

The Roles of the Teachers in the Development of the Early Literacy Skills of the Kindergarten Learners in the Public Elementary Schools in Ligao City Division

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the roles of kindergarten teachers in developing early literacy skills in public elementary schools in Ligao City Division during School Year 2025–2026. Using a descriptive–evaluative–correlational design, the researcher surveyed 55 kindergarten teachers selected through purposive identification of participating schools and total enumeration of the target teacher group. A researcher-developed questionnaire examined ten dimensions of teachers’ roles, five factors associated with early literacy instruction, implementation constraints, and proposed initiatives. Frequencies, percentages, weighted means, ranks, and Kendall’s coefficient of concordance were used. The composite mean for teachers’ roles was 4.33; prior knowledge (4.44) was highest and learning differences (4.19) lowest. Factors associated with teachers’ roles also averaged 4.33, led by creating literacy-rich environments (4.49),

while comprehension development had the lowest mean (4.07). Constraints averaged 4.36, with pressure for results and teacher burnout most highly rated (4.58). Proposed initiatives averaged 4.42, with guided literacy-rich play receiving the highest rating (4.71). Rank-order agreement differed by domain, with significant concordance reported for learning assessment, ongoing training, and collaboration, but not most other dimensions. Findings inform school-level literacy planning, targeted professional development, inclusive assessment, family engagement, and resource support. These descriptive findings represent teachers’ reported views rather than direct measures of learner achievement.

Keywords: *kindergarten education, early literacy development, teacher roles, play-based learning, literacy-rich environment, Ligao City Division*

INTRODUCTION

Early literacy encompasses children’s emerging understanding of print, oral language, letters, sound–symbol relationships, vocabulary, comprehension, and early writing. As children begin formal schooling, kindergarten teachers create experiences that connect these capacities with meaningful classroom routines, play, stories, conversation, and systematic guidance. Foundational knowledge acquired in the early years influences later opportunities to participate in reading and writing tasks. The Philippine Kindergarten Education Act (Republic Act No. 10157, 2012) recognizes kindergarten as a compulsory preparatory year, giving particular importance to early teaching practices and supportive learning environments.

National policy places responsibility for educational access, developmentally appropriate teaching, and quality learning provision on schools and education authorities. The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (Republic Act No. 9155, 2001), the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533, 2013), and the Department of Education’s MATATAG initiative (Department of Education, 2023) form part of the policy

context reviewed in the thesis. Within these expectations, teachers translate curriculum goals into opportunities to listen, speak, identify letters and sounds, share books, experiment with writing, and build early comprehension.

Teachers' roles are not limited to presenting learning materials. Their content knowledge and instructional skills interact with scaffolding, assessment, recognition of prior knowledge, responsiveness to learning differences, parental involvement, community partnership, continuing training, and professional collaboration. Research on effective reading programs underscores the importance of instructional processes rather than simply supplying materials or technology (Slavin et al., 2009). Likewise, targeted professional learning has strengthened teachers' capacity to teach beginning phonics (Ehri & Flugman, 2018).

In public schools, the practical implementation of these roles may differ by school size, resources, teacher preparation, home involvement, and the demands placed on teachers. The thesis identified a need for locally grounded evidence that distinguishes the roles teachers report performing, factors affecting literacy instruction, constraints they encounter, and the initiatives they consider necessary. Without this distinction, policy and supervision efforts may give equal attention to established strengths and to areas requiring more targeted support.

The study therefore examined kindergarten teachers in small, medium, and large public elementary schools in the Ligao City Division in School Year 2025–2026. It described ten dimensions of teacher roles and five factors related to literacy instruction; assessed constraints and proposed initiatives; and compared the consistency of rank orders across school-size groups using Kendall's coefficient of concordance. The intended contribution was a contextualized basis for policy recommendations and school-level improvement, rather than a causal estimate of teachers' effects on learners' measured literacy outcomes.

Literature Review

Teachers' Roles in Early Literacy and Foundational Reading

Kindergarten teachers mediate the transition from children's informal exposure to language toward organized encounters with print, phonological awareness, letter–sound relationships, vocabulary, and emergent writing. Early instruction draws on teachers' understanding of the subject as well as how children learn. The review by Slavin et al. (2009), discussed in the original thesis, found stronger support for programs that improve daily instructional processes than for approaches reliant on materials or educational technology alone. The literature consequently suggests that the teacher's decisions about explanations, practice, interaction, and feedback are central to early literacy provision.

