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Standpoints of Teachers in Using Teaching Pedagogies for Elementary Learners: Learning Gaps in Focus

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Abstract—This phenomenological inquiry explored and understood the experiences of teachers in using teaching pedagogies in the classroom at San Isidro District, Division of Davao del Norte. This also investigated their coping mechanisms from the challenges they encountered, and their insights drawn from the findings of this study. In exploring the experiences of the ten (10) participants, I employed the qualitative – phenomenological study of which primary instrument of data gathering was through in- depth interview. Major findings indicated that when the participants were asked about their experiences, they mentioned three themes namely, upgrading of teaching methodologies, encouraging students to learn, and focusing the role of technology in teaching. Furthermore, after analyzing the answers of the participants about their coping strategies with the challenges in using teaching pedagogies in addressing learning gaps, the following themes emerged namely culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, effectiveness of teachers, and positive relationships between teachers and students. Finally, the participants mentioned three emergent themes on their insights namely engaging in professional development programs, developing students' critical thinking, and establishing a more child-centered classroom. Pedagogy equipped educators with the knowledge necessary to comprehend which methods were most effective within the confines of a schoolroom. It was helpful for them to know the various ways in which students learned and comprehended information since it allowed them to adjust their lectures to meet the requirements of the pupils. It was possible that the overall quality of instruction, as well as the students' reception of it, increased as a result. Pedagogy played an essential function in assisting teachers to comprehend the most effective classroom management techniques. It provided them with insight into how students learn differently in various subject areas so that they could tailor their teachings accordingly.

***Index Terms*—teaching pedagogies, elementary learners, learning gaps, phenomenology, Davao del Norte, Philippines.**

1. Introduction

Every day, schools face a variety of issues, which have a negative impact on student learning. Although school administrators and instructors attempt to overcome these obstacles, it is typically difficult. Regardless of the methods employed by institutions, certain factors may never be eliminated. Despite this, schools must strive to reduce the impact of these issues while simultaneously enhancing student learning. There are numerous natural obstacles that impede student learning, making education a challenging responsibility.

Globally, particularly in Great Britain, teachers were having problems with the kind of professional learning communities that integrate technology (Stevenson et al., 2019). The results show that real pedagogical change in technology-mediated maker-based learning requires focused professional development paired with a considerable collegially supported implementation phase, as well as support from school administrators and industry partners. Likewise, Faikhamta et al. (2018) conducted research on the constructivist science teacher training programs in Thailand. Problems have arisen because of the inability of these programs to adequately prepare teachers in terms of pedagogical training, subject matter expertise, and reflective and research-based activities. Competent science educators are slow to emerge in Thailand for a number of reasons, including a lack of incentives for hiring top performers, a lack of familiarity with current issues and content in science education, and a lack of experience supervising student teachers in research-based internships.

In the Philippines, to aid educators in performing their knowledge-sharing duties, the educational system has radically and dynamically adopted a broad variety of tactics and methodologies. Hence, they instruct their pupils or learners to be adaptable in the face of new developments in the field of education and to think globally and collaboratively. For students to choose for themselves what makes a quality education, it is recommended that they practice critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Carag, 2021).

Similarly, in San Isidro District, Division of Davao del Norte, teachers were struggling with the kind of teaching pedagogies to be used in the classroom due to lack of proper training especially on the application of appropriate technologies. Also, some were lacking knowledge about the content and lack of teaching resources. Many educators face challenges when attempting to use many pedagogical approaches to address the achievement gap. It may be challenging for teachers to make up for students' lost knowledge and motivation if they themselves are unprepared.

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I have read various studies about issues of teachers on teaching pedagogies but none of those were conducted in the local setting. Teachers' knowledge of computational thinking, pedagogical skills, technological fluency, and self-assurance may be bolstered by focused professional development in a short amount of time, according to the data (Bower et al., 2017). According to another study by Chmielewski (2019), the performance gap widens the most in countries with rapidly increasing school enrollments, indicating that increased access reveals educational injustice that was previously hidden outside of the school system. Despite the existence of these knowledge gaps, however, classroom teachers still have room for improvement in terms of meeting the requirements of their students. Studying how teachers really use pedagogy in the classroom is essential for researchers who want to fill up students' knowledge gaps on an individual basis.

The findings have real-world applications, such as helping students who are falling behind in class. This research offers primary school educators' insights on pedagogies that might improve instruction and student achievement. In this case, pedagogies are essential. Students who have a significant learning gap may use the extra activities and techniques provided by pedagogies to help them narrow the gap and improve their performance. This study's primary school educators' perspectives may help us find ways to close the achievement gap that exists between today's and yesterday's students. These insights might be utilized to raise the bar for primary school educators throughout the Philippines and ensure that the country's educational system evolves in step with the times.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and understand the experiences of teachers in using teaching pedagogies in the classroom at San Isidro District, Division of Davao del Norte. This also investigated their coping mechanisms from the challenges they encountered, and their insights drawn from the findings of this study.

