The teachers use the procedure to assist learners to think of context cues with the text they read. This is able to assist students think ahead, read and predict the story as it unfolds.

#### **H. Different groupings**

Participants hinted the use of groupings as one the strategies they used. The groupings, according to participants were sometimes based on friendship, abilities or mixed abilities groupings. This idea according to participant was to motivate the learners. This is revealed in the following narrations.

*I do different groupings. In fact, it is an effective strategy. I group students based on their learning abilities and friendship. Sometimes, I will group kids that are friends already because I know that they will work nicely together. Other times, I will group like a higher-level student with maybe a lower-level student to really motivate the lower-level student. By so doing it helps students to improve their comprehension by talking with one another, hearing what each other thinks, hearing what they have to say, hearing each other's personal connection to the texts (Teacher F).*

Another participant added;

*I have been grouping my student in an attempt to assist to learn reading comprehension. With this method, I can tell students to turn and talk to their partner. How do you think she was feeling at the end*

*of the story or at the beginning of the story? And then they can tell what they think and then tell each other the reason why if they disagree. In a whole group, it is more like three or four students. I think they hear more of what their peers say than they hear what I say. They just seem more interested in what their peers have to say. They seem to have more interest and motivation (Teacher F).*

From the comments, the use of groupings was used by teachers to improve comprehensions skills for learners with reading difficulties. The groupings were sometime based on friendship and or mixed abilities. Membership of the group is either three or four.

#### **4.2.8.1 Techniques used by teachers to motivate learners with reading difficulties during comprehension lessons**

The teachers tried as much as possible to motivate learners with reading difficulties during comprehension lessons. From the data, a major theme that emerged was the use of different instructional strategies and materials to motivate learners during comprehension lessons.

##### **a. Use of different instructional strategies**

*Some students have severe attention problem. So, there will not be any comprehension if I do not somehow get their attention and so I will do a strategy like close proximity. I will sit close to them, and then I need to keep checking in with those students. I will ask questions directly to such students, so she/he is not off. I have to keep their attention (Teacher A)*

*My philosophy as it relates to reading comprehension is a kind of bilateral approach, and students have varied reading approaches. So, I have different approaches to how I intervene in their reading weaknesses. So, my philosophy behind that has to do with using a number of approaches, have flexibility within those approaches as*

*well. I just like to emphasize how important flexibility is. I do because of the different types of students that I serve. It is just important to be very flexible. I have different types of students. They all have their own reading methods and behavioral aspects toward reading, So, I use different approaches and strategies to meet their needs such as story mapping and peer-assisted reading (Teacher B)*

*I use graphic organizers and pictures while teaching reading comprehension. This sustains their attention and motivates them to read text. (Teacher C).*

From the comments, the use of different instructional strategies was found to be one of the strategies to motivate learners to learn. The strategy was able to assist them manage students' attention and improve students' learning.

#### **B. Use of instructional materials**

It was also gathered from the data teacher used instructional materials as a motivator. This is revealed by the following comments.

*I use instructional materials a lot. For instance, I use flash cards and word cards. I write short stories on them. I read the stories and act them. I ask students to pick and act stories. (Teacher D)*

*Firstly, I write vocabularies on the board. I pronounce the vocabularies and use them in sentences. Then I ask pupils to repeat them several times. (Teacher E)*

*I make comprehension lessons so interesting. I use poems, songs, rhymes and other teaching techniques as well as teaching and learning aids that make comprehension lesson easy. They enjoy it. (Teacher F)*

From the comments, teachers make use of instructional materials like word cards and charts. These aids usually contain words, stories and poems that make reading comprehension easy.

### **Forms of assessment teachers use during comprehension lessons.**

Teachers used different forms of assessments tools to evaluate students during comprehension lessons. Three themes emerged. And these were oral assessment, written assessment and filling of graphic organizers.

#### **A. Oral assessment**

The use of oral assessment was hinted to be one of forms of assessment teachers used during evaluation of comprehension lessons. The oral assessment took the form of reading and retelling. These are exemplified in the following comments.

*I conduct oral assessment in the form of questions and answers in the course of the lesson. “Some students are not so good with writing, so I will just allow them to tell me that loud. (Teacher A)*

Another participant added;

*I informally assess students’ reading comprehension. Assessing students’ comprehension through questioning is a method that I use to assess their students. I do it on a daily basis. I would ask questions on a more simplistic basis for some students at different levels. I have got others that have a much more in-depth knowledge base, and I would probably ask them more difficult questions. I do a lot of questioning as they’re reading. So, I will stop, interrupt their reading to ask a question to see if they have understood so far of what they have read. Just asking questions (Teacher E).*

Another participant stated;

*Usually, I use oral questions. Sometimes, they answer written questions. Questioning helps “to see if students understood certain key elements or key events. These questions kind of determine if they understood some of these key elements in the story. I check understanding through questioning. Questioning helps me know if*

*students have taken the concept and organize it to higher order thinking or whether they are still at a fundamental after reading the text and the story. I am presenting questions to the students to gain understanding of their understanding of the main ideas and details related to the story (. (Teacher B).*

Another participant also added;

*I assess students' comprehension through questioning by "Asking them questions and have them summarize part of the story. That tells me quickly if they grasp the text or not. It tells me if I need to utilize another strategy or rereading or illustrating something. I just do a lot of questioning with my students to make sure that they comprehend what they are reading, and if they don't, I need to reteach to them. (Teacher D)*

In explaining the retelling form of oral assessment, a participant explained:

*I do retell method about once a week. With retelling, I use it to informally assess the reading comprehension of students with reading. Retelling as an assessment requires students to either verbally or in writing retell or summarize the reading passage. Therefore, I can determine whether or not the students comprehend the text well. I will ask them to tell me verbally what happened at the beginning, middle, next, so if their strengths are not writing, I still know that they understand what has happened in the story (Teacher C).*

From the comments, teachers use oral assessment to assess students' reading comprehension. The oral assessment is used as an alternative to written assessment for those who are not good at writing. It is also used in addition to written form assessment. The assessment takes the form of question and answers. And it is also used throughout the reading exercise as teachers use them to find out about the level of understanding of the students.

