

Edukalidad 2.0: Professional development practices and needs of medium elementary schools in District II Schools Division of Candon City

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Abstract

Continuous professional development programs play an essential role in developing competency of teachers, because of their positive impact to students' academic achievement. Professional Development program is aimed at equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to make them efficient, effective and successful in their job. While the importance of continuous professional development is recognized, more investigations are needed to describe and identify the current professional practices and needs of teachers as bases in crafting an effective professional development program. In such perspectives, this study was conceptualized. Through the interviews, the study produced extended texts as a result of transcribing the interview recordings. Thorough text's thematic analysis on professional development practices led to the discovery of important three themes dubbed as ACE: Attending Professional Activities, Collaborating with Colleagues, and Enrolling Graduate Studies. These themes emphasized the professional development practices of teachers. Furthermore, this study discovered the professional development needs of teachers as revealed by the thematic analysis of the gathered data, dubbed as the 5S of teachers. These needs are focused on having intensive trainings on strategies in Integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, strategies on classroom management, skills in communication, strategies in localizing instruction, and skills in writing research. Finally, the study concludes that undergoing ACE will address the identified 5S. In such light, the localized primer developed may be used to crafting and implementing professional development programs thereby enhancing teachers' competency that will ultimately pave the way for transformative teaching practices, enriched learning experiences, and empowered students.

Keywords: education, elementary teachers, professional growth, mentoring, professional activities

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1. Introduction

Teachers played a crucial role in nation building. Through quality teachers, the Philippines developed holistic learners who are steeped in values, equipped with 21st century skills, and able to propel the country to development and progress. This is in consonance with the Department of Education's (DepEd) vision of producing Filipinos who passionately loved their country and whose values and competencies enable them to realize their full potential and contributed meaningfully to building the nation (DepED Order No. 36, s. 2013).

In addition, evidences showed unequivocally that good teachers were vital to raising student achievement. That means quality learning was contingent upon quality teaching. Hence, enhancing teacher quality became of utmost importance for long-term and sustainable nation building. Notably, the changes brought about by various national and global frameworks such as the K to 12 Reform and the ASEAN integration, globalization, and the changing character of the 21st century learners necessitated improvement and adaptability of education, and called for the rethinking of the current teacher standards. Consequently, the Philippine Government had consistently pursued teacher quality reforms through a number of initiatives.

Furthermore, the K to 12 Reform (R.A. 10533) in 2013 had changed the landscape of teacher quality requirements in the Philippines. The reform process warranted an equivalent supportive focus on teacher quality – high quality teachers who were properly equipped and prepared to assume the roles and functions of a K to 12 teacher. The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, which is built on NCBTS, complemented the reform initiatives on teacher quality from pre-service education to in-service training. It articulated what constitutes teacher quality in the K to 12 Reform through well-defined domains, strands, and indicators that provided measures of professional learning, competent practice, and effective engagement. This set of standards made explicit what teachers should know, be able to do and value to achieve competence, improved student learning outcomes, and eventually quality education. It is founded on teaching philosophies of learner-centeredness, lifelong learning, and inclusivity/inclusiveness, among others. The professional standards, therefore, became a public statement of professional accountability that helped teachers reflect on and assess their own practices as they aspire for personal growth and professional development.

In such context, the need for professional development of teachers is paramount. In fact DepEd through its DO 32 series of 2011 on policies and guidelines on training and development programs and activities March 31, 2011 has reviewed and reformulated policy guidelines on designing training and development (T&D) programs and in conducting activities for the capacity and capability building of the DepEd personnel and staff. These policies were implemented in consonance with the existing policies and guidelines prepared by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Commission on Audit (COA), and this Department, among others. Moreover, DepEd Order No. 42 series of 2017 highlighted that the DepEd recognizes the importance of professional standards in the continuing professional development and advancement of teachers based on the principle of lifelong learning. It was committed to supporting teachers, and taking cognizance of unequivocal evidence that good teachers are vital to raising student achievement. Quality learning was contingent upon quality teaching. Hence, enhancing teacher quality became of utmost importance for long term and sustainable nation building.

Noticeably, continued professional development for teachers was crucial for educators, because their application of new knowledge will directly affect students. According to Learning Forward, classroom achievement increases when teachers took part in development that was focused on addressing the major learning challenges of their students. Not only did this development help educators update their skills and hone their craft,

but also improved student success.

Clearly, it became important in implementing a professional improvement program of teachers based on the competency gap analysis that was experienced by teachers as a basis for the professional development of teachers. Many professional development programs seemed unable to reduce the competency gaps experienced by teachers. Many professional development programs were conducted based on a policy to down by ignoring the real teacher competency gaps occurring in the learning process. Various professional development programs of teachers were still not able to answer in reducing the teacher's competency gap. One of the efforts to develop the competency of teachers was through the continuous Professional Development program which was encouraged through the collective activities of teachers and training. However, some of the studies that have been conducted showed that ongoing professional development programs were still not in accordance with the needs of teachers' competency development. As such, this study was conceptualized to describe the professional development needs and practices of medium elementary schools in the District II of Schools Division of Candon City. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: 1) What are the professional development practices of teachers? 2) What are the professional development needs of teachers? 3) What localized primer for professional development practices and need can be developed?