At this stage of research, the experiences of teachers in utilizing teaching pedagogies were generally defined as their challenging and positive experiences relative to addressing learners' learning gaps.

Research Questions:

This phenomenological study aimed to explore and understand the experiences of teachers in using teaching pedagogies in the classrooms in San Isidro District, Division of Davao del Norte. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers in using teaching pedagogies in addressing learning gaps?
2. How do the teachers cope with the challenges they encountered in using teaching pedagogies in addressing learning gaps?
3. What insights can be drawn from the experiences of teachers that can be shared with others?

3. Methods

This study employed qualitative methodology. For the purpose of assisting the study of phenomena about which very little was known, qualitative research made use of descriptive data. Qualitative observations of social and cultural phenomena were made possible through observing the feelings, ideas, and behaviors of members of society (Creswell, 2015).

I followed some criteria in selecting the participants such as: (a) the participants must be holding a permanent position at least Teacher I in public elementary schools at San Isidro District, Division of Davao del Norte for at least one year; (b) they are subject experts; (c) these teachers had experienced various challenges in addressing learning gaps through the use of different teaching pedagogies in the classroom; (d) they were composed of either male or female teachers; and (e) they were not members of any ethic minority or Indigenous People (IP) group and were willing to participate in this study. Additionally, these ten participants were for in-depth interviews and this number was already enough to provide information with regard to the opportunity to identify and generate the themes. However, the participants may be excluded from the selection if (a) they were not designated as permanent teachers, (b) designated as permanent teachers for less than a year, and (c) they were not detailed at San Isidro District, Division of Davao del Norte.

Thorne (2000) identified data analysis as the most challenging aspect of qualitative research in an article by Nowell et al. (2017). Analysis of qualitative data was a meticulous examination of collected textual data that described and explained the experiences of the individuals being studied. In this investigation, I implemented data coding and thematic analysis.

4. Results and Discussions

A. Experiences of Teachers in Using Teaching Pedagogies in Addressing Learning Gaps

This section presents the experiences of teachers in using teaching pedagogies in addressing learning gaps. When the participants were asked about their experiences, they mentioned three themes namely, upgrading of teaching methodologies, encouraging students to learn, and focusing the role of technology in teaching.

1) Upgrading of Teaching Methodologies

Teaching methods are the more general strategies that are utilized to assist students in accomplishing learning goals, and activities are the many ways that these teaching methods may be put into practice. Students may more easily learn the material covered in the course thanks to various teaching approaches. Finding different sources of feedback that will allow you to enhance the teaching and learning that takes place in your classroom is an important step toward being a successful educator. This step requires you to actively seek out these input sources. This section is intended to provide some advice to you on possible avenues for conversation and different approaches to receiving input.

Pedagogy is the bedrock of education, as De Rijke et al.

(2022) argues. To better equip today's youth for tomorrow's challenges, educators must reevaluate and update the methods they now use in the classroom. Yet, the general public continues to see schools as especially resistant to change, despite an increase in reports of creative teachers and institutions.

Teaching is more than just passing on information and skills from teachers to students, and academic pedagogical ideas go in that direction. It's more nuanced than that since it requires flexible responses to students' individual learning needs and complex activities. A competent educator is one who uses sound pedagogical methods in the classroom. Yet, great teachers are developed via a series of steps and years of experience in order to gain the skills and information necessary to become experts in their fields (Daane et al., 2018).

2) Encouraging Students to Learn

Your presentations will be more effective if you inject some energy and excitement into them. Your kids will be motivated by your enthusiasm, which is a reflection of the motivation that you have. Make the class more about you by demonstrating why you are interested in the subject matter. Students' attention and concentration are improved, and they are motivated to engage in higher-level critical thinking when they are given opportunities to participate in the learning process.

Significant pedagogical ramifications arise from the change in focus from encouraging students to become lifelong learners to imparting a corpus of known information. Early on, educators recognize the need of instilling in their students "developmental traits" including "academic mind-sets and dispositions," "self-regulated learning abilities," and "academic behaviors" (Hauser, 2016).