## **B. The use of written exercises**

Participants indicated that they made use of written exercise to evaluate the learning of the student during comprehension lessons. This is revealed in the narrations below:

*I use written exercises at the end of the lesson. Also, I usually create my own informal tests to assess students' reading comprehension. I can develop my own test. I mean teacher-made tests. So, there will be some open-ended questions. There are some multiple choices, and there will be some questions to demonstrate their overall comprehension. For example, the open-ended questions allow them to bring their own thoughts and understanding. Therefore, I can tell if they are generally answering the questions correctly. (Teacher A)*

Another participant added.

*I give them written exercises at least about once a week. I do assess the students' performance by letting them write it down in their exercise books and workbooks. I engage them in writing activity. I ask my students to express their reading comprehension through a writing activity. Having the students express their comprehension through writing that is a big one for me, I like that. It helps them in so many ways, but in terms of me, it is easier for me to see what they comprehend in writing because I can always have it in front of me. I see them organize their thoughts, I see them compare and contrast what they gained from the book, from what they recall from their head. By using writing, it gives them a freedom to add and take away details that are not important (Teacher C).*

From the comments written exercises are were used as a form of assessment to evaluate the level of students reading comprehension. The exercises take the form of multiple choice or open-ended questions where students compose their own ideas.

### **Filling of graphic organisers**

The filling of graphic organisers was mentioned as one of the means of assessment.

This was done to primarily assess the level of reading comprehension.

*I would say every day. Having students fill in graphic organizers is what I do. I usually ask students to fill graphic organizers to assess their reading comprehension. It is informally to assess what they know, what they learned, and what they did not know. As an assessment, it allows them to interrupt information from reading, to add to their stories, and to gain language skills by verbal presentation. Filling in a graphic organizer is helpful for students with reading difficulties because it is able to have them hold on the parts of the story. If I am asking them usually, I can have them do it independently after they have had numerous practices on filling their own graphic organizers and answering oral questions (Teacher C).*

Another teacher added:

*I use graphic organizers just as a quick informal assessment to see if they are learning the information and comprehending what the information has to say. I kind of have an informal assessment every day. But for my records, I do once a week. I do not generally use their grade level. For example, the graphic organizers I do will not use one that had ten bubbles. I would use one that had a small amount of information, you know, based on the ability of my students. (Teacher D).*

Comments from the respondents also revealed that teachers resort to the filling of graphic organizers by the student as a means of assessment. They use that to informally assess what the students have learnt and what they haven't. Filling in a graphic organizer is helpful for students with reading difficulties because it is able to have them hold on the parts of the story after they have tried with numerous practices.

#### 4.2.8.2 Questioning skills of teachers during comprehension lessons

How teachers ask questions during comprehension lessons were probed. It emerged from the study that the teachers were asking questions sentence by sentence

*Questioning is a strategy that I use during comprehension lessons. I do a lot of questioning as students are reading. I ask question sentence by sentence. So, I will interrupt their reading to ask a question to see if they have understood so far of what they have read. And that starts off again as me leading it, and then hopefully, as they start to pick it up and do it in their minds on their own. (Teacher A)*

*Reading comprehension is an effective strategy for improving students reading comprehension. I ask questions sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, and at the end of the comprehension. I think that it kind of reinforces while you are reading you have really got to be thinking. If you are just reading the words on the page, then your mind is not thinking about the words that you are reading, then you are that's not really reading. (Teacher B)*

*According to another female participant, she bases her questioning on students' ability. Questioning as strategy can take two forms, either I question the students or the students question themselves while reading. I start by doing the questioning, and as we progress along, try to get them to question themselves to be able to check their own comprehension. (Teacher C)*

*Another female teacher stated that if the ability is not there then students will be waiting for me to ask the questions. I ask the questions whose answers can directly be found in the text or passage. She explained why questioning is an effective strategy by adding that I feel like it starts to teach them. Oh, I need to be paying attention as I go along, and I need to think about what I am reading, and if I have*

*a question, I need to think about what the answer is, or if I have missed it, I have to go back and reread it. (Teacher D)*

*Another teacher described how questioning as a strategy helped his students by sharing that When using questioning with my students, I have noticed that helps generate understanding of the main idea concept in the plot. Some students will go further and ask “what if” questions. They will also gain understanding of the details, and it will also bring in their own experiences (Teacher E)*

*I ask question based on the passage read. Usually, I use oral and written questions. I would ask questions on a more simplistic basis for some students at different levels, and I would probably ask them more difficult questions. I just do a lot of questioning with my students to make sure that they comprehend what they are reading, and if they don't, I need to reteach to them (Teacher F)*

#### **4.2.8.3 Strategies used by teachers to address the individual needs of learners during comprehension lessons**

Different strategies used by the teachers to address the individual learning needs were revealed by the data. The strategies include model reading, remedial reading, independent reading, and the use of teaching and learning materials.