2. Framework of the Study

The study was grounded in relevant theories and frameworks related to coaching, mentoring, and teacher development. The framework provided a structured approach to examine the impact of coaching and mentoring on teacher development. As such, the succeeding discussions were made. In applying socio-cultural theory and Vygotsky's thoughts and ideas, Warford (2011) claimed that teachers' learning is situated. Facts were not transferred to the learners, but the learners appropriated their own meaning relating to the content by means of cultural artefacts. Cultural artefacts may, in this context, be language used in conversation, or the learner may be in dialogue with a text. Teaching teachers with this perspective as the guide often required a dialogue between the previous experiences teachers had, their tacit perception of pedagogy and the educational content they interacted with in their training. According to Warford (2011), teacher trainers cannot promote the learning of teachers without awakening their previous knowledge and experiences during the learning process. Based on the previous knowledge of teachers, they may be assisted in their zones of proximal development by more competent others (Vygotsky 1978). More competent others may, in this setting, be colleagues, external teachers or other resource persons.

In the learning process, reflection was a key activity. Postholm (2008) had described reflection as the key to teachers' learning and development of teaching practice. Lempert-Shepell (1995) defined reflection 'as the ability to make one's own behavior an object of study: To manage it via the ability to regard oneself as the ideal other' (p. 434). A relationship appeared between reflection and action, and Lempert-Shepell (1995) went on to say: 'Reflection changes the character of the action. An acting person stops dealing with the situational action but regards the sphere of possible actions. The structure of an action can change'. According to Lempert-Shepell, both co-organisation and self-organisation of the content of activities were vital for promoting teachers' learning. In organising and reflecting on teaching, everyday terms and scientific constructs (Vygotsky, 2000) may be interwoven, thus brought theory and practice closer together. Hence, reflection may have contributed to developing both theory and practice (Kvernbekk, 2011). Vygotsky (2000) asserted that behind a theory, thought or idea we will always find an emotion or will, and that full understanding of another person's thoughts was only possible when this person's emotions or intent have been understood. To understand the language of another was not sufficient to understand the other's words, we must also understand his or her thoughts. But this is still not enough; we must also understand the person's motivation. This means that thoughts, emotions and a person's will were closely linked to actions, hence also to teachers' professional development and learning understood within a socio-cultural frame of reference.

3. Methods

Research Design - This research utilized basic qualitative descriptive design. The design was used to describe experiences by not grounding it to any theoretical or conceptual framework (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Also, it generated data that described the 'who, what, and where of events or experiences' from a subjective perspective (Kim *et al.*, 2017). In qualitative descriptive research, this translated into researchers being concerned with understanding the individual human experience in its unique context. This type of inquiry required flexible research processes that are inductive and dynamic but do not transform the data beyond recognition from the phenomenon being studied (Ormston *et al.*, 2014). Description of teachers' professional needs and practices provided more in-depth understanding of their actual experiences and will help in crafting valid professional development plan; hence, the researcher found the design fitting and suitable. After all, from a philosophical perspective, this approach to research was best aligned with constructionism and critical theories that used interpretative and naturalistic methods; these philosophical perspectives represented the view that reality existed within various contexts that are dynamic and perceived differently depending on the subject, therefore, reality is multiple and subjective (Lincoln *et al.*, 2017).

Selection and Study Site - This study was conducted to explore whether the existing professional development programs in Candon City Division adequately address the diverse needs of teachers, particularly beginning teachers at selected medium schools in District II of Schools Division of Candon City, Ilocos Sur, particularly, Paypayad Elementary School, Calongbuyan Elementary School and Patpata Elementary School. The participants were teachers who have at least 5-year teaching experience in the public school. They were chosen also based on their willingness to be interviewed and to participate in the study. Twelve (12) participants fulfilled the aforementioned requirements and were used as the study's primary informants.

Data Gathering Instrument - To elicit and gather data on the professional needs and practices of teachers, the researcher developed an interview protocol. The interview protocol guided the researcher during the interviews; however, the researcher was flexible and added questions for clarification or if interesting information arose during the interview.

Data Gathering Procedure - In implementing the study, the researcher secured permission to conduct the study from the Department of Education officials. Second, the interview protocol was constructed. It is imperative that the content of the instrument was presented to and approved by the panel. Third, the participants were identified using the set criteria. Fourth, the consent of the participants was secured through an informed consent form. Likewise, the nature and scope of the study was explained to the participants. Fifth, a date was set with the participants when the interviews will be held, at their most convenient time, through audio recording, interview recordings were transcribed. Sixth, after completing the interviews, the researcher performed thematic analysis of gathered data and finally developed a primer for professional development of beginning teachers. The researcher also conducted the member checking procedures. First, follow up meetings were scheduled to discuss the results of the transcribed interview were presented to the participants for them to verify the accuracy and truthfulness of the data gathered and provide feedback. Participants were allowed to ask questions, provide corrections, or offer additional insights based on their experiences. The feedbacks provided by participants during the member checking process were recorded and incorporated into the analysis. After which, the final results were again presented to the participants together with the primer developed.