Professional expertise must include both knowledge of foundational reading skills and the ability to make that knowledge teachable. Ehri and Flugman (2018) demonstrated the relevance of intensive mentoring and systematic phonics preparation for kindergarten and primary-grade teachers. Giles and Tunks (2015), also considered in the thesis, examined teachers' perceptions of literacy acquisition and showed why classroom beliefs and experience deserve attention. These studies support examination of content knowledge, instructional skills, and the use of prior knowledge as related but distinct dimensions of teachers' roles. Research on teachers' acceptance of educational applications also underscores the relevance of teachers' attitudes and classroom implementation to early learning experiences (Hoareau & Tazouti, 2024).

Scaffolding, Assessment, and Responsiveness to Learning Differences

Young learners enter kindergarten with varying language histories, exposure to books, opportunities to practice writing, and developmental needs. Socially mediated learning, associated with Vygotsky (1978), offers a rationale for adult guidance and scaffolded participation in language activities. Piaget (1973) also provides a developmental perspective on children's active construction of understanding. Together, these perspectives situate early literacy within interaction, experience, and appropriately designed learning tasks rather than within a uniform sequence applied to all children.

Assessment allows teachers to notice differences and adjust instruction. Teachers can observe participation during stories and play, attend to letter and sound recognition, review early writing attempts, and provide timely, specific feedback. Hattie (2009) identified feedback and the quality of teaching as influential components of learning, while Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) offered a framework for aligning learning objectives and assessment. For the present study, these perspectives support treating learning assessment and responsiveness to learning differences as integral features of literacy instruction rather than supplementary administrative tasks.

Literacy-Rich Environments, Guided Play, and Emergent Writing

A literacy-rich classroom makes language visible and useful through accessible books, displays, purposeful labels, writing materials, storytelling, songs, and everyday conversations. Play can connect these resources with children's interests through pretend shops, name-making, retelling, picture reading, and dramatic representation. Kolb (1984) emphasized the role of experience in learning, while the National Research Council (2000) explained how existing knowledge and meaningful settings influence the transfer of learning. These perspectives are consistent with the thesis's treatment of guided play and prior knowledge as important components of early literacy activity.

Instructional quality nevertheless depends on how the teacher links exploration to explicit learning goals. A play center, for example, can provide opportunities to hear and produce sounds, recognize familiar print, describe events, or attempt writing, while intentional adult prompts strengthen these experiences. Explicit instruction and guided exploration are complementary, not necessarily competing approaches. The study therefore separately considered literacy-rich environments, explicit foundational-skills instruction, comprehension development, emergent writing, and collaboration and communication as factors shaping kindergarten teachers' work.

Partnership, Collaboration, and Professional Learning

Early literacy develops through participation across home, school, and community settings. Teachers communicate with families about children's progress and suggest manageable opportunities to discuss stories, identify familiar words, and explore environmental print. Collaboration with colleagues and school leaders also enables shared lesson planning, discussion of learner needs, and more consistent instructional support. Gillies (2016) reviewed cooperative learning and emphasized teachers' important role in structuring productive interactions, a principle that also informs professional collaboration around classroom practice.

Continuing professional development is particularly relevant when teachers must adapt to different needs, materials, and instructional demands. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) documented the importance of sustained professional learning, while Ehri and Flugman (2018) illustrated how mentoring may strengthen specific foundational-literacy practices. The thesis positioned ongoing training, community partnership, parental involvement, and collaboration among the teacher roles to be assessed because improvement requires an environment that supports teachers rather than assigning responsibility to individuals alone.

