Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Program: Through the Lens of the Supervisors

Charlyn Y. Emata [iD]
Department of Education, Philippines

To cite this article:

Emata, C.Y. (2024). Implementation of early language, literacy and numeracy (ELLN) program: Through the lens of the supervisors. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES), 10*(4), 709-720. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.3478

Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Program: Through the Lens of the Supervisors

Charlyn Y. Emata

Article Info	Abstract
	The qualitative – case study aimed to unveil the supportive leadership practices of supervisors in the implementation of Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) in terms of fostering learner-centered pedagogical practices; providing conducive learning environment; ensuring a balanced curriculum; capacity building; fostering multi-cultural awareness; and building connections, anchored on DepEd vision, mission and core values. There were five (5) supervisors who participated in the study. Of the five (5), three (3) were Education Program Supervisors and two (2) were Public Schools District Supervisors. As to the supportive leadership of supervisors in terms of fostering learner-centered pedagogical practices, four (4) themes emerged: advocating developmentally appropriate techniques; conducting trainings; doing monitoring and evaluation; and encouraging coaching and mentoring. As to providing conducive learning environment, two (2) themes emerged: providing instructional materials; and ensuring an enabling environment. In terms of ensuring a balanced curriculum, two (2) themes emerged: adhering to standards; and contextualizing the curriculum. As to capacity building, one (1) theme emerged, which was conducting professional development activities. In terms of fostering multi-cultural awareness, one (1) theme emerged, which was promoting inclusive education. In terms of building connections, one (1) theme emerged, which was advocating stakeholder engagement. The DepEd vision, mission and core values served as guide to the supervisors.

Introduction

Foundational skills in language, literacy, and numeracy are crucial for the success in school and in the world outside the school. Success of students in the formal schooling lies greatly on the ability of the learners to read, comprehend, and solve algorithms. Many students fail to develop and master complex skills, particularly 21st century skills, because their foundational skills are still not developed and honed. The development of these basic skills does not only rely on the teachers who are in the forefront of the teaching-learning processes. It is also dependent on the supportive leadership of the educational leaders to implement and supervise the literacy and numeracy interventions of the schools.

In Indonesia, the average reading ability of Indonesian learners was below the international median (Suryaman, 2015, cited in Banawi, Latuconsina & Latuconsina, 2022). In Afghanistan, the learning poverty rate, the measure that talks about the percentage of children not meeting the minimum reading proficiency, is 93%, which is considered among the highest in the world. In India, the National Large-Scale Assessment (NLSA) noted that 55% of the children in the country are "learning poor" (World Bank, 2019).In the Philippines, Filipino learners showed low proficiency in English and Filipino based on the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Assessment (ELLNA) results for School Year 2017-2018. The said assessment measured the listening and reading comprehension of Grade 3 learners. (Department of Education, 2022).

In Tagum City, in an interview with the reading focal person of the Department of Education Tagum City Division, 343 kindergarten learners needed full refresher on basic literacy. Moreover, 13 Grade 1 learners, 20 Grade 2 learners, and 19 Grade 3 learners needed to undergo intensive reading remediation program. Many of the researches on early literacy and numeracy center on the outcomes of the interventions and on early literacy and numeracy as predictors of school success. The researchers were not able to come across studies on the implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) with supportive leadership of supervisors as the focus of the study.

This research is vital in bringing forth the practices showing the leadership of the supervisors in the implementation of ELLN. Needless to say, educational leaders, who advocate instructional leadership, help raise the bar of excellence in terms of student outcomes. The findings will be beneficial to other supervisors and educational leaders for these will provide benchmarks on leadership practices that help improve early literacy and numeracy interventions in schools.

Method
Qualitative Design and Methodology

This study utilized qualitative research design. Qualitative research design is a type of research that does not involve statistical procedures in producing results (Strass & Corbin, 1998, cited in Fischer & Guzel, 2022). Hence, data in qualitative research are composed non-quantified data like texts, audio-recordings or objects. Qualitative researches make use of interviews, participant observation, and documents as primary tools to gather qualitative data.

