

School Management Practices and Implementation of Integrated Content and Pedagogy: Basis for Enhancing Classroom Observable Indicators - A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract— This phenomenological study explores how teachers teaching Filipino subject implement integrated content and pedagogy in classroom instruction and how management practices influence this process. The study highlights classroom indicators that demonstrate leaders' dedication to supporting integrated teaching. Data were collected from 3 selected Filipino teachers teaching Grades 4–6 at one of the public elementary schools in the District of Lemery, Iloilo. The participants were chosen based on the given criteria related to their involvement in instructional supervision and curriculum implementation and guided by (Creswell, 2013; van Manen 1990 format and Patton 2025). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Colaizzi's (1978) thematic analysis method. This method of phenomenological analysis will serve as the guiding framework for the data analysis process. Findings revealed that while teachers value integration, they face challenges such as time constraints, limited resources, and inadequate professional development. Supportive management, especially through mentoring and collaborative planning, empowers teachers to succeed in enhancing integration. By employing a phenomenological inquiry approach, this study aims to provide insights into the lived experiences of educators thereby contributing to the understanding of effective school management and teaching practices. The study concludes with recommendations for strengthening school management practices to improve teachers' implementation of integration and, consequently, classroom observable indicators aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

Keywords— Integrated Content and Pedagogy, Teachers, Classroom Observable Indicators.

I. INTRODUCTION

School management encompasses the systematic process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling school operations and resources to achieve educational objectives. It involves coordinating human resources—such as teachers, staff, and learners—along with financial, physical, and instructional resources to ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes (Buthelezi & Ajani, 2023).

In today's educational landscape, effective teaching goes beyond mastery of content. It requires teachers to integrate content knowledge and pedagogy to cultivate deep understanding and meaningful learning across disciplines. The Department of Education (DepEd, 2022) underscores that such integration fosters critical

thinking, contextualization, and relevance in learners' experiences.

Although integrated instructional strategies are widely promoted, many teachers still face difficulties implementing them because they lack adequate support, training, or supervision from school leadership (He, Guo, & Abazie, 2024). To address this problem, leaders must provide structured guidance, create reflective spaces, and sustain ongoing support. Given the critical influence of school management, it is essential to explore how principals and administrators can foster such a supportive environment.

Recent studies confirm the importance of leadership: for example, instructional leadership by school

principals has been shown to predict teacher professional development (He et al., 2024) Moreover through consistent supervision, mentoring, and well-designed professional development, school administrators significantly enhance teachers' capacity to integrate and apply instructional strategies more effectively.

Despite numerous studies on instructional leadership and integrated pedagogy, few qualitative studies explore how Filipino teachers experience the influence of school management practices on classroom observable indicators within the RPMS-PPST framework. The Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) anchored on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) serves as an evaluative framework that emphasizes observable indicators of teaching quality—such as learner engagement, lesson alignment, and contextualized instruction (DepEd, 2022). Hence, studying how management practices affect teachers' implementation of integrated content and pedagogy provides valuable insights for improving classroom performance.

This study was conducted to determine the influence of school management on teachers' efforts to integrate content knowledge and pedagogical strategies in classroom instruction. It seeks to identify innovative approaches that can enhance observable indicators of effective teaching.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do Filipino teachers describe their experiences in implementing integrated content and pedagogy in classroom instruction?

2. 2.What challenges do teachers encounter in implementing integrated teaching?
3. 3.What management practices can improve the implementation of integrated content pedagogy to enhance classroom observable indicators?

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a phenomenological design to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences in implementing integrated content and pedagogy and the role of school management in supporting these efforts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This design allowed exploration of the phenomenon within its natural context, emphasizing meaning over measurement.

The study was conducted in one of the selected public elementary schools in the District of Lemery under the Department of Education in the Philippines . Participants in this study are the 3 teachers teaching Filipino from Grade 4-6.

They were purposively selected based on given criteria related to their involvement in instructional supervision and curriculum implementation and guided by (Creswell,2013; van Mane 1990 format and Patton 2025).

According to (Creswell, 2013; van Manen, 1990), in phenomenological case studies, there is no universal fixed number of respondents, but samples are small by design prioritizing depth of lived experience over statistical representativeness.

Patton (2015) notes that 3–5 participants may suffice for single-case or highly focused studies, where deep exploration of individual experiences is centra.

| Respondent | Position | Length in Service | Grade Level Taught |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Teacher 1 | Master Teacher I | 9 years | Grade 4 |
| Teacher 2 | Teacher III | 23 years | Grade 5 |
| Teacher 3 | Master Teacher 1 | 9 years | Grade 6 |

The diagram presented the demographic profiles of Filipino subject teachers, including their positions, length in service, and grade levels taught.