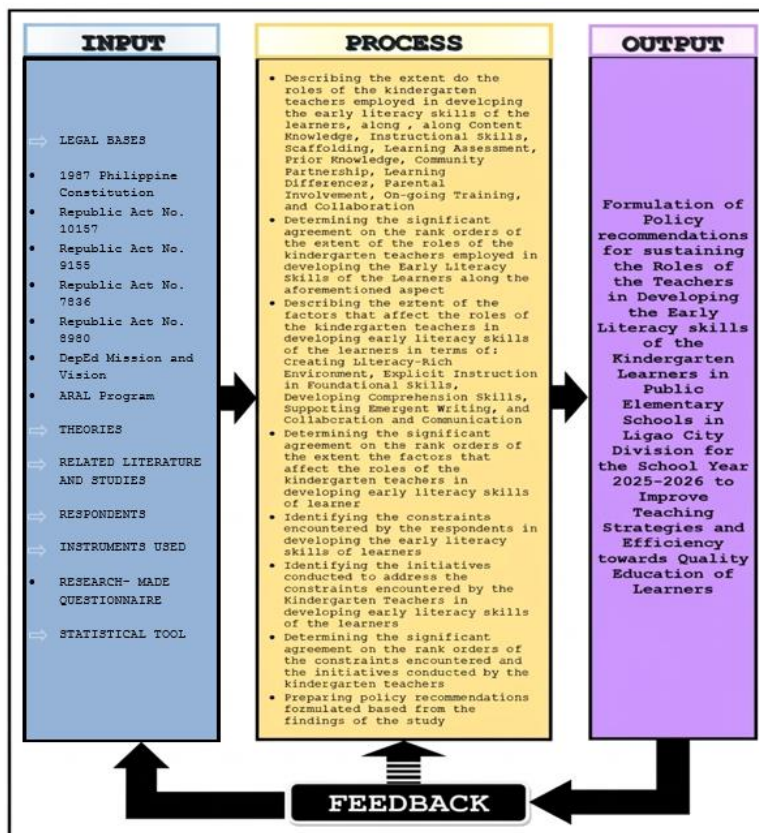
Synthesis and Conceptual Framework

Across the literature, early literacy provision rests on a combination of instructional expertise, responsive practice, developmentally meaningful learning experiences, and coordinated support. Teacher content knowledge and pedagogy matter, but so do the learning opportunities children encounter, the feedback they receive, and the involvement of families and school communities. Studies of instructional processes, formative feedback, and teacher professional learning provide a rationale for assessing the study's ten teacher-role dimensions alongside five factors associated with early literacy development (Slavin et al., 2009; Hattie, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

The original thesis organized these concerns using an input–process–output paradigm with a feedback component. Its inputs include the policy setting, related literature, the research instruments, and statistical tools;

the process covers assessing teacher roles, contextual factors, constraints, initiatives, and agreement in rankings; and the output is a set of policy recommendations intended to sustain early literacy development in Ligao City Division. Figure 1 reproduces the thesis's conceptual paradigm in its original image form, retaining the researcher's organizational model.

Figure 1. *Conceptual paradigm of the study (reproduced from the original thesis).*



METHODS

Research Design

The study used a descriptive–evaluative–correlational approach as specified in the original thesis. It described kindergarten teachers' reported roles in early literacy development, evaluated related factors and reported constraints and initiatives, and tested concordance in the rank orders assigned by respondents from different school-size groups. The questionnaire generated primarily quantitative ratings. No experimental intervention or direct assessment of pupils' reading achievement was reported; therefore, the analysis should not be interpreted as establishing causation.

Research Locale

The investigation was conducted in public elementary schools under the Schools Division of Ligao City, Albay, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. The sampling frame included schools from South, East, and West districts and grouped them according to small, medium, and large school size. The setting was relevant to evaluating how literacy responsibilities were perceived across different school contexts within one schools division.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The thesis identified participating public elementary schools purposively and used total enumeration of the target kindergarten-teacher respondents. The final sample comprised 55 kindergarten teachers: 39 from small schools, 12 from medium schools, and four from large schools. By district, 18 respondents came from South, 18 from East, and 19 from West. Although one methodological passage also mentions school heads and parents, the sample table specifies 55 kindergarten teachers; the present report follows that tabulated sample and does not introduce additional participants.

Table 1. *Kindergarten-teacher respondents by district and school size (n = 55).*

District	Small	Medium	Large	Total
South	13	4	1	18
East	12	5	1	18
West	14	3	2	19
Total	39	12	4	55

Research Instrument

Data were obtained through a researcher-developed questionnaire informed by the research questions, the literature, and a pre-survey. The instrument covered (a) ten roles—content knowledge, instructional skills, scaffolding, learning assessment, prior knowledge, community partnership, learning differences, parental involvement, ongoing training, and collaboration; (b) five factors—creating literacy-rich environments, explicit foundational-skills instruction, comprehension development, emergent writing, and collaboration/communication; (c) constraints encountered; and (d) initiatives considered necessary to address the constraints. Five-point scales were used, with verbal interpretations dependent on the construct assessed.