##### **A. Model reading**

Model reading was one of the strategies teachers used. It was used specifically to assist those who could not read fluently. This is revealed in the following comments;

*I go round to aid learners who need help. Some of these students have a problem; they do not know how to speak and to read the English words. For this reason, I ask each learner to read for the rest to listen. Some words are difficult...to read. So, I allow the slow learners to read one passage. (Teacher A)*

Another teacher added

*Some individual students jump pronunciations and they do not read the full story. So, they do not understand the meaning of some words. I have to write what they don't understand, the meaning of the words and the pronunciation of the words. I let learners pronounce vocabulary. (Teacher B)*

It is clear from the comments that teachers are able to assist learner with reading difficulties read through model reading. The approach is able to give students the opportunity to listen and learn the text prior to reading it. This helps remove barrier in terms difficult vocabularies, difficult sentences and so forth from the reading.

### **B. Remedial reading lesson**

Remedial teaching was also revealed as one of the strategies used to assist learners with reading difficulties during comprehension lessons. This is revealed in the following comments:

*I do **remedial reading lesson**. Also, I assign homework to learners with reading difficulties to improve their performance because they will be assisted by parents at home. Some of these children understand their parents better and their parents understand them better as well. (Teacher C)*

Another participant added:

*I do remedial teaching to assist those who could not catch up. In teaching, not all the children can grasp what you teach with the set time frame. The inability to grasp is not necessarily a characteristic of slow learners. Other times, even average and fast learners are not able understand. So, when I find out that some students did not understand what I taught, I do remedial teaching (Teacher E)*

From the comments, remedial teaching/reading is used to address the learning needs of individual learners during comprehension lessons. The remedial reading serves a as

reinforcement to what the student have already read. Going through remedial reading assist the learners to overcome the challenge they had during the main reading lessons.

### **C. Encouraging independent reading**

Participants also hinted that they encourage the learner to do independent reading.

This is revealed in the following comment

*I encourage learners to read independently (inside and outside the classroom). I create my own reading material, encourage learners to visit the library in order to access other books and have a reading corner for learners in the classroom. (Teacher D)*

Another participant added;

*I have my own library in the classroom so that learners can read a variety of books. I improvise by making my own books using magazines and newspapers. I arrange for each learner to have a workbook. They would work in pairs. I make sure there are enough newspapers and magazines. I give them more reading time. I make sure that the learners have a place (library) with sufficient reading material, encourage them to choose their own reading books and read for enjoyment. (Teacher E)*

*I provide materials such as flash cards, sentence strips, letters of alphabets, charts, flash cards, books, magazines and newspapers in teaching them at school. I encourage them to watch TV news, and listen to the radio at school and home. Sometimes, I allow them to come out with their own stories and pictures. (Teacher F)*

From the comment, it can be said that the teachers create the enabling environment in their classrooms for children to do further independent reading as a means of addressing the comprehension needs of the learners. The teachers provide readings materials to create a miniature library for the children to read.

#### **4.2.8.4 Teaching and learning materials used by teachers during comprehension lessons for learners with reading difficulties**

The use of teaching and learning materials is recommended in the teaching and learning process. And since there are a variety of them, the various ones used were probed. Two themes emerged, namely print media and electronic media.

##### **A. The use of print media**

The use of print media such as word cards, books, newspapers and magazines feature prominently. And this is revealed in the comments below:

*I use a lot of materials word cards on new vocabulary, and meaning cards. I use pictures to sequence comprehension lessons. Sometimes I use a textbook especially when it comes to talking about pictures in the text to be read (**Teacher A**).*

Another participant indicated:

*When it comes to instructional materials, I am able to provide students with worksheets and other instructional materials. I use them to teach reading comprehension to learners with reading disabilities **Teacher C***

***Teacher D** commented that she provides word cards, sentence strips, letters of alphabets, charts, word cards. And use them for comprehension lessons, vocabulary lessons, and many more.*

From the comments, the print media is used prominently as teaching and learning materials to facilitate comprehension lesson. The cards are able to provide the opportunity for the student to learn the text in segments. For instance, a teacher may write all the sentences that make up a text on a sentence card for student to read.

##### **B. Use of electronic media**

The teachers revealed the use of electronic media as one of the teaching and learning aids for comprehension lessons. This is revealed in the following comment:

*Instead of always writing text on card books or blackboard, I sometimes project them at our ICT lab with the help of a computer and an overhead projector. I am able use the slides to flip through key vocabularies like I do when using the flash cards*

In the words of Teacher F *'there are radio lessons where students listen to the text read to them on radio and they answer questions on them.* He mentioned that he does that *to improve the students' listening and comprehension skills.*

From the comments, it is clear that teachers use electronic media such as radio, computers and projectors to support the teaching and learning of comprehension skills. The medium as teaching and learning aids, makes the teachers to teach effectively and learners to learn more than when the lessons were conducted without them.

#### **4.2.9 Research Question Four: How do teachers use recommended fluency-based strategies to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties?**

Research question four explored the strategies teachers use to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties. Two themes emerged. They were regular exercises on reading, and use of teaching and learning materials.