The study utilized semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method, providing participants with the flexibility to express their thoughts and

experiences regarding integrated instruction and management support. This approach is widely recognized for generating rich, descriptive narratives and aligns with phenomenological principles that emphasize understanding lived experiences (Henriksen, Englander, & Nordgaard, 2022; Ruslin et al., 2022; Skourteli & Apostolopoulou, 2015).

Before data collection, approval was obtained from school authorities. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Interviews and observations were conducted during teachers' available time to minimize disruption. Field notes and audio recordings were transcribed for analysis.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Colaizzi's (1978) thematic analysis method. This method of phenomenological analysis will serve as the guiding framework for the data analysis process. Colaizzi's method is particularly suitable for phenomenological research because it emphasizes participants' lived experiences and the meaning they attach to those experiences. By using this approach, the study will focus on gaining a deep understanding of teachers' experiences with the implementation of content and pedagogy which can then inform the design of more relevant and impactful in enhancing classroom observable indicators. Colaizzi's method is also rigorous in ensuring that the findings are grounded in the participants' perspectives, thereby enhancing the validity and trustworthiness of the results (Colaizzi, 1978).

The use of descriptive phenomenological research, specifically provides a robust framework for exploring the lived experiences of teachers teaching Filipino subject. Codes were developed from interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents, then grouped into themes reflecting (a) implementation of integration, (b) challenges encountered in the integration of content and pedagogy, and (c) management Practices to Enhance Classroom Observable Indicators. The insights derived from this research will be crucial in the implementation of

content and pedagogy that align with teachers' real-world needs in improving classroom indicators.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of integrated content and pedagogy in Filipino classrooms reflects both promising practices and persistent challenges. Findings indicate that teachers initiate integration during lesson planning by designing activities that connect lessons to learners' real-life experiences, interests, and future goals, thereby making learning more meaningful and practical. This approach aligns with Jacobs (2017), who emphasizes that curriculum integration fosters holistic understanding when lessons are linked to authentic contexts.

Although teachers attempt to integrate content and pedagogy, observations reveal that such integration often remains superficial, emphasizing the need for deeper interdisciplinary collaboration and systemic support (Sørensen & Stenalt, 2025; Verma, 2024). The study revealed that despite the efforts to improve, significant barriers still exist, including time constraints, limited resources, and inadequate training, which hinder effective implementation. These challenges are reflected in recent findings highlighting structural limitations and gaps in professional development, particularly in education.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in addressing these challenges; however, respondents noted that current management practices prioritize compliance over developmental guidance, reflecting concerns that sustainable educational change requires balancing accountability with empowerment. To bridge these gaps, participants recommended strategies such as regular mentoring sessions, collaborative planning time, provision of instructional materials and ICT tools, and recognition of innovative teaching practices—recommendations aligned with DepEd's RPMS-PPST framework promoting reflective practice and collaboration (Vandeyar & Adegoke, 2024; Department of Education, 2022).

Implementation of Integrated Content and Pedagogy

Integrated content and pedagogy refer to the alignment of curriculum content with teaching methods to create

a cohesive learning experience. This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of knowledge and skills across different subjects, promoting deeper understanding and retention among students (Beane, 1997). Research indicates that integrated pedagogy can lead to improved student outcomes, as it encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Drake & Reid, 2010).

The implementation of Integrated Content and Pedagogy is a transformative educational approach that seamlessly integrates subject-matter expertise with instructional strategies to foster meaningful learning experiences. Findings revealed that teachers begin integration during lesson planning. They design activities that link Filipino lessons with learners' real-life experiences and context. According to Teacher 1, "One way I make my lessons more meaningful and connect to learners' real-life experiences is to link classroom content with their everyday lives, interests, and future goals. This means using real-world examples and providing opportunities for learners to apply knowledge in practical situations."

These findings align with Jacobs (2017), who stress that curriculum integration promotes holistic understanding when lessons are connected across meaningful contexts. However, in practice, observed integration often remained surface-level, suggesting the need for deeper interdisciplinary collaboration and professional guidance. Drake and Reid (2018) affirm that authentic integration requires systemic support, planning time, and shared pedagogical vision among teachers.

Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of Content and Pedagogy

The implementation of content and pedagogy in educational settings is a complex process that involves not only the dissemination of knowledge but also the effective translation of curriculum into meaningful learning experiences for students. Research consistently highlights that educators face multifaceted challenges in both content delivery and pedagogical practice.