Analysis of Data - Each interview recording was transcribed to produce the extended texts. These extended texts were subjected to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was reading through a collection of data and searching for patterns in the meaning of the data to identify themes. Making sense of the data was an active reflexive process where the researcher's subjective experience was at the center of making sense of the data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Professional Development Practices of Teachers

As educators, the role of teachers is paramount in shaping the minds of young people and preparing them for success in life. To fulfill this role effectively, they must commit to their professional development and growth. Professional development encompasses a wide range of practices that aim to enhance our knowledge, skills, and abilities. These highlight the need to investigate the professional development practices of teachers. In fact, thematic analysis of the extended texts on the professional practices of the participants of the study generated three themes which are tagged as ACE: Attending Professional Activities, Collaborating with Colleagues, and Enrolling Graduate Studies.

Attending Professional Activities. In the interview with the participants, analysis revealed that professional development practices are centered on attending seminars/trainings/workshops. Seminars, trainings and workshops serve as avenue for learning new knowledge, skills and insights relevant to teaching. They provide opportunities to stay updated on trends and best practices that will improve their competence. Their responses means that they fully acknowledge that attending such activities will make them better informed, more competitive and adaptable as teachers. The following excerpts from the extended texts justify the assertions:

“By attending conference, workshops, trainings, and seminars that will improve my professional knowledge.” (T1)

“I usually enhance my knowledge and skills as teacher by attending seminars/webinars, focusing on teaching-learning process.” (T3)

“As a teacher, it is a must to act professionally as such. We need to read, we still need to study and attend seminars and trainings. (T8)

“... aside from that I also attend seminars, trainings and workshops initiated by the Department of Education.” (T9)

“Attending seminars ...gives fortified nourishment to the foundation which has already been established.” (T11)

“By attending trainings and share it other teachers and apply it inside the class or in the school...” (T12)

The verbalizations of the participants emphasize that seminars, trainings, workshops, and conferences provide opportunities to learn new teaching strategies, gain insights into best practices, and connect with other educators. They can also help teachers stay up-to-date on the latest research and trends in education. In fact, Regis *et al.* (2022) reported that teachers manifested significant improvements in their teaching practices in connection with content and pedagogy, diversity of learners, community linkages, and professional engagement after their professional activities like seminars and trainings. Also, their study showed that teachers who received professional training are better able to meet the requirements of a diverse student body by utilizing content and methods that are specifically designed for them. As a result, teaching tactics and methodologies become more proficient.

Furthermore, the finding indicates that professional development has a beneficial effect on instructional methods, classroom administration, and assessment procedures. Students benefit from a more favorable learning environment as a result of this. Notably, Suliman *et al.* (2019) discovered that training has impacted teachers in selecting approaches to be employed in their literature lessons. According to them, teachers with training more open to their methods of teaching, for they received more knowledge about different pedagogical strategies, instructional tactics, and literary analysis methods. As a result, they are more qualified to effectively engage students, improve comprehension, and cultivate critical thinking abilities in them. They proved that ongoing and

continuing trainings are crucial since they provide a means of sharing more modern and up-to-date techniques for teaching literature.

Collaborating with Colleagues. The participants confided that they sought advice/ guidance/mentoring from seasoned teachers. Mentoring by colleagues is a collaborative process that fosters professional development, knowledge sharing, support, and career guidance within the workplace. It leverages the expertise and experience of more seasoned teachers to help beginning teachers navigate their career paths and achieve their goals. Interestingly, they were able to find emotional support and encouragement from their mentors, particularly during times of uncertainty, stress, or difficulty, providing reassurance, and help boost their confidence to continue with their calling. In fact, they stated:

“I also seek advice to these co-teachers who are already well experienced.” (T8)

“... coaching and mentoring from my school head and master teacher is very essential for my professional growth.” (T10)

“Another way [to professionally grow] is by learning from other teachers who have more experience and expertise. I will seek advice and ask them questions.” (T7)

“...taking action on ... my superior's feedback contribute to the enhancement of my knowledge and skills as a teacher.” (T11)

The finding signifies that teachers need the help of their colleagues for them to grow in the teaching field. Similarly, Turton (2023) found that beginning teachers struggle to overcome challenges and difficulties in their first years of teaching. In her study, a mentoring support is needed to build their capacity and stop them from crumbling under pressure and quit from their work. She emphasized the importance of mentorship and support for beginning teachers to help them overcome challenges and thrive in their early years of teaching. By implementing structured mentorship programs and prioritizing professional development initiatives, educational institutions can improve teacher retention rates and ultimately enhance the quality of education for students.

Finally, Saka (2021) underscored the importance of fostering teacher collaboration as a means to enhance students' academic performance. Findings in his study indicated that teacher collaboration contribute to an increase in students' learning; thus, school administrators should prioritize initiatives that facilitate collaboration among teachers, such as workshops, seminars, and collaborative planning sessions to further their professional development.