The specific qualitative research design used was case study. Case studies permits in-depth investigation of phenomenon that has unfolded over time. These bring thick descriptions of the phenomenon based on the participants' perspectives of their experiences (Polio & Friedman, 2016, cited in Hinton, 2020). In addition, case studies require detailed investigation due to limited number of samples.The case study design was appropriate in the research because it explored with depth the supportive leadership practices of the supervisors in the implementation of ELLN. Multiple perspectives were taken into consideration since the study involved both education program supervisors (curriculum management) and public schools district supervisors (technical assistance).

Case study was used in the conduct of this qualitative study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select its participants who were involved in an in-depth interview. The data gathered were analyzed through coding and thematic analysis. The researcher ensured the validity of the results as well as the observance to the principles under ethical consideration.

Research Site

The research was done in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, Philippines. Tagum City is one of the component cities in the Province of Davao del Norte; and is said to be the most populous component city in Mindanao. It has 23 barangays, with Barangay Visayan Village as the most populous barangay.

Selection Criteria and Participants

The participants in the study were five (5) supervisors from Department of Education Tagum City Division. Of the five (5) supervisors, three (3) were Education Program Supervisors and two (2) were Public Schools District Supervisors, who have experienced providing supportive leadership in the implementation of ELLN. The supervisors involved had at least two (2) years of experience in the position; and they were able to supervise the implementation of the ELLN for at least (2) years. The sampling method used was purposive sampling. The researcher believed that these supervisors can bring thick descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data Collection

Before the conduct of the in-depth interview, permission was sought through a letter addressed to the Chief Education Supervisor of the Curriculum Implementation Division of DepEd Tagum City Division. The letter contained the purpose of the study as well as the target participants. Given the necessary approval, the researcher wrote a letter to the identified participants and asked for their informed consent and for their favorable time for the conduct of the interview.

The participants were scheduled for an interview after they have sent back the signed informed consent form. During the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation. Each participant, during the interview, was asked with open-ended questions to explore the best practices of the supervisors in the implementation of ELLN. The interview was audio-recorded. It ran on an average of thirty (30) minutes per participant. The audio recordings were secured by the researcher. These recordings were stored in the personal computer for security reasons. Also, these were used by the researcher in his verbatim transcription. Only the researcher had access to the recordings to observe privacy of information.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I observed different roles in the conduct of the study. First, I served as interviewer. As an interviewer, I gathered data through in-depth interviews. The interview procedure had three parts. The first part

was the preliminaries where I gave an overview of the study, presented the informed consent form and explained its contents. I allowed the participants to ask questions should there be things that he/she wanted to clarify before the interview proper. Taking into consideration the participant's convenience was my priority. I also emphasized that in the interview procedure, confidentiality will be maintained, and the contact information for the researcher will be explained. All interviews were recorded on a cellphone. Data were transferred from the portable device to the researcher's personal computer and were saved in privacy. Second, I served as a transcriber. I listened to the audio-recorded interviews so that I could transcribe the interviews in verbatim. The interview transcripts were cleaned by removing unnecessary words/phrases. Third, I served as a primary data analyst. I analyzed the qualitative data through coding and thematic analysis. Fourth, I ensured that the interviews are properly recorded. Therefore, I prepared the interview guide as well as the equipment to be used during the interviews.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The validation process of the research used four (4) criteria, namely: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research and is concerned with the truth of the research findings. Also, it establishes whether the findings represent believable data and correct information extracted from the participants' responses and original views. Strategies to ensure the credibility of the study are persistent observation, triangulation, and member check (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To ensure the credibility of my study, I used iterative questioning during the interview, member checking through participants' validation of their responses, and thick description of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions. It is important to state the principles and criteria used to select participants and detail the participants' main characteristics so that the transferability of the results to other contexts can be assessed. Dependability establishes the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable. The close ties between credibility and dependability, arguing that, in practice, a demonstration of the former goes some distance in ensuring the latter (Creswell, 2017). To ensure the dependability of my study, I observed in-depth methodological descriptions to allow the study to be repeated by other researchers.

Transferability concerns the aspect of applicability. The researcher should convince the reader that your research applies to their setting by giving an ample description of the participants and the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In the context of my study, I provided detailed descriptions of phenomenon to allow comparison to be made.