##### **A. Regular exercises on reading**

Engaging learners in regular reading exercise was one of the strategies the teachers used. This is explicitly stated by **Teacher "A"** that *"I let children blend two or more syllables to form word and read them. I guide the students to do this more often. As they do so, they become more fluent.* Another teacher stated, *"I let children use the words to form sentences orally. As they do this more often, they are able to be fluent* (**Teacher B**). Another interview participant (**Teacher D**) had this to say, *I pay less focus on corrections. But I let children blend two or more syllables to form word and read them".*

From the comments, teachers resorted to regular reading exercises to assist learners. The reading often targeted sentences, paragraphs and words. In order to assist the learners build confidence, interruptions for corrections are minimized to ensure that the students flow through the reading exercise.

### **B. Model reading**

The use of model reading featured greatly as one of the strategies used by teachers to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties. This is revealed in the comments from the participants below:

*I use model reading to assist the students with difficulty with fluent reading. I read the text twice for the students to listen. Then I read it the third time this time more slowly and with more stress where needed. I do that for the student to familiarize themselves with what is to be read (Teacher E).*

Another participant added:

*To assist those with difficulty with fluent reading, after I read a text stressing on the key vocabularies and paraphrasing the text, I let other two good readers read just to motivate the others that if a friend has been able to read, they can also do. When the learners are served through the model reading, they are able read at average level (Teacher C).*

From the comments, it is clear that model reading assisted teachers to improve fluency skills for learners with difficulties. The model reading enabled the learners to listen as learn prior to reading. This gave them the needed confidence and arsenals to read fluently.

#### **4.2.9.1 Motivation of learners with reading difficulties to improve fluency skills**

Motivation is needed for learning especially in children. Several motivation strategies may work when dealing with children. In this study, how the teachers motivate learners

with reading difficulties to acquire fluency skills were probed. It emerged that the teachers used motivating and encouraging words, and modelling to motivate the learners.

#### **A. The use of encouraging words**

The participants were of the view that certain words of praise and appreciation of efforts like ‘excellent’, ‘very good’ and so forth encourage learners to put up their best, hence they used them often for the learner. This is revealed in the following narrations.

*The trouble with fluency takes two different forms, which are fast reading and slow reading. The lack of fluency and slow decoding negatively influence pupils’ comprehension. For instance, the lack of fluency affects the student comprehension. I think a lot of the pupils I’ve seen they have a lot of trouble just with decoding. So, a lot of cases it seems like they’re brain capacity and brain power is so focused on decoding the word that there’s nothing left for comprehension, so a lot of times decoding actually gets in the way of comprehension. I use encouraging words like excellent for any progress made (Teacher A).*

Another participant added:

*I think when the working memory is taken up by sound out words there is really no working memory left for thinking about the story and thinking about what is happening in the story if you are reading so slowly or so choppy then you cannot put together the meaning. I let children blend two or more syllables to form word and read them. I let children use the words to form sentences orally. I give encouraging remarks, praises, etcetera for their successes (Teacher B)*

From the comments, it clear that the teachers used words of encouragement and praise such as *excellent, well done* to motivate them. Such words, apart confirming that what

the learners have done are right, also motivates them extrinsically as they are able to believe that they are capable of reading like their other counterparts.

### **B. Modeling**

According to the participants, they used modeling to motivate the learners. With that, learners were able to replicate their (the teachers) actions for successful learning. This is exemplified in the following comments.

*Modeling; I mean scaffolding. I read the sentence for learners. I can see that they comprehend when I read a story to them, and then we talk about it (Teacher D).*

Another participant added:

*Some pupils can answer questions because they are listening. They have the capacity to comprehend, but it is when their reading in such a choppy way, and so slowly, then they start to lose the meaning. I let children tell stories and retell stories they've heard before (Teacher E).*

From the comments, it is clear that teachers provided modelling and scaffolding to support both very slow and super-fast readers.

#### **4.2.9.2 Addressing individual needs of learners with reading difficulties during lessons on fluency**

How teachers manage the individual learning needs during lessons on fluency was also probed in this study. Four themes emerged. They were choral reading, and repeated reading, modeling, and reading backward. These are discussed below with verbatim quotation to support them.

### **A. Choral reading and repeated reading**

This theme featured prominently in interview. According to participants, the use of these strategies is to target the seemingly slow readers. Tracking, choral reading, and repeated reading assisted the learners to imitate the teacher for a successful reading exercise.

*I do choral reading, and repeated reading. I utilize rereading strategy and modeling in order to help slow reading pupils with fluency in order to improve their comprehension. A lot of times, just rereading passages, rereading practice, providing a good model for them, so I will read it, so that they can hear where I pause, the intonation, and then say, “can you read it and make it sound like me (Teacher A)*

Another participant commented that:

*I do repeated reading. Some of the learners need to hear the text read over and over again. And I take my time to do that. Sometimes, I let the fluent readers do the reading severally for the slow learner to listen. After that I make the whole class read in unison before I make the slow learner start reading individually (Teacher C).*

It is clear from the comments that the use of repeated reading and choral reading is a strategy used by the teachers to address the individual needs of learners with reading difficulties during lessons on fluency. The repeated reading and choral reading give the slow learners the opportunity to listen and learn before they actually read.

### **B. Modeling**

Modeling was another strategy used. Depending on the average speed of the class, the teachers read the text clearly for learners to get a good grasp of it. This is revealed in the following narration

*Modeling! I read aloud at a good pace, accuracy and expression for learners to listen. I do accommodate in the classroom here. We do a lot of rereading, or the pupils will read it, and then I will read it over*

*again, or listen to books on tape if it's a classroom book or something, so they hear it fluently (Teacher B).*

In the words of **Teacher E**, *“most times, I ensure I read the text to the whole class severally. I do that because I want the student to note how to best to read the text with correct stress and pronunciations”*.

