



CHALLENGES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IN TEACHING ENGLISH: INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to discover the instructional supervision and pedagogical practices as major strategies used by teachers who are currently teaching in the elementary schools. This study will focus on the commitment of the teachers to teaching elementary students and how they boost perseverance in achieving their goals in teaching English. The decreasing number of students and increasing accountability to the public challenge in the Philippines is the sustainable development of schools. Schools must provide quality education to attract students and maintain their brand. For sustainable development, leaders are expected to strengthen the professional competency of teachers and staff, formulate strategic plans, and build collaborative relationships with external parties to manage change. Principals, as instructional leaders, are primarily responsible for promoting effective teaching implementation. Effective principals continually engage teachers in instructional dialog and reflective practices to ensure that they are thoroughly equipped to improve student performance. Effective principals are aware of the varied instructional strategies that directly or indirectly improve teachers' professional development. When teachers are not well supervised, effectiveness in instruction will be adversely affected and the instructional purposes may not be well realized. Negligence in the improvement of instruction through improper instructional supervisory practices by school heads may go on without being detected. This may lead to low quality of instruction and invariably teachers' lack of commitment to their job.

KEYWORDS: Instructional supervision, pedagogical practices, challenges, elementary teacher

INTRODUCTION

Teaching strategies and practices refer to the methods, techniques, procedures and processes that a teacher uses during instruction. It is generally recognized that teaching strategies are multidimensional and their effectiveness depends on the context in which they are applied. There is no single strategy that can guarantee better student outcomes, however, research has highlighted a number of practices that enable learning among students.

In the advent of Philippine Education system, everything has changed and has started running with entirely new measures. There are restrictions everywhere and we have to manage things keeping those restrictions in mind. Education system too is dealing with such restrictions. However, the system has found out various ways to tackle the situation such as online virtual classes. This made the responsibilities of teachers increase and now they have to learn the challenges in teaching English using different styles in teaching Elementary students.

The study focused on two main concepts: instructional supervision and pedagogical practices. According to Tesfaw and Hofman (2014), instructional supervision is the supervision carried out by the head teacher, subject heads, and other assigned supervisors in a school to provide guidance and support to teachers. Zepeda (2010) on the other hand looks at instructional supervision as the continuous monitoring of classroom teaching with the aim of not only promoting professional practices but also enhancing professional development in a collegial and collaborative style.



According to Zepeda (2010) she mentioned that instructional supervision occurs in two main ways, namely: classroom observations (formal and informal) and portfolio supervision. Formal observations according to Cogan (2020), occur when a school head teacher or any other administrator sits in the classroom to conduct lesson observations. Such observations start with the supervisor holding a pre-observation conference with the teacher before the actual lesson observation occurs; and later, end with a post-observation conference. Informal classroom observation meanwhile occurs when the head teacher or any other administrator makes a short visit to class when the teacher is conducting a lesson and such visits are intended not necessarily to evaluate the teacher but rather to gather information on the curriculum and the teacher's pedagogical practices (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, 2004).

Portfolio supervision on the other hand refers to the review of the teacher's artifacts such as the teacher's statement of belief on teaching, sample lesson plans, results of tests, schemes of work, samples of student work, career goals, journals, and such things like lesson notes (Zepeda, 2010). In this study, the researchers borrowed the definition of instructional supervision from Zepeda whereby instructional supervision was characterized by classroom observations and portfolio supervision.

In Germany, pedagogical practices refer to the various types of tasks, ways of working, or types of activities and practices, which guide effective teaching and learning. Such practices Lakkala et al. say include among others: preparing well in advance relevant schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes, and teaching aids; prompt setting of written and practical exercises; prompt and careful evaluation of all written and practical exercises; provision of feedback to learners on assessments, and undertaking of remedial teaching to ensure effective learning. In this study, the researchers borrowed the definition of pedagogical practices from Lakkala et al. (2011); thus, pedagogical practices were characterized by whether a teacher makes schemes of work, draws lesson plans, and so on.