Enrolling Graduate Studies. The verbalizations of the participants also collectively described that their practices include enrolling in graduate or post graduate studies. This means that they have to pursue advanced academic program that delve deeper into subject area that focus on advanced theories, research methodologies, and practical applications that they may use in teaching. It serves as their pathway to deepen their knowledge, expertise, and credentials within their chosen field. For them, enrolling in graduate studies is a significant undertaking and commitment that offers them opportunity for advanced education, specialization, research, personal growth and professional development. The excerpts below support the claims:

“I enroll in my graduate studies learn more and improve myself.” (T3)

“...continue my studies in the graduate school for professional growth.” (T4)

“I enroll in graduate school for me to improve my teaching and to grow more professionally.” (T5)

“I am attending my post-graduate studies to become a better version of myself.” (T9)

“I enrolled in my masteral class to have more knowledge and skills that I can share at my school....” (T10)

“Allotting a time for reflection at the end of each day and attending classes for advanced studies are my mechanisms to improve and learn many things.” (T11)

The finding conforms to the study Vural and Basaran (2021) which revealed comparable findings about the motivations for teachers' enrollment in master's degree programs. In their study, teachers acquire master's degrees in order to specialize in their field, gain more in-depth understanding of it, and improve their performance in the classroom. Additionally, instructors completed their master's degree in order to further their professional growth, pursue an academic career, and gain in-depth understanding of the field of education.

Notably, Sevin and Akin (2021) discovered that teachers went on to graduate school in order to advance their careers as academics and to further their personal and professional growth. Moreover, their graduate education equipped them with scientific research and thinking abilities, communication skills, and a positive outlook on their field, students, education, and life in general. Teachers were also able to pick up and use new skills and strategies, which had a noticeable impact on how they measured and evaluated students.

4.2. Professional Development Needs of Teachers

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, teachers are faced with a multitude of challenges. To effectively address these challenges and meet the diverse needs of their learners, teachers require ongoing professional development opportunities that empower them to enhance their skills, knowledge, and pedagogical practices. In such case, this study discovered the professional development needs of teachers as revealed by the thematic analysis of the gathered data. These needs are dubbed as the 5S of teachers. These needs are focused on having intensive trainings on Strategies in Integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, Strategies on classroom management, Skills in Communication, Strategies in localizing instruction, and Skills in writing research.

Strategies in ICT to Pedagogy. The interviews divulged the participants' need in Integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Pedagogy. This means incorporating various digital tools, resources, and technologies into the teaching and learning process to enhance educational outcomes. It involves the use of a variety of digital tools and platforms to diversify their teaching methods, such as interactive whiteboards, educational software, multimedia presentations, online simulations, and virtual laboratories to make lessons more engaging and interactive, as well as cater to the diverse needs of the pupils. As such, integrating Information and Communications Technology in pedagogy transforms traditional teaching and learning practices, making education more interactive, engaging, and accessible while also preparing students for success in a digital world. As stated:

“Strategically utilizing technology in the classroom to present lessons in a new way, show videos to enrich learning and create interactive exercises.” (T1)

“Any workshops offered and required such as the use of digital products like LCD projectors, various types of computers or applications, software packages like adobe, mecromedia, Microsoft, etc. and workshops related to education.” (T2)

“I want to attend more trainings or activities on improving my technical skills most especially on the different skills and activities related to ICT.” (T10)

“As an ALS teacher, I'm interested in online professional development due to its flexibility, accessibility and self-directed learning options such as webinars, online class and interactive modalities. It will make it easier for me to connect with and instruct my learners, especially the ones who are unable to attend class because of employment obligations.” (T1)

“I like to improve my teaching strategies on the use of technology inside the classroom.” (T3)

“I want to develop my information technology skills and computer skills.” (T8)

“Need to improve on the different strategies the most efficient and effective one and still need to know more on using computer.” (T12)

The verbalizations highlight that the participants recognize the vital role of ICT-integration in teaching. Similarly, Pasco (2023) claimed that although teachers felt that ICT was valuable and easy to use, their ICT integration was either fair or below satisfactory. In order to demonstrate the value of ICT in education, his research suggested that educators are encouraged to use ICT in the classroom and provide more opportunities for students to engage in more meaningful ICT-based learning.

Furthermore, Muhonen *et al.* (2023) demonstrated the association between teachers' ICT and pedagogical training, their methods for teaching online, and their usage of digital technologies. According to their research, teachers employed digital tools more for information delivery and less for student activation. Additionally, teachers' use of digital tools was more varied and learning-focused when they received pedagogical training. It was unexpected that instructors' ICT training had little to do with using digital tools. For this reason, it is critical to offer pedagogical training to assist educators in conducting instruction in a variety of teaching-learning settings and to improve the development of online learning, where digital resources are employed to foster interaction in a virtual setting.

Finally, Shivam (2022) reported that ICT integration in the teaching-learning process helped a lot in understanding the concept of their lessons. Learning process helps in developing the higher order thinking skills such as problem solving, perception, improving understanding and many more. Clearly, the adaptation and its implementation in the teaching learning environment offer more opportunities for students and teachers to work in the digital era along with global people.