The thesis reports that teaching personnel not included in the final study and other reviewers examined questionnaire wording and content; the adviser reviewed the final version. It refers to a Kuder–Richardson reliability computation, but one reported coefficient (19.687) lies outside the conventional range for a reliability coefficient, and complete item-level computations were not provided. Accordingly, this article does not treat that numerical value as evidence of acceptable instrument reliability; the author should verify the original reliability report before submission.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher identified the problem, prepared the questionnaire and rating scales, sought permission from the schools concerned, distributed the questionnaires personally, retrieved completed forms, organized responses, and tabulated and interpreted the results. The thesis also mentions email and messaging tools as supplementary means of gathering information. The reported analysis and subsequent recommendations were developed from the consolidated survey responses.

Data Analysis

Frequencies and percentages described the respondent distribution; weighted means and ranks summarized the survey indicators. Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W), with chi-square approximations, assessed agreement among the three school-size groups' rankings. Hypotheses were tested against the stated 0.05 significance level. Higher mean scores indicated greater reported role enactment, factor endorsement, seriousness of constraints, or necessity of initiatives, as appropriate. Because certain original summary-table category labels disagree with the numerical interval key, this article emphasizes the exact numerical means and reports the source's significance decisions separately.

Ethical Consideration

The documented research procedure included obtaining permission from participating schools and collecting responses from teachers within the division. The supplied methodology does not explicitly document

written informed consent, an ethics review approval identifier, confidentiality procedures, or data retention protocols. These details should be supplied or confirmed by the author in accordance with the journal's ethical reporting requirements; they have not been assumed in this conversion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Roles in Early Literacy Development

Across the ten assessed dimensions, the original summary table reported an overall weighted mean of 4.33. Prior knowledge received the highest mean (4.44), suggesting that teachers placed particular emphasis on relating literacy activities to what children already knew. Content knowledge, parental involvement, and collaboration each scored 4.36; ongoing training scored 4.35; community partnership 4.34; scaffolding and learning assessment 4.32; and instructional skills 4.22. Learning differences (4.19) received the lowest mean, although the overall ratings remained relatively high.

Table 2. *Reported teacher roles in early literacy development.*

Dimension	Weighted mean
Prior knowledge	4.44
Content knowledge	4.36
Parental involvement	4.36
Collaboration	4.36
Ongoing training	4.35
Community partnership	4.34
Scaffolding	4.32
Learning assessment	4.32
Instructional skills	4.22
Learning differences	4.19
Overall mean	4.33

The highest rating for prior knowledge supports a view of early learning as the extension and restructuring of children's experiences (National Research Council, 2000). At the same time, the lower ratings for learning differences and instructional skills identify concrete areas for teacher support: differentiated tasks, explicit early-reading instruction, scaffolding, and ongoing feedback. These findings indicate the relative priorities expressed by the respondents; because the study did not measure learners' literacy performance, they cannot establish which practices improved reading outcomes.

The pattern also suggests why a single general training seminar may be insufficient. Teachers may be confident in connecting lessons to prior experiences but still need sustained opportunities to observe and practice specific approaches to sound-letter instruction, emergent writing, learner screening, and adapted instruction. Ehri and Flugman (2018) found that intensive mentoring supported teachers' systematic phonics instruction, while Giles and Tunks (2015) showed the relevance of early childhood teachers' beliefs to their instructional decisions.

Agreement in Rankings of Teacher Roles

The thesis compared rank orders assigned by teachers from large, medium, and small schools using Kendall's W. Most domains were classified as showing no significant concordance. Three exceptions appeared in the detailed source table: learning assessment ($W = 0.60$, $\chi^2 = 19.80$), ongoing training ($W = 0.60$, $\chi^2 = 20.46$), and collaboration ($W = 0.60$, $\chi^2 = 20.46$), each marked significant at the 0.05 level. The overall thesis conclusion states that agreement was not significant, but the detailed table explicitly identifies these domain-specific exceptions, which are retained here.