From the comments, it is clear that teachers address the individual needs of learners with reading difficulties during lessons on fluency through model reading. The model reading is first done by the teachers followed by some of the students. This is done to assist the slow readers learn the text enough before they read independently

### **C. Reading backward**

The participants stated that they use a strategy called reading backward. That was done to ensure that every work in the text is read. The following narration exemplifies the strategy.

*We do reading backward and giving attention to words, sentences and paragraphs. Some pupils read very fast, but they do not understand what they are reading. For instance, I have and I had some pupils in the past, they were very good at fluency. They can read well, but sometimes they want to go fast and would not demonstrate comprehension when you would ask them questions about what they read, and quite often, they would have to go back and reread, so that is one situation (Teacher D).*

Another participant added:

*I sometimes make them read backwards. Even though it is difficult getting the understanding of the text from this kind of reading, the students' ability to do it indicates their ability to read it. So, I make them read paragraphs and sentences backwards until all the passage is read. (Teacher E).*

From the comments it is clear that teachers use backward reading to address the individual needs of learners with reading difficulties during lessons on fluency. With that the student read in reverse paragraphs and sentences which make up the passage.

#### **4.2.9.3 The rate at which teachers conduct exercises in fluency**

How often teachers conducted exercises during the teaching of reading fluency was also explored in this study. It emerged that both oral and written exercises were used regularly, specifically at least twice a week.

An interview participant (**Teacher B**) said, *“Daily. I conduct oral tests during the lesson and immediately after the lesson”*. Another participant (**Teacher B**) commented, *“two times in a week. I conduct written exercise to assess pupils based on individual abilities”*. Again, **Teacher C** stated that, *“she does oral tests immediately after the lesson”*. When **Teacher D** was asked how often she assesses her pupils in fluency, she reported that, *“I would say every day. I conduct either oral or written assessment”*.

**Teacher E** shared that, *“It is daily assignment in the form of oral and written exercise. Sometimes, I conduct written exercise weekly and fortnightly”*. Another teacher (**Teacher F**) commented that *“As you are teaching you are doing a daily assessment to constantly check fluency levels of pupils.”*

The data gathered from the interview data revealed that, teachers in Agona Swedru Presby A & B upper primary schools conducted oral and written exercises in fluency on daily, weekly and fortnightly basis. Thus, reading fluency instruction combined with regular assessment is the key to student success in reading fluency and comprehension.

#### **4.2.9.4 Teaching and learning materials used by teachers during lessons on fluency for learners with reading difficulties**

The data revealed that, teachers in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools utilized a variety of visual and audio-visual tools as instructional materials to promote the teaching and learning of reading fluency. It emerged from the data that teachers used word cards, sentence cards, audio recordings, puzzles, games, poems, songs, and worksheets as teaching/learning materials. The following comments exemplify the said materials the teachers used.

An interview participant (**Teacher A**) remarked, *“I use word cards, sentence cards, etc. I mean flash cards. The use of these materials makes lessons meaningful to the pupils”*.

Another participant **Teacher B** had this to say, *“I utilize recorded model reading to sharpen the fluency skills of pupils. Here, I do audio record of the reading. I play it for pupils to listen to it. I ask them to repeat or do same”*. Moreover, **Teacher C** stated,

*“Look – say – cover. This is what I do. First, pupils look at the sounds, words, sentences and paragraphs on flash cards. I let them say. Another interview participant, **Teacher D**, had this to say, “I utilize write - check – game. Sometimes, I engage pupils in memory and spelling activities as puzzles, etc. Pupils write the word from memory (spellings)”*.

When it comes to instructional materials, an interviewee (**Teacher E**) had this to say, *“I am able to provide pupils with flash cards, worksheets, etc. I use them to teach lessons in fluency to learners with reading disabilities. Another participant (**Teacher F**) stated, “I write poems, songs and puzzles, etc. on card boards. I use them in teaching reading fluency”*.

### **4.3 Discussion**

This section discusses the data collected and analyzed. The discussion is done according to the research questions.

#### **Strategies teachers use to improve phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties**

Analysis of research question one revealed that teachers use rhymes, colorful letter/word sound and teaching the sound of the alphabets as a strategy of teaching phonic skills for learners with reading difficulties. While teaching, they make use of sound games, two letter words sound balls, letter cards and word cards, teaching of rhymes, and clapping as a strategy to motivate students to acquire phonics skills. It was also found that activities used during phonics lessons to cater for individual needs were remedial teaching and repetition of lessons, model pronunciation, and use of ability-based tasks. The materials used by teachers during phonics lessons were the use of print media and the use of electronic media. The findings above with regards to the use of teaching and learning in teaching phonics buttress the argument by Adu, Awortwe, & Owusu (2024) that teaching has moved away from the traditional trend that relied solely on students' hearing and seeing to a modern trend that includes other senses such as smelling, tasting and touching. This modern trend has proved to be more effective. Again, the teachers' efforts to motivate the learners during teaching and learning suggest that as professionals, they understand the essence of motivation in teaching and learning. Avoke (2008) also supports the opinions of the respondents in a finding that the use of pictures as is an effective approach in teaching reading. He referred to this as "picture word method".