According to Husu (2022), pedagogical knowing is characterized as an active process by which teachers perform their duties in situations involving intense social interactions. The results show that the concept and practice of teachers' pedagogical knowing contains certain fundamental tensions inherent in teaching. Five stand out: care and respect for students, the compelling power of teachers' personal justifications, the absence of a shared code of practice, the struggles to balance teachers' public and private roles, and the basic uncertainty within the teaching profession. To fully grasp the diverse nature of pedagogical knowing, its general social and cultural context should be taken into account. The general context is particularly significant in the ethical issues manifested in teachers' work.

3) Focusing the Role of Technology in Teaching

Collaboration may be encouraged via the use of educational technologies. During class time, not only may professors interact with pupils, but students can also talk to one other and participate in conversation. Students gain the opportunity to collaborate on problem-solving via the use of online instructional videos and educational activities. An increase in student engagement, assistance for instructors in the development of more successful lesson plans, and the facilitation of more individualized learning may all result from the productive use of digital learning tools in the classroom. Additionally, it assists pupils in developing key abilities for the 21st century.

The process of teaching and learning may be improved with the help of advanced teaching pedagogy. As a result of technological advancements and the proliferation of globalizations, the teaching-learning process has assumed a pivotal position in today's students' lives, and education has become a worldwide phenomenon. In a hybrid classroom, traditional classroom time is combined with online learning (Nancy et al., 2020).

Likewise, the spread of technology is one of neoliberalism's consequences, as is the erosion of communal spirit due to the rise of individualism. As a result of technological advancements, digital natives now have access to a novel environment that may shape their learning and thought processes. Nonetheless, because of its pervasiveness and spread among youngsters, electronic addiction is becoming a serious educational concern. Education may play a crucial role in preventing behavioral addictions and promoting physical and mental wellbeing, according to a meta-analysis of empirical studies and international experiences. This is because the proper and supervised application of technology may serve as a precursor to the development of long-lasting, constructive attitudes toward healthy lifestyle choices and pedagogical approaches (Toto, 2018).

B. Coping Mechanisms of Teachers with the Challenges Encountered in Using Teaching Pedagogies in Addressing Learning Gaps

After analyzing the answers of the participants about their coping strategies with the challenges in using teaching pedagogies in addressing learning gaps, the following themes emerged namely culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, effectiveness of teachers, and positive relationships between teachers and students.

1) Culturally Responsive Teaching Pedagogy

A methodology known as culturally responsive teaching is one that makes use of the traditions, traits, experiences, and points of view of its students as resources for improving classroom learning. Students of color have the self-perception and the community-perception that they belong in academic settings. Each of these methods of instructing places the expertise of populations that have historically been marginalized at the center of classroom education. Because of this, all students, and students of color in particular, are given the tools they need to become independent learners and thinkers for the rest of their lives.

Thomas and Berry III (2019) synthesized qualitative research using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) as their theoretical frameworks and qualitative meta synthesis as their methodological framework. Concerning teacher practices, classroom interactions, and student experiences with CRP and CRT in mathematics education, five findings were identified: caring, context, cultural competency, high expectations, and mathematics education.

Likewise, urban students are increasingly diverse in race, culture, language, and background knowledge. Educators must consider how students' differences affect learning and align

pedagogies that address this diversity. Universal design for learning (UDL) has provided educators with a framework for differentiation to address learner differences. Using UDL principles without explicitly considering how cultural differences and perspectives affect learning may increase the disparity in student achievement for students of color. Likewise, the same applies to the effect of socioeconomic status or language development on students' preparation for learning in a "typical" school environment. Culturally responsive pedagogies prompt educators to design instruction from the perspective of students' diversity as strengths rather than deficits. Frequently overlooked aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy are compared with the facets of the UDL framework to provide teachers with additional considerations when planning for effective instruction (Kieran & Anderson, 2019).

2) Effectiveness of Teachers

The cognitive, social, and emotional development of a kid may all be significantly influenced by the quality of the teaching they get. Their contribution is critical to ensuring that students attain the very best results that are achievable. The success of a teacher is almost always ensured by the presence of a solid school district that fosters an environment that places a premium on ongoing professional education.

Kim et al. (2018) provided a summary of the findings from three field-based intervention studies that demonstrate, through the use of evidence-based teaching strategies for pre-service and in-service teachers, that Content Knowledge can improve the efficacy of instruction and, consequently, student motor learning. Teacher effectiveness could be further investigated and confirmed by determining whether motor skill development and high physical activity participation can occur simultaneously.

During their studies, students of the Faculty of Primary Education (future primary school teachers) must not only acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to demonstrate their success in the field, but also develop essential teaching qualities. To accomplish this objective, a comprehensive set of pedagogical instruments, including pedagogical practice, must be employed. Such an arrangement of the system for the development of primary school instructors' professional competencies contributes to the formulation and growth of professional competence (Mukhamadovna et al., 2020).