Table 3. *Kendall's concordance for rank orders of teacher roles.*

Teacher-role dimension	Kendall W	χ^2	Source decision
Content knowledge	0.36	14.04	NS
Instructional skills	0.40	15.60	NS
Scaffolding	0.32	11.52	NS
Learning assessment	0.60	19.80	Significant
Prior knowledge	0.32	10.56	NS
Community partnership	0.40	13.20	NS
Learning differences	0.44	15.84	NS
Parental involvement	0.22	7.26	NS
Ongoing training	0.60	20.46	Significant
Collaboration	0.60	20.46	Significant

These comparisons show that respondents from different school contexts did not consistently prioritize every instructional responsibility in the same order. The concordance reported for learning assessment, ongoing training, and collaboration may indicate a more shared sense of their importance across groups. Even where overall teacher-role ratings were favorable, variation in rank order suggests that school-level planning should be responsive to differing resource conditions and teaching needs rather than assume identical priorities across schools.

Factors Associated with Teachers' Early Literacy Roles

The five factors assessed in the study averaged 4.33. Creating a literacy-rich environment received the highest mean (4.49), followed by explicit instruction in foundational skills (4.44), supporting emergent writing (4.35), collaboration and communication (4.30), and developing comprehension skills (4.07). The comparatively lower comprehension rating points to a need to connect alphabetic and vocabulary work with meaningful talk, storytelling, questioning, and interpretation of texts.

Table 4. *Factors associated with early literacy instruction.*

Factor	Weighted mean
Creating a literacy-rich environment	4.49
Explicit instruction in foundational skills	4.44
Supporting emergent writing	4.35
Collaboration and communication	4.30
Developing comprehension skills	4.07
Overall mean	4.33

This distribution is consistent with the view that classroom access to print must be accompanied by purposeful teacher mediation. Literacy-rich spaces give learners opportunities to interact with words and symbols, while explicit phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension activities make important learning goals visible. The finding highlights both complementary approaches without suggesting that the survey establishes the effectiveness of any particular intervention (Slavin et al., 2009; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

The source's domain-level Kendall tests for these five factors were all classified as not significant: literacy-rich environment ($W = 0.43$, $\chi^2 = 13.06$), explicit foundational skills (0.46, 15.28), comprehension (0.58, 13.93), emergent writing (0.42, 11.27), and collaboration/communication (0.38, 9.16). Thus, school-size groups did not demonstrate statistically significant overall rank agreement for these factor categories at the stated criterion, even though the descriptive ratings generally favored them.

Constraints Encountered by Kindergarten Teachers

The overall mean for constraints was 4.36. The most highly rated concern was pressure to produce results and the possibility of teacher burnout (4.58), followed by poor timing of educational change (4.55). Lack of preparation in lesson study and difficulties with classroom management and feedback each scored 4.51; inadequate pre-service and in-service training scored 4.50. These concerns indicate that early literacy instruction involves organizational demands as well as the classroom-level use of teaching methods.

The lowest rated constraint in the table was the absence of concrete feedback among teachers and pupils (3.98), followed by difficulty providing individual attention (4.15). These were still identified as concerns, although less highly rated than workload, timing, and preparation. The pattern gives school leaders a practical basis for prioritizing realistic implementation timelines, protected collaborative planning, mentoring, materials support, and formative feedback. It accords with broader discussions of sustained professional learning as an institutional responsibility (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Initiatives Considered Necessary for Early Literacy Support

The overall mean for proposed initiatives was 4.42. Guided play incorporating literacy skills into dramatic play or building activities ranked highest (4.71), followed by sharing stories and language-rich materials (4.63) and creating engaging and positive learning experiences (4.56). Supporting individual learning styles was rated 4.50. Other initiatives addressed classroom reading materials, assessment-based adaptation, digital tools, and preparation of comprehensive literacy lessons.