Similarly, Sapungan (2013) found out that the Philippine schools in Jeddah employed not highly qualified teachers and seldom attend training and seminar workshops. As a result, attendance may be associated with questionable teachers' classroom performance, obstructing an appealing source of research. More importantly, in 2017, the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspected The Philippine School in Dubai, UAE, for the overall quality of education based on the UAE School Inspection Framework. The overall result was weak. In other words, the quality of performance is below the expectations (DSIB, 2017). Though the claims, as mentioned, will not speak for the entire PSOs, it could be considered valid and evident that the same patterns may be discovered from any other PSOs' adherence to educational practices.

Furthermore, out of 42 PSOs worldwide, only the Philippine School in Bahrain is accredited by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU). As for characterizing other PSOs on the subject of accreditation, it is essential to point out that school accreditation, in some instances, validates the organizational standards of educational practices in different areas.

Otherwise, the impact of poor educational practices is enormous, particularly on the part of Filipino graduates, who may form the next generation of OFWs. Therefore, it is undeniable that there are untold dilemmas in the educational practices of Philippine schools overseas that have never been put on paper to be shared with others. This notion profoundly piqued the researcher's interest in assessing the teachers Instructional Supervision and the pedagogical practices among elementary students during the pandemic.

According to the Department of Education Region 11, supervision of instruction is important for the realization of an effective education system. Supervision of instruction may be defined as the process of bringing about improvement in the teaching-learning process through a network of cooperative activities and democratic relationship of persons concerned with teaching and learning. Egunyomi (2021) observed that instructional supervision is the interaction between supervisor and the tutor to effectuate the quality of instruction. Instructional supervision implies the analysis of the behavior, and teachers' antecedent factors of the two groups in the interaction process and proposition, which seek to explain the interaction process itself. This interaction process involves the supervisor who happens to be a professional superior and a professional teacher who is a subordinate. The behavior of the supervisor in his relationship with teacher is assumed to be one of the significant factors on the teacher efficiency or performance. Glickman, (2020)



opined that instructional supervision is a process of improving instruction for the benefit of students. He noted that instructional supervision helps the students to learn as effectively and efficiently as possible.

On the other hand, pandemic pedagogy refers to the contingent problem-solving and troubleshooting mentalities required in the (re)design and adaptation of curricula to new formats and timeframes. As a facet of this mindset, educators have also had to implement measures aimed at alleviating feelings of isolation, fatigue and anxiety among students and faculty. Pedagogy, as such, is not just about the shift in the format of conducting one's classes. In essence, it is an attitude to teaching that entails a realignment of conventional performance indicators, such that what is considered 'effective pedagogy' is measured by how well we can orient technologically-mediated learning platforms towards achieving the twin aims of teaching continuity and learning inclusion. These reflections may provide us with an opportunity to reconsider the present and future of education in Asia, and how our educational institutions can continue to play a role in the global knowledge economy.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to discover the instructional supervision and pedagogical practices as major strategies used by teachers who are currently teaching in the Elementary schools. This study will focus on the commitment of the teachers to Elementary students and how they boost teaching styles in achieving their goals.

Further, highly effective teaching has been proven to improve student learning. However, the kind of pedagogical practices teachers employ determine how successful students can learn, other factors notwithstanding. In practice, however, many teachers often utilize professional practices that dampen the chances of students to effectively learn. This kind of scenario may not be different from what is happening amongst public secondary school teachers in the country. Yet, effective school supervision could encourage teachers to apply more robust and effective pedagogical practices that have been devised over the years.

In this study, the researchers delved into the effect of instructional supervision and pedagogical practices of teachers in selected public Elementary school in the Philippines. The study was instigated by the persistent complaints from different stakeholders about the deteriorating performance of students in many schools in the country which they attribute to poor teaching.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher made these qualitative assumptions that consist of the methods used in the process of qualitative research (Creswell 2003). The procedures used by the researcher are inductive and are based on the researcher's own experience in collecting and analyzing data. The research here is the product of the values of the researcher. Through an inductive approach, raw textual data is condensed into a brief, summary format. Clear links are established between research objectives and summary findings derived from raw data. A framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident from the raw data is developed.