## **Strategies Teachers use to Improve Vocabulary Skills for Learners with Reading Difficulties**

Research question two which sought to find out the strategies teachers use to improve vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties revealed that the teachers resorted to teaching of new vocabularies and building learners' vocabulary bank. The teachers resorted to identification of unfamiliar words, encouraging children to read every day as a motivating strategy for learners' reading difficulties. Word cards and the use of audio recordings were the materials used by teachers in helping learners acquire vocabulary skills. It was also found that teachers used poems, rhymes, pictures and word cards to sustain the attention of learners in learning vocabulary skills. Remedial teaching, cooperative learning and tailor-made teaching were used to address the individual need of learners during vocabulary lessons. Strong and wide vocabulary are need for effective communication and for effective writing in academic circles. This means that the teachers are in effect preparing the learners to cope with the demands of formal education. This present finding of building the vocabulary of the learners corroborates the findings of Calvin et al. (2015), whose study concluded that students need to have strong vocabulary to overcome the challenge of reading without comprehension as a result of misunderstanding of key words. This finding is also in line with the bottom-up approach to reading where learners begin with letters of the alphabet and proceed with words in that order. Flanigan et al., (2012) also argue that the use of generative vocabulary instruction is based on the notion that 70% of English words have prefixes and suffixes or roots with Greek or Latin origin. Queini, et al., (2008) in their study on read aloud concluded that the impact of read aloud strategy on vocabulary acquisition for young children will hopefully allow them to grow as independent learners and build strategy

to deduce or acquire the meaning of new words when they read independently. The teachers' use of resources such as dictionary, flashcards, word cards and audio recording in teaching vocabulary also buttressed by Urquiji (2012) whose study on improving oral performance through interaction with flashcards because flashcards improve oral performance for three reasons. Firstly, they foster the integrated upgrading of all the qualitative aspect of spoken language. Secondly, they aid subject abilities to deal with generative topics and finally the impact learners' behaviours and foster development of social skills. Chelimo (2014) found out that flashcards are effective in reinforcing acquisition of pre reading skills development that is pronunciation, letter recognition, vocabulary acquisition and picture reading.

### **Strategies Teachers use to Improve Comprehension Skills for Learners with Reading Difficulties**

Research question three which sought to explore the strategies teachers use to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties revealed the use of explanation and demonstration, the use of graphic organizers, teaching of vocabularies, peer-assisted reading, discussing the text, use of cloze procedure and different groupings as some of the strategies used. With regards to techniques used by teachers to motivate learners with reading difficulties during comprehension lessons, it was found that the teachers used different instructional strategies, and instructional materials. It was also found that the teachers engaged the students in oral assessment, written exercises and filling of graphic organisers as the major forms of exercises teachers use during comprehension lessons. Strategies used by teachers to address the individual needs of learners during comprehension lessons were found to be model reading, remedial reading lesson and the teaching and learning materials used by

teachers during comprehension lessons for learners with reading difficulties were print media and electronic media.

The findings from the respondents revealed that teachers use peer teaching as a strategy and this is parallel with a study conducted by Hayford (2013) which concluded that peer tutoring is an instructional method in which students help each other to learn and in turn learn by teaching cross age. This approach has well documented academic and social benefits for both the tutor and the learner. The teachers use different techniques such as rhymes, graphic organisers, guided reading, songs, and close proximity-sitting close to learners to teach comprehension. These findings are parallel to a study by Hanson (2016) who among other things, found guided reading as a tool for teaching comprehension to struggling readers. Similarly, Souhila (2014) also conducted a study to make English as a foreign language learner aware of reading dealing with some effective strategies that will help them to overcome their difficulties in reading comprehension. The hypothesis of the study stated that if English students used the strategies of predicting, skimming, scanning, inferring, guessing the meaning of new words, self-monitoring and summarizing appropriately, they would be able to achieve comprehension in reading easily.

It emerged from the data that, teachers conduct remedial lessons on pronunciation, vocabulary and reading to address the individual needs of learners during comprehension lessons. They create library where they have a collection of both print and electronic media to support individual learners read and develop comprehension skills. This finding is confirmed by Logsdon (2016) who argued that every student has learning difference to some degree. Some learn better by reading than they do by listening to a lecture. Others learn best working with hands on projects than by thinking about ideas in their minds. Some learn best by reading while others prefer to

write. Some students need additional time and experience with ideas to understand them. Working with a special education teachers in small groups allows students to have more time to learn than can be provided in a regular classroom. Students with reading difficulties need instructions that provide the following individual attention; time to listen to ideas presented in a pace natural to them; time to think about and practice ideas; opportunities to in groups and additional time to work alone if needed; time to review frequently before moving on to other materials; and multisensory learning tools add flexible testing methods allow students to show what they have learned in ways that feel comfortable to them.

The use of different instructional strategies and materials motivated learners' interest in comprehension lessons used by the teachers have been found to promote mastery skills in reading comprehension. The findings above are consistent with the interactive model of reading which recognizes reading as an active process which involves the collective participation of peers, teachers and learning resources. The findings also confirm the work of other researchers who identified the use of questioning, story maps, retelling, remedial reading, think-aloud and use of graphic organizers as instructional strategies for comprehension (Anderson, 2016, cited in O'Rourke, 2017; Ceprano, 2010; Hansen et al., 2014; The National Reading Panel, 2005; Read Naturally, Inc., 2020; Souhila, 2014). These researchers revealed that the use of these instructional strategies, materials and assessment procedures are useful in helping students master reading skills. For instance, Huggins & Edwards (2011) found that graphic organizers which make use of boxes, lines and other devices to categorize and prioritize information for retention and comprehension in the classroom assist in improving reading comprehension.