3) Positive Relationships Between Teachers and Students

Having a solid connection with your students is crucial to your success. Students are more likely to study and succeed in school when they have a sense of safety and belonging in their classroom. Students also experience fewer behavioral issues when their interactions with instructors are good. Students are better able to achieve these requirements when there is a strong rapport between teachers and students. Teachers encourage students' senses of competence by providing them with feedback on their performance. Students' sense of independence is strengthened when teachers take an interest in and make accommodations for their unique interests and preferences.

Individual differences in physiological reactivity can make children more susceptible to the classroom environment, but classrooms are the most influential social context on children's self-control (Roubinov et al., 2019). Positive relationships between instructors and pupils in the classroom facilitate learning. In addition, it allows the teacher to identify the needs of the children in the classroom and assess behavioral changes among the students (Che Ahmad et al., 2017).

In addition, a positive learning environment requires teachers who are skilled at creating interactions using the appropriate teaching methods and who have knowledge, abilities, and competencies pertaining to various educational contexts' use of contenting, classroom management, and instructional techniques (McNally et al., 2018). Positive interactions in the classroom are crucial because children learn primarily through the teacher's direction. Educator empowerment has the greatest impact on children's intellectual and social performance, particularly in the early years (Acar et al., 2017).

C. Insights Drawn from the Experiences of Teachers that can be Shared to Others

This section provides the insights of teachers which they can share with others in terms of using teaching pedagogies in addressing learning gaps. The participants mentioned three emergent themes namely engaging in professional development programs, developing students' critical thinking, and establishing a more child-centered classroom.

1) Engaging in Professional Development Programs

By introducing educators to new delivery techniques, assessment styles, and record-keeping strategies, professional development for teachers makes them more efficient in their presentations and course evaluations. The objective of professional development is to provide working adults with the chance to acquire and put into practice new information and capabilities that may assist them in doing their jobs and advancing their careers. Developing your professional skills and expanding your domain-specific knowledge is the essence of professional growth.

Teaching practice and educator maturation are both bolstered by professional development. Teachers in Kentucky are required to put in at least 40 hours of professional development each year, with districts developing plans based on evidence of what works to improve teacher training (Bridgstock, 2019). It allows educators to stimulate students' curiosity and create a dynamic classroom setting. Many educational approaches allow teachers to help students study at their own speed (SplashLearn, 2021).

Similar to how pedagogical abilities integrate subject understanding with instructional know-how. Time and further classroom practice fosters this. As a field of study, pedagogy has come to be recognized for its ability to draw connections between many aspects of teachers' professional training and practice (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019).

2) Developing Students' Critical Thinking

Being consistently negative or critical of everything is not necessary to develop critical thinking skills. It's all about maintaining objectivity while keeping an open and curious mind. In order to develop an in-depth comprehension of what's actually going on, critical thinking entails doing in-depth

analyses of topics on the basis of objective evidence (rather than relying on one's own beliefs, prejudices, etc.). And when you are in this position of having a comprehensive knowledge, you can make better judgments and successfully address difficulties.

It has been advocated that inquiry-based science education (IBSE) is a motivating method of teaching science because it encourages students to design and undertake their own scientific investigations. Our findings indicate that teachers can effectively guide their students through the open inquiry process by explicitly addressing the conceptual, epistemic, social, and/or procedural domains of scientific knowledge in subsequent inquiry phases. The conclusion of the paper suggests additional research to validate our framework and to develop a pedagogy for primary school teachers to direct their students through the various phases of open inquiry (Van Uum et al., 2016).

Further, the results indicated that the devised instructional model consists of six major components: principle, objective, learning content, learning instruction, learning materials, and evaluation. The developed instructional model was maximally applicable. The instructional design for learning critical thinking consisted of eight steps: problem identification, data investigation, discussion and evaluation of findings, solution creation, solution presentation, and reflection on learning outcome. The trainees' post-critical thinking implementation was significantly higher than their pre-critical thinking implementation, and their abilities in teaching critical thinking were exemplary. Vong and Kaewurai, 2017 found that trainee students' attitudes toward acquiring critical thinking and imparting instruction were the highest.

3) Establishing a More Child-Centered Classroom

By incorporating evaluation, pupil empowerment, opportunity, and community building into the classroom, teachers may provide students with more enriching learning opportunities. In a student-centered classroom, students have an integral role in the educational process. Students are able to study at their own speed and actively participate in their education, making this sort of classroom more effective than the conventional lecture format. In a student-centered classroom, the teacher plays a more facilitative role than a standard lecturer in order to better meet the needs of the students in the class. The instructor in a student-centered classroom encourages students to pursue their own areas of interest, pose their own questions, and work together. Students in such an atmosphere may become more analytical, creative, and motivated to study.