A phenomenological study describes the meaning of lived experiences of individuals about a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2003) was used in this study. A phenomenological study intends to understand and describe an event from the point of view of the participants. A key characteristic of this approach is to study how members of a group or community interpret themselves, the world, and the life around them (Mertens, 2005). The purpose of this study was to gain insights into the experiences of the teachers teaching English in selected Elementary schools in Davao City and the use of instructional supervision and pedagogical practices. Phenomenology is considered the best approach applicable in this study since the researcher will be asking about the lived experiences of the teachers in selected public Elementary schools concerning their instructional supervision and pedagogical practices.

Participants and Sampling

The researcher protected the respondent/participants' right to privacy wherein their responses were given with the highest respect. Unless required by the law, the confidentiality of information shall at all times be observed. Other personal information will not be asked in the study to safeguard their identities and to enable them to participate without any fear of the revelation of involvement in the study.



Any information will be taken with utmost care to ensure the anonymity of the data sources and de-identification of any personal information that would be shared. Such names and identities were protected by using a pseudonym. The tracing of the information of these codes was reflected in an archival log. Hence, personal names were not used in the tracing of identification. Written responses, if any, were captured through a camera. Recordings were saved and documents were kept in one single place that is protected or encrypted.

Research Instruments

Patton (2005) proposes researchers conduct interviews to learn the things they cannot directly observe. Qualitative interviewing is not used to get answers to questions, but to understand the experiences of the participants and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 2016). Generally, qualitative studies use unstructured, open-ended interviews, because they allow for the most flexibility and responsiveness to emerging issues for both the participants and interviewer; however, the use of semi-structured interviews is not uncommon and used when the researcher seeks to obtain specific more focused information (Schwandt, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews combine the flexibility of unstructured, open-ended interviews with directionality and an agenda to produce focused, qualitative, textual data (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 2019). This study collected data using semi-structured interviews to explore how the Elementary teachers in selected public schools improve the quality of teaching using multiple pedagogical practices and instructional supervision and to describe their experiences, strategies, and outcomes when attending classes in promoting the best instructional supervision and pedagogical practices in the country where they are currently teaching.

To ensure that the same information was collected from all the participants, an interview guide was used. The interview guide included open-ended questions and topics to help structure the interview, but when needed, the interviewer also explored, probed, and asked additional questions to clarify and expand on a particular topic. The interview guide helped make interviewing several different participants more systematic and comprehensive by defining in advance the issues to be explored (Patton, 2005). The open-ended questions were framed in a way, so the participants could represent their views and perspectives in their own words and terms, in addition to taking the questions in any direction that they chose (Patton, 1990).

Since qualitative research studies subjects in their natural setting, all interviews must be done through virtual interviews using google meet at a time convenient for the participants. All interview sessions were tape-recorded for purposes of transcription. When needed, the researcher used follow-up interviews after transcription to clarify meaning or explore areas in more depth.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instructional supervision and pedagogical practices require the school heads to oversee, assess, evaluate and direct teachers to ensure that the school is meeting its goals. A closer, regular and continuous instructional supervisory practice rather than snappy, unscheduled, and partial supervision is what is urgently needed especially now that a lot of changes have been introduced into the school curriculum. It follows then that, the instructional supervisory practices as identified in this study should be effectively utilized by principals for an effective teaching-learning process geared towards attaining the goals of Elementary teachers in teaching English in selected public Elementary schools in Davao City.

Implications

The decreasing number of students and increasing accountability to the public challenge in selected Elementary schools in Davao City is the sustainable development of schools. Schools must provide quality education to attract students and maintain their brand. For sustainable development, leaders are expected to strengthen the professional competency of teachers and staff, formulate strategic plans, and build collaborative relationships with external parties to manage change. Principals, as instructional leaders, are primarily responsible for promoting effective teaching implementation. Effective principals continually engage teachers in instructional dialog and reflective practices to ensure that they are thoroughly equipped to improve student performance. Effective principals are aware of the varied instructional strategies that directly or indirectly improve teachers' professional development.