Table 5. *Highest-rated constraints and proposed initiatives.*

Category	Indicator	Mean
Constraint	Pressure for results and risk of teacher burnout	4.58
Constraint	Poor timing in educational change	4.55
Constraint	Insufficient preparation for lesson study	4.51
Constraint	Classroom management and feedback difficulties	4.51
Constraint	Inadequate pre-service and in-service training	4.50
Initiative	Guided play with literacy activities	4.71
Initiative	Story sharing and language-rich materials	4.63
Initiative	Engaging activities and positive interactions	4.56
Initiative	Support for individual learning styles	4.50
Overall	Constraints / Initiatives (respectively)	4.36 / 4.42

The prominence of guided play and stories suggests that respondents favored practical, developmentally appropriate activities over narrowly administrative solutions. Such initiatives may help teachers connect new skills with children's existing experiences and interactions (Kolb, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978). Nevertheless, these are rated proposals: the study did not implement and experimentally evaluate the initiatives, so their effectiveness should be investigated through subsequent classroom monitoring or intervention research.

Agreement on Constraints and Proposed Initiatives

The Kendall's concordance results for constraints ($W = 0.55$, $\chi^2 = 19.80$; $df = 12$) and initiatives ($W = 0.26$, $\chi^2 = 10.14$; $df = 13$) were both classified as not significant at the 0.05 level by the thesis. The finding indicates that the three school-size groups did not exhibit a statistically consistent common ranking of these two sets of indicators. Differing perspectives may reflect variation in teacher workloads, access to resources, and implementation environments, although the design did not establish these explanations as causal mechanisms.

These results reinforce the value of collaborative, context-sensitive planning. A shared division-level policy can set goals for foundational reading, accessible learning materials, family communication, and professional learning, while school-level teams adapt support to local needs. The study's contribution lies in

identifying the combination of responsibilities, needs, and reported barriers across school categories and translating them into evidence-informed policy priorities.

Implications for Educational Management and Policy

The thesis proposed 21 policy recommendations involving kindergarten teachers, master teachers, school heads, supervisors, parents, and the Schools Division Office. Recurring priorities included play-based literacy activities, teacher mentoring and lesson study, classroom print and writing materials, regular assessment and feedback, communication with families, and division-level monitoring. For educational management, the results suggest that strengthening teachers' roles requires coordinated classroom, school, and system supports rather than simply requiring more teacher effort.

The evidence should be interpreted within its methodological limits. The sample was limited to 55 teachers in one division, the survey described respondents' perceptions, and the study did not report direct learner testing or a causal intervention. In addition, some numerical reliability entries and category interpretations require author verification. These qualifications do not negate the descriptive results, but they define the appropriate scope of the conclusions and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Kindergarten teachers in Ligao City Division reported substantial engagement with a range of roles supporting early literacy development, especially the use of learners' prior knowledge, content knowledge, parental involvement, and collaboration. Learning differences and instructional skills received comparatively lower ratings, identifying areas for focused professional support. Creating literacy-rich environments and explicit foundational-skills instruction were highly rated, while comprehension development showed the greatest relative room for improvement among the contributing factors.

At the organizational level, teacher workload pressures, the timing of educational change, lesson-study preparation, classroom management, and training needs emerged as prominent constraints. Respondents most strongly endorsed guided play, story sharing, and engaging instruction as initiatives for improvement. Concordance analyses showed varied school-size group rankings for most domains, with significant agreement in selected teacher roles. Overall, the study provides descriptive evidence for strengthening early literacy through instructional capacity, inclusive classroom practice, collaborative support, and locally responsive policy planning; it does not establish effects on learner achievement.

Recommendation

The Schools Division Office of Ligao City and school heads should prioritize sustained, practical professional development in foundational reading instruction, comprehension-focused teaching, learner differentiation, early assessment, and feedback. School-based Learning Action Cells and lesson study may be organized around observed classroom needs, with realistic preparation time and mentoring support to reduce pressure on teachers.

Kindergarten teachers, master teachers, and supervisors should strengthen daily literacy opportunities through guided play, storytelling, print-rich learning corners, explicit letter-sound activities, and emergent writing tasks. Periodic classroom observation and formative assessment may be used to monitor implementation and to adapt instruction for learners requiring additional support. Schools should maintain regular, accessible communication with parents and community partners regarding at-home reading and oral-language activities.

Division and school leaders should review the original 21 policy proposals against available resources, clarify implementation responsibilities and monitoring indicators, and pilot the most feasible initiatives before scaling them. Future studies should include classroom observations and direct literacy assessments, compare school contexts with adequate group representation, verify the instrument's psychometric quality, and evaluate whether the proposed interventions lead to measurable changes in teaching practice and learner progress.

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