Lastly, *confirmability* is related to establishing that data and interpretations of findings are based on the data gathered and not on our ideas (Anney, 2014). In the context of my study, I used audit trail. This is a detailed record whereby responses are traced/tracked against the informants.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers observed the three (3) principles of ethical considerations, namely: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.*Respect for persons*, according to the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979), is about protecting the autonomy for all people and treating them with courtesy and respect. It implies the honor, respect, and the right for autonomy that every person deserves. To observe this principle, I ensured that the participation of the participants was voluntary; and that the participants have the right to withdraw when they feel unsecured. Also, I utilized the informed consent form to be signed by the participants prior to the conduct of the interviews. In addition, confidentiality was also observed. Pseudonyms were used in the manuscript to protect the participants.

Beneficence refers to the treatment of a person in a good manner utilizing respecting their decision, doing no harm, and protecting their well-being (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). To observe beneficence, I treated the participants with utmost care and protection. Risks involved were explained to the participants. Moreover, the benefits of the study were maximized, and the risks were minimized. The principle of **justice** was observed by asking relevant questions and by considering what is fair and just in terms of selection of participants.

Results and Discussion

Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy in terms of Fostering Learner-centered Pedagogical Practices

After analyzing the responses of the participants, the researcher came-up with five (5) themes, namely: (1) advocating the use of explicit approaches; (2) providing developmentally appropriate techniques; (3) conducting trainings; (4) doing monitoring and evaluation; and (5) encouraging coaching and mentoring.

Advocating Developmentally Appropriate Techniques

For the two (2) participants, employing developmentally appropriate teaching strategies is needed in the implementation of ELLN inside the classrooms. There is a need to tailor-fit or adjust the techniques since the recipients are struggling learners in basic literacy and numeracy.

This is linked to the response of IDI 001 who shared her practice:

"In numeracy in order to foster learner-centered pedagogies and practices, I advised teachers to use explicit approaches in the delivery of the contents. In this approach, the teacher does the modeling - I do-you do-we do. In this approach, meaningful learning happens."

This is also supported by IDI 004 when she posited that:

"I have been a regional facilitator of ELLN in Region XI. I would love to share my journey on this program in our region. ELLN, basically, focused on providing strategic approaches and developmentally

appropriate techniques to key stage 1 teachers in the delivery of teaching- learning pedagogy to our beginning learners. By using learner- centered pedagogies, the program ensures that inclusivity and diversity are evident at utmost classroom setting."

Conducting Trainings

One participant noted that as a supervisor, one of the functions is doing trainings for the teachers. IDI 002 mentioned:

"I need to conduct trainings."

Doing Monitoring and Evaluation

One participant opined that in order to sustain the literacy program, she must do monitoring and evaluation. IDI 005 expressed:

"By sustaining the literacy program innovation under my learning area with monitoring and evaluation on its impact to the learners."

Encouraging Coaching and Mentoring

IDI003 recognized the value of coaching and mentoring, especially to the teachers who have difficulty teaching foundational literacy and numeracy. He said:

"I have to recognize those teachers implementing those learner- centered pedagogies and practices, and then encourage those who did not make use of it through coaching and mentoring with their School Heads and Master Teachers."

The result of the study is supported by Honig and Rainey (2019) who posited that the role of supervisors is to help principals grow as instructional leaders. Both principals and supervisors may support one another to make instructional leadership work effectively.

Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy in terms of Providing Conducive Learning Environment

After analyzing the responses of the participants, the researcher came-up with two (2) themes, namely: (1) providing instructional materials; and (2) ensuring an enabling environment.

Providing Instructional Materials

Three (3) of the participants expressed their supportive leadership in terms of providing instructional materials. These materials help in the delivery of instruction, and are basically interactive in nature.

IDI001 shared her idea:

> "In ELLN, one of the considerations is the learning environment to be appropriate and conducive by providing learners learning counters for them to master skills in numeracy. Moreover, healthy/ conducive learning environment for ELLN will enable teachers and learners attain expected learning goals."

This is also supported by IDI004 when she emphasized:

> "As a School Principal for 10 years, I see to it that supplies and materials for the reproduction of teaching aids are included in the monthly MOOE appropriation."

IDI005 shared the same contention, saying that:

> "By capacitating teachers in the development of literacy interactive materials for learners to maximize learning."

Ensuring an Enabling Environment

Two (2) participants expressed the value of providing an enabling environment. Ideal class size must be observed. And in addition, motivation of and appreciation in efforts of teachers make it easy for effective learning to happen.

IDI002 commented on the class size. He posited:

> "I have to ensure observe of standard class size."