Strategies on Classroom Management. Interviews further revealed the participants need to learn about classroom management strategies. These are techniques and approaches that teachers use to create a positive and productive learning environment, maintain order, and promote student engagement and achievement. They firmly believe that as teachers, they have to create a supportive and structured learning environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, and which minimize disruptions, and maximize learning opportunities for all students. In fact, they shared:

“The things that I need to improve myself, knowledge and skills as a teacher is on how to manage effectively our class especially that I am teaching Grade I pupils. They are very active but have short attention span. Another is on how I can teach reading effectively to my Grade I pupils especially...” (T7)

“I need to improve my skills in classroom management ...” (T9)

“Ways of handling the gen Z learners better and sustaining the attention span of learners are what I need.” (T11)

“The nature of the trainings or activities that I want to attend for my professional development are how to manage challenging behaviors of pupils ...” (T8)

“Knowledge on handling misbehaving pupils, creating conducive learning environment, how to make learning fun and engaging, how to motivate learners to improve their learning styles.” (T3)

“Trainings about management, on how to handle your class and pupils.” (T12)

Notably, classroom management and strategies remain to be one of the imperative things that teachers need. This is supported by Junker *et al.* (2021) who made mention about beginning teachers lacking classroom management competence. In their study, beginning teachers were found to be least prepared in effective classroom management. Hence, administrators need to prepare teachers, provide support structures by prioritizing

professional development, mentorship, and collaboration that can better equip beginning teachers with the skills and strategies necessary for effective classroom management.

Undoubtedly, Thi and Nguyen (2021) underscored that classroom management bears significance in students' motivation to learn. Accordingly, different classroom management styles significantly impacted students' motivation and academic achievement. Hence, teachers must possess a reservoir of classroom management techniques to be able to combat the challenges in handling learners' diversified behaviors.

Skills in Communication. The participants shared that they need to improve their communication skills. This purports to their ability to convey information, ideas, thoughts, and feelings effectively and efficiently through various channels and mediums like verbal, non-verbal or written. As teachers, they need to acquire such essential skills for these can lead to improved relationships, increased productivity, and better outcomes not only for students but in various aspects of teachers' life. To support these claims, the statements of the participants below justify.

“My vocabulary to speak like native speakers and my critical thinking to be more productive, especially in dealing with my professional growth in the field of teaching. Also, my grammar and calculation to assess my ability to create my own sentences and stories to be more efficient also regarding calculation matter.” (T2)

“For myself, I want to improve my communication skills and self-esteem.” (T3)

“I need to develop communication skills for effective discussion and communication with learners.” (T4)

“I want to improve my communication skills to be able to effectively teach the lesson and communicate to my learners.” (T5)

Clearly, the teachers acknowledge the vital role of possessing communication skills to affect teaching. In fact, Jakhanwal (2021) articulated that education is mostly about communication, teachers' communication abilities are crucial to students' academic performance. Teachers who possess strong communication skills are well-equipped to guide, counsel, and mentor students, helping them to develop a critical competency that 21st century learners must master: improved communication.

Last, Khan *et al.* (2017) also emphasized the importance of teachers' communication abilities. To them, learners benefitted greatly from teachers who could effectively communicate with them since it raised their level of knowledge. Nevertheless, learners' academic progress is influenced by teachers' use of effective communication techniques as well as their subject matter expertise.

Strategies in Localizing Instruction. In the interview with the participants, they shared the need to develop their skills and knowledge in localizing their lessons and material. They shared the need to be equipped with strategies or ways to localize teaching. As verbalized:

“I need to develop my skills in localizing my lessons and materials.” (T9)

“In my case, I need to have a thorough knowledge and skills in terms of localizing teaching because this is what my learners need.” (T10)

“Strategies and ways of localizing teaching is what I need. It should be an extensive one not just for compliance.” (T7)

Lucidly, the result indicates that localizing teaching is paramount in the success of the teaching and learning process. In fact, Fragat (2019) documented the beneficial outcomes of using localized teaching methodologies. Accordingly, learners were able to learn more, comprehend the material better, retain it, and become proficient in it since their activities were relevant to their experiences. Therefore, teachers need to employ localizations to

increase students' understanding.

In addition, Saro *et al.* (2023) confirmed to the fact that when teachers used localization tactics, students' learning performance improved. They showed that the localized content allowed learners to connect their learning to real-life contexts, helping them see the practical applications of what they are learning and fostering a deeper understanding of the material; hence, learning performance significantly increased. Therefore, localization of instruction should be included across a range of disciplines and grade levels, yet educational institutions should provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn about and implement localization strategies effectively. Teachers need access to resources such as relevant teaching materials, textbooks, and digital resources to facilitate the integration of localization into their instruction.

Skills in Writing Research. Participants further acknowledged their need for research writing skills, especially that they need to do action research. This refers to their ability to conduct thorough and systematic research on a given topic and to effectively communicate the findings through writing. These skills are crucial for academic, professional, and scientific writing contexts. Research writing skills are essential for effectively communicating research findings to a wider audience and contributing to the body of knowledge in a particular field or discipline. Developing these skills takes time and practice but mastering them can lead to more impactful and influential research outputs that will serve as strong bases for classroom innovations. The verbalizations below justify.