It is emphasized that the pedagogical aspects of its use are emphasized, given that the most interesting findings from the analysis of the platform's use were those relating to the academic and pedagogical objectives involved (Malikowski, 2007; Zydney, 2018). Similarly, Kim et al. (2018) highlighted the connection between pedagogical expertise and student development. In addition, instructional methods and child-centered learning practices are significant determinants of teacher performance (Dilekli et al. 2016).

The results corroborate the questionnaire's factual validity. Self-efficacy positively predicted educational practice, whereas attitudes of professionals were unrelated to educational practice. In addition, self-efficacy mediated the positive influence of domain-specific knowledge on educational practice. In conclusion, family daycare providers reported less levels of self-efficacy and child-centered educational practice than other professionals. This study highlights the importance of professionals' self-efficacy in the context of providing high-quality early childhood care and child-centered education. Perren et al. (2017) suggests that increasing early childhood educators' self-efficacy may be a promising strategy for promoting their child-centered educational practice by enhancing their knowledge of teaching methods.

5. Implications and Future Directions

A. Implications

A student is said to have a learning gap when there is a discrepancy between what they have really learned and what is required in the grade level that they are currently enrolled in. A student could have a learning gap in just one academic area, or they might have gaps in their education more generally. The education of a pupil is constructed off of more fundamental ideas that came before.

Learning gaps have a propensity to deepen and widen over time if they are not addressed, which may make it more likely that a kid will struggle academically and socially or will drop out of school. This is one of the most important characteristics of learning gaps, since it can raise the likelihood that a student will drop out of school.

Pedagogy equips educators with the knowledge necessary to comprehend which methods are most effective within the confines of a schoolroom. It is helpful for them to know the various ways in which students learn and comprehend information since it allows them to adjust their lectures to meet the requirements of the pupils. It is possible that the overall quality of instruction, as well as the students' reception of it, will increase as a result.

In order for students to create meaningful classroom interactions and build on previous learning, pedagogy is an absolutely necessary component. Building on the knowledge that the students have already acquired is the primary objective of pedagogy, along with fostering the growth of the students' abilities and worldviews. Students are able to get a comprehensive comprehension of the topic via the use of pedagogy, which also assists them in successfully transferring what they have learned in the classroom to other aspects of their life.

Pedagogy requires exchanges in the classroom between the instructor and the students, which have the potential to make a profound impression on the mind of the learner. Pedagogy equips educators with the knowledge necessary to comprehend which methods are most effective within the confines of a schoolroom. It is helpful for them to know the various ways in which students learn and comprehend information since it allows them to adjust their lectures to meet the requirements of the pupils. It is possible that the overall quality of instruction, as well as the students' reception of it, will increase as a result.

Pedagogy plays an essential function in assisting teachers to comprehend the most effective classroom management techniques. It provides them insight into how students learn differently in various subject areas so that they can tailor their teachings accordingly. It seeks to enhance the caliber of students' education. In a constructivist pedagogical approach, students actively participate in the process of comprehending and acquiring knowledge, as opposed to passively receiving information. This promotes critical thinking among the students and creates an environment where they can relate to what they are hearing.

B. Future Directions of the Study

If a well-considered pedagogy is implemented in classrooms, the quality of education can improve dramatically. This will benefit the students by facilitating their comprehension of the curriculum, thereby enhancing their learning outcomes. Implementing pedagogy in education encourages students to work collaboratively to complete a task and to learn together. This enhances their perceptions by allowing them to comprehend and consider the perspectives of their peers, thereby enabling them to acclimate to cooperative learning environments and become better leaders in the future.

Since this study was limited to ten (10) participants of Davao del Norte Division, the following implications for future research are forwarded: More investigation into the roles of school administrators and other stakeholders in developing better pedagogical approaches to closing achievement gaps is required.

Teachers have a responsibility to those students who are falling behind in class to provide them with more time, as well as to explain everything thoroughly and adhere to a certain format while they are teaching. They should teach the students with greater enthusiasm, more repetition, and more frequency, and they should respond to the requirements of each individual student.

The formulation of individualized development and learning plans, the provision of one-on-one or very small group coaching or tuition, and the provision of flexible learning alternatives, paths, and transitions for older children are all examples of intervention techniques of this sort.

To get more credible results, focus group discussions (FGDs) might be conducted. Findings from participant interviews and FGDs are consistent with one another. Therefore, focus groups are a useful tool for learning more about people's views and attitudes on a certain issue.

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