IDI003 showed his support by saying that:

> "School Heads are fully aware of their responsibility of ensuring a conducive learning environment thus our role then as supervisors is to motivate them to do more and appreciate the initiatives they were doing."

The result is supported by CCSSO (21015), cited in Hvidston, Range, Anderson and Quirk (2019), affirmed that supervisors determine the necessary improvements in the practices of principals in promoting positive learning environment.

Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy in terms of ensuring a Balanced Curriculum

After analyzing the responses of the participants, the researcher came-up with two (2) themes, namely: (1) adhering to guidelines and (2) contextualizing the curriculum.

Adhering to Standards

Two (2) participants noted the need to adhere to the standards set by the Department of Education. This may be in terms of time allocation and weight for each domain.

This is connected to the response of IDI001, saying:

> "A well-defined distribution of weight and time per domain will enable the learner to be holistically honed. This objective will only be realized if weights of every domain be distributed accordingly. Such as Science and Arts subjects, the academic and vocational subjects. In this way, it will lead to the advancement of the educational objectives."

IDI002 opined that:

> "I need to remind schools to adhere to actual time allocation."

Contextualizing the Curriculum

Two (2) participants stressed the need to contextualize the curriculum, especially for those struggling learners. There is a need to capitalize the experiences of the learners when planning for instruction.

IDI003 emphasized that the curriculum is already there. And what is left for the teacher is to contextualize. He mentioned:

> "The curriculum was already provided as product of those experts tapped of preparing it but our teachers were trained/empowered to do contextualization."

IDI005 shared the same opinion, saying that:

> "By capacitating teachers in contextualizing lessons fitted for diverse learners"

The result is supported by Harris and Ancho (2020) who remarked that educational supervisors make sure that schools operate efficiently and with the legal mandates.

Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy in terms of Capacity Building

After analyzing the responses of the participants, the researcher came-up with one (1) theme, namely: conducting professional development activities.

Conducting Professional Development Activities

Four (4) participants asserted that conducting professional development activities is necessary in the implementation of ELLN. These activities hone the pedagogical skill of the teachers. They expressed:

> "Teachers in consideration of the diversity of learners in terms of pacing and preparation must be provided with capacity building for them to be able to handle and engage learning process to learners effectively (IDI001)."

> "Several trainings were already conducted but if they need to have some refresher activities they can do

it during LAC sessions. Learning episodes or recorded explanations, activities and workshops were available. (IDI003)."

"Regular conduct of SLAC session to teachers for them to be more competent and equipped in handling Key stage 1 learners. Classrooms are evidently a learning abode by the presence of print- rich materials reachable and accessible to learners (IDI004)."

"I conducted regular capacity building through quarterly Professional Learning Community to improve teachers' literacy and numeracy teaching skills (IDI005)."

Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy in terms of Fostering Multi-cultural Awareness

After analyzing the responses of the participants, the researcher came-up with one (1) theme, namely: promoting inclusive education.

Promoting Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is the call of the times. In the implementation of ELLN, the participants saw the need for inclusivity in the delivery of instruction. They remarked:

"In the MATATAG Curriculum for learners, TA -take good care of learners by promoting learners' well-being, inclusiveness learning and positive learning environment. Given this direction in ELLN the diversity of learners is the primary consideration (IDI001)."

"Integration of IPEd and other related programs (IDI002)"

"In Inclusive Education, ELLN program promotes learning approaches that are accessible to diverse learners. Teachers are encouraged to create stories, situations, poems that are contextualized and localized that best suit to the community. Instructional materialize can be indigenize to develop familiarity to the learners for easy understanding of the context (IDI004)."

"By catering and addressing multi-cultural uniqueness of learners in all program implementation (IDI005)."

Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy in terms of Building Connections

After analyzing the responses of the participants, the researcher came-up with one (1) theme, namely: advocating stakeholder engagement.

Advocating Stakeholder Engagement

Three (3) participants accentuated the necessity of stakeholder engagement. The implementation of ELLN depends on the collaboration of all key players in the educational system. They noted:

> "ELLN Program provides learners quality, equitable, culture - based and complete basic education. Involving everyone in the institution as learning partners in achieving the direction in developing life-long learners (IDI001)."

> "It's a shared responsibility but we are in the forefront of leading to reach our goal of developing our learners to be equipped with KSAVs which will make them ready to face our changing and challenging world (IDI003)."