“With the popularity of research, I need to be equipped with research writing skills and knowledge. These are what we really need given that action researches are now part of our system.” (T2)

“We lack the research skills because we are not exposed to it.” (T11)

“There should be a workshop no just information dissemination on ways to write the parts of a research paper.” (T7)

“Honestly, I don't know how to write research. That is why I really want to learn how to do it.” (T6)

The verbalizations accentuate that teachers need to equip with skills and knowledge in writing research. Tolentino (2021) revealed that teachers have moderate level of capability in technical skills and writing the conceptualizing research designs attributed to lack of attended trainings and seminars in research. This suggests that while there could be difficulties in conceiving research ideas, research skills may be developed and enhanced by enrolling in graduate programs and receiving ongoing training in the subject for an efficient research output.

Notably, Caingcoy (2020) acknowledged that academics and professionals have recently shown a surprising and overwhelming interest in research capability. In his study, the results yielded that teachers were slightly capable to conducting research and having neutral attitudes toward it, motivated to write research, had a high level of difficulties in research processes, and moderately capable of action planning. Participants showed that they were slightly capable to conducting research. These suggest that there is a need to enhance the capabilities of these teachers especially on the conceptualization and processes of action research including time management.

4.3. Primer for the Professional Development Needs of Teachers

Rationale: In the ever-changing landscape of education, where change is the only constant, pursuing professional excellence becomes not only desired but also essential. Professional development is likened to a beacon that leads educators through the maze of changing student demands, technologies, and methods. It is the furnace where knowledge is refined, creativity is fostered, and teaching enthusiasm is rekindled. To become pedagogical experts who can create life-changing learning experiences, educators participate in professional development, much like a master artisan continuously honing their skill. Teachers discover the essence of progress, the strength of teamwork, and the unwavering quest for educational excellence as they dig deeper into the fields

of professional development.

Beginning teachers often face numerous challenges, such as managing diverse classrooms, addressing individual student needs, and dealing with administrative tasks. They need to be equipped with strategies to address these challenges proactively, fostering their resilience and confidence in their teaching abilities. However, they often lack practical experience despite having theoretical knowledge, hence they need help create a solid foundation by equipping them with the fundamental tactics, approaches, and resources to effectively traverse the intricacies of teaching. Furthermore, teaching is a complex art that incorporates several pedagogical strategies, this is an aspect where new teachers need assistance in comprehending and successfully implementing instructional strategies, classroom management tactics, assessment procedures, and differentiated instruction.

In addition to that, in the teaching profession, professional development is a continuous activity. An introduction to the idea of continuous improvement is, along with tools and techniques to help new teachers continue to advance as educators is greatly appreciated. Inasmuch as teaching can be isolating, especially for beginning teachers who may feel disconnected from their peers, opportunities for collaboration, mentorship programs, and networking events to help beginning teachers connect with experienced educators and build supportive professional relationships is highly needed.

Ultimately, improving student outcomes is the aim of professional development programs for new teachers, and they need help for the students to succeed in their classes by providing them with the essential information, abilities, and support they require, and where they are able to find satisfaction and fulfillment by providing the support and resources necessary for success in their roles. In conclusion, a Primer for beginning teachers' professional development is an essential resource for fostering their development and increasing their efficacy in the classroom, for it essentially lays a strong foundation, support continuous growth, address challenges, build professional networks, ensures student success, and enhances teacher job satisfaction.

Given these perspectives, this localized primer for the professional development practices tagged as ACE: Attend Professional Activities, Collaborate with Colleagues, and Enroll in Graduate Studies; which addresses the professional development needs dubbed as 5S: Strategies in Integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, Strategies on classroom management, Skills in Communication, Strategies in localizing instruction, and Skills in writing research was conceptualized.

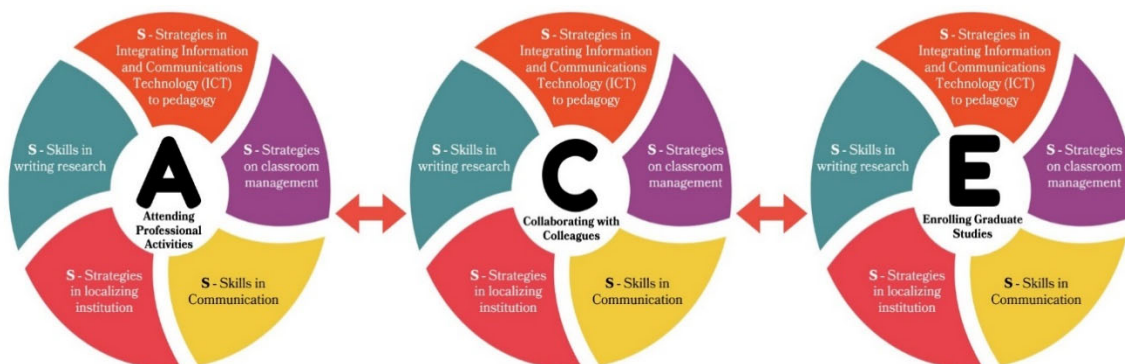


Figure 1: **Primer for Professional Development Practices and Needs of Beginning Elementary School Teachers**

Objectives: This ACE and 5S, a primer for the professional development practices and needs for beginning teachers, aims to:

- provide information about ongoing professional development opportunities, resources, and networks

available to beginning teachers to support their continued growth and development over the course of their careers.