## **Strategies Teachers use to Improve Fluency Skills for Learners with Reading Difficulties**

Research Question Four explored the strategies teachers use to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties. It was revealed that teachers used regular exercises on reading. They also used encouraging words and modelling to motivate learners with difficulties to improve fluency skills. The individual needs of learners with reading difficulties during lessons on fluency were addressed through choral reading and repeated reading, modelling and reading backward. The rate at which teachers conduct exercises on fluency was found to be on daily, weekly and fortnightly basis. The teachers' use of tracking, choral reading, and repeated reading, modelling, one-minute prompts, individual teaching, scaffolding, etcetera to address individual needs of learners with reading difficulties during lessons on fluency. These strategies affirm the views of August and Shanahan (2006) who argued that differentiated instruction is an effective strategy for meeting every child's diverse learning needs. The conduct of exercise regularly is confirmed by Alordiah (2018) who agree that instruction that is guided by frequent, quick, reliable, valid, and curriculum-based assessment has the potential to lead to improved teacher decision-making and student performance in reading. Thus, reading fluency instruction combined with regular assessment is the key to student success in reading fluency and comprehension.

The study found that, teachers in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools utilized a number of strategies to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties. The specific strategies they utilized included decoding, individual remedial tuition, rereading and modelling, blending, one-minute prompts, tracking, choral reading, repeated reading, and scaffolding. It emerged from the data that, they

provided modelling and scaffolding to support both very slow and super-fast readers. Again, they utilized a variety of visual and audio-visual tools such as word cards, sentence cards, flash cards, audio recordings, puzzles, games, poems, songs, and worksheets as instructional materials to promote the teaching and learning of reading fluency. Moreover, they conducted oral and written exercises in fluency on daily, weekly and fortnightly basis to check fluency levels of pupils. The use of these instructional strategies, materials and assessment procedures corroborates the views of several researchers who found that these strategies contribute to growth in oral reading fluency among students (Alordiah, 2018; Learner, 2009; Musti-Rao et al., 2009; The National Reading Panel, 2005). Goering and Baker (2010), for instance, found a statistically significant improvement in oral reading fluency for all students. Similarly, Reading Rockets (2026) found that repeated reading, and paired reading promote oral reading fluency and accurate decoding as well as students' reading fluency and comprehension. The National Reading Panel (2005) also observed that these strategies are quite effective. The findings above fall in line with the interactive model of reading as it shows how teachers effectively utilized regularly assessment of student performance and encouraged collaborative activities in assisting students to improve their reading skills.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Overview

The study explored the strategies teachers use to improve reading skills for learners with reading difficulties in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. To arrive at this objective, six (6) public primary school teachers were sampled through purposive sampling techniques for the study. Case study design using the qualitative approach was adopted for this study. The instruments used for data collection was semi-structured interview guide. The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis. Responses from respondents were categorized into themes. This chapter highlights the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study. Suggestions for further studies are also put forward.

#### 5.2 Summary of Key Findings

Among the findings of this study were the following:

##### **Strategies teachers use to improve phonic skills for learners with reading difficulties**

The first research question sought to find out how teachers use teaching strategies to improve phonic skills for learners with reading difficulties in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. It was found that teachers use rhymes, sounds letter cards, word sounds, print and electronic media such as radio and mobile phones, and interactive techniques in remediating phonics lessons for learners who have reading difficulties. The findings revealed that teachers frequently repeated phonic lessons for individual learners with reading difficulties through remedial teaching, model pronunciation, and assignment of tasks based on individual learners.

The second research question examined the strategies and how teachers use them to improve vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. It was revealed that teachers taught vocabulary skills, new vocabulary and their meanings to learners through the use of learner-centered instructional strategies such as songs, poems, rhymes, interactive instructional media such as word cards, pictures, and audio recordings, assessment and remediation procedures. The findings also revealed that the teachers conducted remedial teaching and vocabulary drills for the individual learners.

The third research question explored teaching strategies and how they were used to improve comprehension for learners with reading difficulties in Agona Swedru Circuits A & B primary schools. It was found out that teachers employed reading strategies such as decoding, story mapping, peer-assisted reading, graphic organizers, think aloud, discussing the text, explicit instruction, brainstorming, different grouping, collaborative strategic reading, and cloze procedure. Additionally, the findings indicate that teachers often conduct oral and written assessment during and at the end of comprehension lessons. Each of these strategies was administered with the individual needs of each student clearly in focus.

The fourth research question of this study examined strategies teachers use to improve fluency for learners with reading difficulties in Agona Swedru Presby A & B primary schools. It was found that teachers utilized a number of strategies. This included decoding, individual remedial tuition, rereading and modelling, blending, one-minute prompts, tracking, choral reading, repeated reading, and scaffolding in teaching fluency skills to learners with reading difficulties. They provided modelling and scaffolding to support both very slow and super-fast readers.

### 5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the strategies teachers use to improve reading difficulties in primary schools:

Teachers employed a variety of instructional strategies to improve phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties. These strategies include the use of rhymes, sounds, letter cards, word cards, songs, poems, interactive media, and assessment procedures tailored to individual learners' needs.

Remedial teaching sessions are characterized by repeated lessons and individualized instruction, allowing teachers to target specific areas of difficulty and provide additional support to struggling learners. This approach emphasizes repetition, modeling, and practice to reinforce learning and improve skill acquisition over time.