> "The DepEd's vision encourages all stakeholders' participation. Thus, education leaders adhere to support, take a lead, provide essential needs such technical, financial, logistics in order to sustain the implementation of ELLN program (IDI004)."

Influence of Vision, Mission and Core Values on the Supportive Leadership of Supervisors in the Implementation of Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy

After analyzing the responses, the researcher came-up with one (1) theme, namely: serving as a guide.

Serving as Guide

Participants observed that the DepEd vision, mission and core values served as guide in their supportive leadership in the implementation of ELLN. They expressed:

> "The DepEd vision directs the institution to proactively reinforcing initiatives to equip learners with the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. The ELLN Program serves as one of the avenues to answer the enhancement of Literacy and Numeracy. This will enable to develop Filipino learners their full potential in becoming a responsible and skillful individual in the country (IDI001)."

> "It serves as a guide (IDI002)."

> "ELLN program is in paralleled with DepEd mission, to promote every Filipino learner to become patriotic, productive, pro- active, engaging, and becoming a globally competitive. ELLN program crafted, developed and delivered pedagogical approaches that can hone learners in- depth understanding holistically (IDI004)."

Conclusion

The aim of the research was to unveil the supportive leadership practices of the supervisors in the implementation

of the Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN). A qualitative approach was adopted using a case study design. The study has provided insights on the supportive leadership practices of education program supervisors and public schools district supervisors in terms of fostering learner-centered pedagogical practices; providing conducive learning environment; ensuring a balanced curriculum; capacity building; fostering multi-cultural awareness; and building connections. It also highlighted the influence of DepEd vision, mission and core values in their supportive leadership. Since the study involved a small number of samples, the findings have limited generalizability. These may not capture the perspectives of supervisors who are not part of the research.

The findings of the study highlighted the crucial role of supervisors in implementing any curriculum. The supervisors help the school heads in curriculum management. Hence, this study may help other supervisors to benchmark some practices in curriculum management. School heads, master teachers, and head teachers can emulate the practices, and if possible, contextualize to fit into their school contexts.

Recommendations

In the light of the aforementioned conclusion, the following recommendations are made:
1. Similar studies may be conducted to compare results using other curricular programs.
2. The study may be replicated to include other divisions in order to capture more perspectives.
3. Multiple data sources may be used to triangulate the data. FGD may be done to the teachers implementing ELLN. Document analysis may be done to substantiate the responses.

Acknowledgements

References

Anney, V. (2014). Ensuring the Quality of the Findings of Qualitative Research: Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, *5*, 272-281.

Banawi, A., Latuconsina, A., & Latuconsina, S. (2022). Exploring the students' reading, writing, and numeracy skills in southeast Maluku Regency coastal elementary schools. *Al Ibtida: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru MI*, *9*(2), 252. https://doi.org/10.24235/al.ibtida.snj.v9i2.10189

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Department of Education. (2022). *Basic education development plan 2030*.

Fischer, E., & Guzel, G. T. (2022). The case for qualitative research. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *33*(1), 259-272. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1300

Haris, I., & Ancho, I. (2020). School supervision practice in Asian countries: A comparison Indonesia and the Philippines. *Journal of Critical Review*, *7*(8), 2547-2554.

Hinton, R. (2020). *Use of Direct Quotes in the Literature Reviews of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations:*

A Qualitative Case Study of L2 Graduate Students [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Tennessee.

Honig, M. I., & Rainey, L. R. (2019). Supporting principal supervisors: what really matters? *Journal of Educational Administration*, *57*(5), 445–462. https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-05-2019-0089

Hvidston, D. J., Range, B., Anderson, J., & Quirk, B. (2019). An Explanation of the Supervisory Model used by Elementary Principal Supervisors in the State of Missouri. *School Leadership Review*, *14*(1), 4. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1269496.pdf

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 120-124. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/read-the-belmont-report/index.html

World Bank. (2019). A learning revolution to eradicate learning poverty. https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/796031571248486139-0090022019/original/LearningPovertybrochureOct17.pdf

Author Information

Charlyn Y. Emata

https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5068-0091

Department of Education Tagum City

Energy Park, Apokon, Tagum City

Philippines

Contact e-mail: *charlyn.emata002@deped.gov.ph*