- introduce effective classroom management strategies and techniques to help beginning teachers establish and maintain a positive and productive learning environment;
- provide guidance on developing curriculum plans aligned with educational standards and goals, including strategies for integrating technology and addressing interdisciplinary connections;
- foster collaboration and teamwork among beginning teachers, emphasizing the importance of working with colleagues, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders to support student success.

ACE: Localized Primer for the Professional Development

Attend Professional Activities. Attending seminars, trainings and workshops serve as avenue for learning new knowledge, skills and insights relevant to teaching. They provide opportunities to stay updated on trends and best practices that will improve their competence, making them better informed, more competitive and adaptable as teachers. To optimize learning from attending such training, seminar and workshops, educational leaders or school administrators are encouraged to perform the listed actions below.

1. Conduct needs assessment on the training needs of teachers.

In doing this, a conclusive needs assessment should be done involving all the teachers. Needs assessment tools should be designed to fully encapsulate all aspects of the professional development of the teachers. Results of the needs assessment shall be used in creating a well-rounded and comprehensive faculty development plan and framework. This is to avoid sending teachers to seminars, trainings and workshops that they do not need. In so doing, they are assured of responsive, updated, and need-based seminars, trainings and workshops in the name of quality and excellent education.

2. Identify the knowledge and skills that teachers need to develop in terms of integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, classroom management, developing teachers' communication skills, localizing instruction, and writing research.

In identifying the knowledge and skills that teachers need, various measures should be observed. Results of instructional supervision activities such as class observation and mentoring should be used. These provide first-hand information about the needs of the teachers in integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, classroom management, developing teachers' communication skills, localizing instruction, and writing research. In so doing, school officials will be able to identify teachers who will be sent to various trainings, seminars, or workshops on integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, classroom management, developing teachers' communication skills, localizing instruction, and writing research.

3. Identify reputable training providers or institutions.

With the rise in number of training institutions in the region and in the country, schools should establish linkages or networks to accredited and credible training providers. Memoranda of Understanding or Agreement should be established to provide binding force and clearer roles for both schools and training institutions. As such, sending teachers to seminars, trainings and workshops organized by predatory organizations will be avoided.

4. Design school-based trainings, seminars, or workshops with experts as resource persons.

School-based trainings, seminars, or workshops should be designed based on the identified needs of the teachers. Inviting experts from outside the school is encouraged to provide more information to the schools. Resource persons should be identified carefully and meticulously based on their expertise and qualifications.

5. Submit proposal for approved funding and implementation.

Training proposals aligned to the institution's format should be drafted and submitted to the division office for the approval of its implementation. By adhering to the protocol, we can ensure the effective implementation of long-lasting and influential programs that enable teachers to leverage technology, classroom management, develop teachers' communication skills, localizing instruction, and writing research skills to improve student learning and teaching.

Collaborating with Colleagues. Mentoring by colleagues is a collaborative process that fosters professional development, knowledge sharing, support, and career guidance within the workplace. It leverages the expertise and experience of more seasoned teachers to help beginning teachers navigate their career paths and achieve their goals. Interestingly, they were able to find emotional support and encouragement from their mentors, particularly during times of uncertainty, stress, or difficulty, providing reassurance, and help boost their confidence to continue with their calling. Beginning teachers can benefit from extensive and varied mentoring that covers a range of professional and personal development areas. teaching practices and set goals for continuous improvement. To create a structured and encouraging mentoring program that enables beginning teachers to succeed, it is recommended that educational leaders or school administrators take the following activities.

- Identify seasoned or experienced teachers who can specifically teach beginning teachers in integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, classroom management, developing teachers' communication skills, localizing instruction, and writing research.
- Match mentors and mentees. A successful mentoring program starts with well-trained mentors, thus choosing knowledgeable and seasoned teachers who could and are willing to teach beginning teachers is crucial. It is very important that mentors have received full training on the identified needs for an effective mentoring program. In addition, pair teachers with mentors who can adjust to each other's unique personality to ensure a professional, positive working relationship.
- Promote a school-wide supportive culture. Both the teaching and non-teaching staff can help create a supportive environment for new teachers, even though beginning teachers are already mentored by experienced teachers. Teachers who receive collaborative support tend to be content and resilient. Administrators may arrange schedules that allow mentoring time and opportunities for the teacher's identified needs.
- Open the lines of communication. Administrators may keep the line of communication through feedbacking mechanisms such as focused group discussions, meetings or just incidental or spontaneous conversation with the mentor and mentees. It can serve as a monitoring mechanism as well to keep track of the progress of the mentees.
- Appreciation or Recognition of achievements. Celebrate and recognize the mentee's and mentor's accomplishments and advancements. Teachers will be more motivated and inspired to continue growing if they receive positive encouragement. Incorporate school-based acknowledgment and praise for striving for excellence into the annual program.