Teachers incorporate a range of reading strategies, such as decoding, story mapping, peer-assisted reading, graphic organizers, and think aloud, to enhance learners' comprehension abilities. These strategies encourage active engagement with texts, facilitate deeper understanding, and promote critical thinking skills among learners.

Fluency instruction focuses on developing students' reading speed, accuracy, and expression through a combination of techniques, including decoding practice, rereading, modeling, and scaffolding. Teachers provide individualized support to accommodate learners with varying levels of fluency, ensuring that each student receives appropriate instruction and encouragement to improve.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of differentiated instruction and targeted interventions in addressing the diverse needs of learners with reading

difficulties. By employing a range of effective strategies tailored to specific skill areas, teachers can help struggling readers build essential literacy skills and achieve greater success in their academic endeavours.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. The Ghana education service should organise annual in-service training workshops focusing specifically on systematic phonics and fluency instruction for lower primary teachers, with practical demonstration and classroom based coaching.
2. The head teachers of Agona Swedru Presby A and B primary schools should encourage teachers to use of multi-sensory instructional approaches for vocabulary instruction, including incorporating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements into lessons.
3. The head teachers should encourage collaboration among teachers, literacy specialists, and other stakeholders to share effective comprehension strategies and resources for supporting struggling readers.
4. Teachers should utilize regular progress monitoring measures to assess students' fluency levels and track their growth over time, enabling teachers to adjust instruction and intervention plans as needed.

#### **5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies**

This study provided a snapshot of the perspectives of public primary school teachers on strategies to improve reading skills for learners with reading difficulties. Future studies should involve parents and pupils and their views with respect to the teaching

and learning of English Language as well as the reading, writing and speaking among pupils.

A mixed-method sequential exploratory design could be used to replicate this study to cover a larger sample in order to draw conclusive evidence on the subject matter or otherwise. This would help strengthen the foundation for interpreting and generalizing the empirical results on the subject matter.



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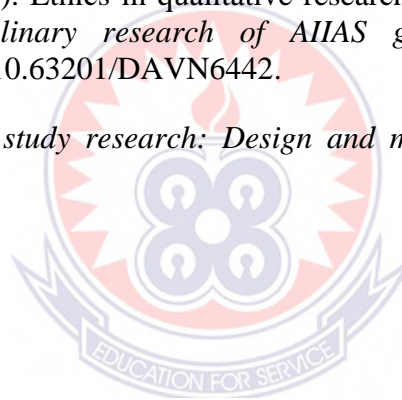
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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

##### RESEARCH TOPIC

**STRATEGIES TEACHERS USE TO IMPROVE READING SKILLS FOR  
LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN AGONA SWEDRU  
PRESBY A & B PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

##### **PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Name / pseudonym .....

Gender .....

Class taught .....

Qualification .....

Teaching experience .....

##### **RESEARCH QUESTION 1**

How do teachers use recommended phonic-based strategies to improve phonics skills for learners with reading difficulties?

##### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How do you motivate learners who have difficulties in reading to acquire phonic skills?
2. How do you attend to individual needs of children with difficulties in acquiring phonic skills?
3. How often do you do those things stated in (2) above?
4. How do you sustain the attention span of your learners during phonic lessons?
5. What materials or resources do you use during phonic lessons?

##### **RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

How do teachers use recommended vocabulary-based strategies to improve vocabulary skills for learners with reading difficulties?

##### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How do you motivate your learners with difficulties in reading to acquire vocabulary skill?
2. What materials or resources do you use during vocabulary lessons?
3. How do you sustain the attention span of your learners during vocabulary lessons?
4. How often do you conduct exercises during vocabulary lessons?

5. How do you attend to individual needs of learners during vocabulary lessons?

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

How do teachers use recommended comprehension-based strategies to improve comprehension skills for learners with reading difficulties?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How do you motivate your learners with reading difficulties to enjoy comprehension lessons?
2. How often do you conduct exercises during comprehension lessons?
3. How do you ask questions during comprehension lessons?
4. How do you address the individual needs of learners during comprehension lessons?
5. What teaching and learning materials or resources do you use during comprehension lessons?

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 4**

How do teachers use recommended fluency-based strategies to improve fluency skills for learners with reading difficulties?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How do you motivate learners with reading difficulties to acquire fluency skills?
2. How do you address the individual needs of your learners during lessons in fluency?
3. How often do you conduct exercises in fluency?
4. Which teaching and learning materials do you use to teach fluency?

### **CONCLUSION**

Thank you for participating in this interview. Every information you shared is very valuable, and it will be treated with complete confidentiality. I may call on you again in case there is the need to do so.

## APPENDIX B



12<sup>th</sup> May, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

Dear Sir,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. COMFORT IMPRAIM**

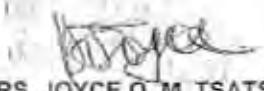
I write to introduce to you, **Ms. Comfort Impraim** an M.Phil. student of the Department of Special Education with index number B180150027

She is currently working on her thesis on the topic: **"Strategies Used by Teachers to Remediate the Reading Difficulties of Learners in Agona Swedru Presby A and B Upper Primary School"**. She needs to observe the pupils in your school.

I would be grateful if you could give her the needed assistance to enable her collect the data.

Thank you for the consideration and assistance.

Yours faithfully,

  
MRS. JOYCE O. M. TSATSU  
for: (Ag. Head of Department)