The relationship between a principal's instructional supervision and a teacher's professional development is of interest to the study of teachers' professional development. Research indicates that principals not only play administrative roles but also instruct teachers. In particular, principals inspire teachers to overcome challenges and changes in education. Principals who are school leaders should consider the influence of teachers' instructional behaviors while emphasizing their roles in instructional supervision. To positively affect teachers' quality, principals must engage teachers in ways that support improved practice and seek to empower teachers as creative and innovative.

In the knowledge-society era, knowledge management (KM) has become a primary strategy for improving a school's competitiveness and a reference for teachers' professional knowledge. If teachers can get useful feedback from principals' supervision of their instruction, they can implement KM behaviors into their professional development. Effective organization, storage, sharing, and leveraging of knowledge can propel teachers to become more adaptive, innovative, and intelligent.

Result of this study has shown that the sharing of knowledge among teachers can predict teachers' professional development. Principal instructional supervision can directly influence teachers' professional development; knowledge sharing can mediate this effect and indirectly improve teachers' professional development. In other words, if teachers can share their knowledge with other teachers, they can improve their professional development through the process. If teachers properly apply KM and the principal's opinions to their teaching, they can improve their self-understanding and professional abilities.

Teacher knowledge contributes substantially to effective teaching and creates more accepting students. Research on teacher expertise underlines the importance of professional development for mastery of tasks typical of the profession. A frequently cited heuristic to classify components of teachers' professional development.

Professional development is a key to reforms in teaching and learning. Recent research agrees that the following characteristics of professional development are critical to improving teacher effectiveness and increasing student achievement: (1) content focus, (2) active learning, (3) coherence, (4) duration, and (5) collective participation. Studies acknowledge these as critical components of effective professional development. Opportunities for teachers to engage in active learning also influence the effectiveness of professional development. Active learning, as opposed to passive learning typically characterized by lectures, can take several forms, including teacher observation, followed by interactive feedback; reviewing relevant student work, and leading discussions.

Future Directions

School principals may consider implementing instructional supervision in the school to strengthen teachers' professional competency, formulate effective policies, and seek external resources for sustainable development. If principals only enact instructional supervision, disregard the importance of KM within the organization, and neglect to allow teachers to use formal and informal channels to circulate ideas among themselves, the effectiveness of instructional supervision will be limited.

Principals should also foster teachers' concept of KM and the willingness to share knowledge. They should encourage teachers to apply knowledge and innovate knowledge together. These behaviors will help teachers to improve their planning and preparation, teaching skills (techniques and strategies), teaching materials, learning-atmosphere management, teaching achievements, and evaluation. With good KM, appropriate changes and innovations can be implemented in teaching to improve teachers' effectiveness and development in the e-generation learning era.

Therefore, studying the instructional strategies in teaching elementary students as described by the participants using a quantitative approach would also be beneficial. One of the findings from this study was the lack of collaboration between parents and English teachers. Further research is recommended to explore what type of co-teaching and alternative school program models increase the collaboration between parents and mathematics teachers and better serve students with difficulty in learning English.

Moreover, educators, parents, and individual students assess each student's situation and discuss adjustments needed for home distance learning. Some examples include using alternatives to print, such as audio or other formats in



instruction, as well as pictures, flexible scheduling and deadlines, and assistive technology. Learning in a remote setting may differ from mainstream, classroom-based environments. This includes expectations for students and course methodology. Curricula must often be adjusted. For example, homework can be simplified, allowing students to dictate rather than type, and audio materials can be provided for reading assignments.

Finally, more time and resources are required for students with learning difficulties in English to actively participate in learning. This includes equipment, internet access, and specially designed materials and support.

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