Enroll in Graduate Studies. This means that they have to pursue advanced academic program that delve deeper into subject area that focus on advanced theories, research methodologies, and practical applications that they may use in teaching. It serves as their pathway to deepen their knowledge, expertise, and credentials within their chosen field. It is a significant undertaking and commitment that offers teachers opportunity for advanced education, specialization, research, personal growth and professional development. Teachers who need to learn integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to pedagogy, classroom management, developing teachers' communication skills, localizing instruction, and writing research by furthering their education through graduate programs that have a wide range of options to choose from, depending on their career goals, subject area

expertise, and personal interests should observe personalized mechanisms. After all, it is a self-directed mechanism of the teachers; to do this, the actions below may be prioritized.

- Set clear goals. They have to clearly define what they want to achieve after completing the course. They have to write down their goals and focus on them to maintain their determination.
- They have to carefully research their options, consider their career goals, and choose a program that aligns with their interests and aspirations.
- They have to identify schools with reputable programs, accredited, faculty expertise, and opportunities for practical experience or research.
- They have to seek support. They have to ask for support from friends, family, and fellow teachers. Having significant people who believe in them and their abilities is important.
- They have to maintain a positive outlook. They should always think positively and have confidence in themselves. They should not let negative thoughts deter them from their goals.
- They need to balance academic and personal life. They have to allocate time for rest, relaxation, and other personal interests to maintain their physical and emotional wellness.
- They should focus on progress. They have to make sure the results of their efforts. They need to use every success as inspiration and motivation to maintain their determination.
- Keep Your Dreams in Mind. Remember why you started the course and what your dreams are after completing it. Reminding yourself of your dreams can help you stay determined despite challenges.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Professional development is critical to the career advancement and success of beginning teachers. Educators who are just starting out in the profession of education confront several hurdles and obstacles that can be intimidating. They can improve their knowledge and abilities, get new insights and views, and stay up to speed on the latest educational trends and research by participating in professional development opportunities such as workshops, seminars, and ongoing training. This allows them to constantly improve their teaching techniques, deliver high-quality training to their learners, and, eventually, contribute to the overall progress of the educational system.

In addition, professional development for beginner teachers helps them establish a strong support network of experienced teachers and mentors who will guide and coach them throughout their careers. Connecting with other professionals in the industry allows them to learn from their experiences, discuss best practices, and collaborate on creative teaching tactics. This not only builds a sense of community and camaraderie among educators, but also it offers new teachers with the resources and assistance they need to manage the profession's hurdles. Furthermore, having a strong professional network can enhance their confidence and drive, allowing them to remain focused and committed to their professional growth and development.

Furthermore, professional development for them can improve learners' learning results. As they enhance their skills, they can create more interesting and dynamic learning environments for their learners, resulting in higher academic performance and overall learner achievement. They may respond to their learners' different requirements, give tailored training, and instill a love of learning by constantly perfecting their teaching approaches. Finally, investing in their professional development benefits not only them but also the learners' educational experiences and outcomes. Moreover, professional development for teachers is an essential component of ensuring high-quality education for learners. Through ongoing professional development, teachers are able to stay current with the latest research and best practices in education. This allows them to incorporate new strategies and techniques into their teaching, ultimately leading to improved learner outcomes. Additionally, professional development helps teachers

continually improve their craft, fostering a growth mindset and commitment to lifelong learning.

Notably, professional development for teachers has broader implications for the entire educational system. When teachers have access to high-quality professional development opportunities, they are better equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students. This ultimately leads to a more equitable and inclusive educational experience for all learners. Additionally, when teachers are continually growing and improving their skills, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and retention, which can have a positive impact on school culture and learner achievement.

Clearly, professional development plays a crucial role in the ongoing growth and success of teachers and the educational system as a whole. By investing in professional development for teachers, we are investing in the future of our learners and ensuring that they receive the best possible education. As educators continue to learn and grow in their practice, the benefits extend beyond the classroom to positively impact learners, schools, and communities.

Finally, In lieu of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are forwarded: 1) As a means of supporting the continuous professional development of beginning teachers, the Department of Education and its officials may institute organized mentoring programs, provide workshops and customized training sessions on pedagogical tactics that work and are suited to the needs of new teachers, provide starting teachers with professional development programs that include technology-enhanced learning possibilities and ensure sustainable funding and support for professional development projects. 2) Research and assessment may also be undertaken to determine how professional development programs affect the career growth of beginning teachers, and make use of research findings and evidence-based methods in policy formulation, program creation, and decision-making. 3) The localized Primer ACE may also be adopted as a guide for teachers.

Limitation of the Study - This has limitations despite its rigor. First, the study is limited only to having teachers from selected medium elementary schools in the locale of the study. This makes the findings generalizable to them only. Second, the study was limited only into developing a primer. As such, future researchers may investigate the effectiveness of the primer and may conduct studies involving a whole elementary district or division.

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