After the data collected, three primary challenges hindered teachers' implementation of integrated

instruction: First, Time Constraints, Teacher 1 said "Tungod sa kadamo sang ulubrahon nga paper works we don't have enough time to focus because nagapati ako nga Integrative lesson planning required additional preparation." [Due to the heavy paperwork load, we often lack sufficient time to concentrate fully, as integrative lesson planning demands additional preparation and thoughtful attention]. According to (Saigar & Jamaludin, 2025), time pressure is a recurring theme in literature on pedagogical change. Teachers often report that innovative or student-centered practices such as differentiated instruction or project-based learning require substantial planning time that is not readily available within typical school schedules. Studies have found that constraints such as limited planning time and large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to fully adopt new pedagogies

Secondly, limited Resources, according to Teacher 3 "challenges we face in preparing materials or aligning competence across subjects is the limited access to materials and resources. Kakulang gid sang instructional materials kag teknolohiya nga kung sa diin tani maging Isa ka makaagaw sang attention sang mga estudyante nga mag engage kag mag participate sa klase." [The challenges we face in preparing materials or aligning competencies across subjects stem from the limited access to materials and resources. There is a significant lack of instructional materials and technology, which could have been a way to capture students' attention and encourage them to engage and participate]". In a narrative literature review of (Khurram, Chachar, & Ahmed, 2024) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms found that teachers face obstacles related to technology availability, lack of readiness to adapt to digital tools, and insufficient technological support that hinders effective technology-based pedagogy. The integration of technology in pedagogy has been widely documented as a double-edged sword. While technology can enhance instructional methods, limited access to technological tools and insufficient

training on how to use these tools remain significant challenges.

Lastly, Insufficient Training, as what Teacher 2 said “Ang pabag-o bag-o sang curriculum amo ang Isa ka rason nga madamo nga mga maestra ang ndi pa gawa makahibalo. Tungod sa gulpiyada nga pag adapt naton madamo nga manunudlo nga parehas namon nga wala pagid ideya bangod sa kakulang sang training. The forms of support or assistance that help us to improve integrated teaching is that engaging in workshops, conferences, webinars and online courses to stay updated with the latest educational trends and methodologies.” [The frequent changes in the curriculum are one reason why many teachers are still unaware. Due to the sudden adaptation, many educators like us have no idea because of the lack of training. The forms of support or assistance that help us improve integrated teaching include engaging in workshops, conferences, webinars, and online courses to stay updated with the latest educational trends and methodologies.]” To support the claim there were recent studies confirm that structural limitations, excessive workload, and insufficient professional development continue to impede curriculum innovation and the adoption of integrative pedagogy. According to (Creagh et al., 2023 & Hunter & Nguyen, 2024), heavy administrative tasks and time poverty negatively affect teachers’ ability to engage in meaningful instructional planning. Similarly, barriers such as inadequate resources and lack of sustained training hinder the implementation of innovative teaching practices, emphasizing the need for systemic interventions and leadership support (Awang et al., 2025 & Manegdeg & Paglinawan, 2024). Effective leadership plays a critical role in addressing these challenges by providing resources, allocating time for collaboration, and ensuring continuous professional development opportunities (Herrero & Despi, 2023; Castaneda & Varela, 2022).

These findings underscore that empowering teachers through targeted training, collaborative structures (such as interdisciplinary planning teams or peer-learning networks to lessen administrative works, and instructional resources such as technology-driven trends are essential for fostering content-rich

curriculum innovation and pedagogically sound instructional practices.

Management Practices to Enhance

Classroom Observable Indicators

Supportive school management forms the foundation of effective schools, fostering environments where equitable learning thrives. By aligning pedagogical strategies educators can directly enhance critical classroom indicators.

Observable indicators of classroom performance include student engagement, participation, and the quality of interactions between teachers and students. These indicators serve as measurable outcomes of effective teaching practices and management strategies. Studies have shown that classrooms characterized by high levels of engagement and positive interactions are more likely to foster academic success (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

According to Teacher 1 " School leader can enhance the integration of content knowledge and pedagogy by providing continuous mentorship and facilitating collaborative learning communities" Although leadership support was provided, its implementation was inconsistent. Respondent noted that school leaders often prioritized compliance with paperwork over developmental guidance, which limits opportunities for professional growth and innovation. This finding reflects concerns raised in recent studies that emphasize the need for leadership to balance accountability with empowerment to achieve sustainable educational change (Adeoye et al., 2025; Decman & Novak, 2023; Richardson & Khawaja, 2025).

School leaders can strengthen the integration of content knowledge and pedagogy by providing continuous mentorship and fostering collaborative learning communities" However, these supports were inconsistently implemented, As what Teacher 3 respond "mas naga focus kag prioritize compliance with paperwork over developmental guidance. " [leadership often prioritizes compliance with paperwork over developmental guidance]. This finding reflects recent research emphasizing that sustainable educational change requires leadership

that balances accountability with empowerment and promotes innovation (Adeoye et al., 2025& Decman et al., 2023). Effective management practices demand an environment built on trust, collaboration, and continuous learning, which are essential for empowering teachers and improving instructional quality (Aypay, 2024& Griffin, 2024). Furthermore, collaborative leadership approaches have been shown to enhance teacher engagement and student outcomes by creating shared decision-making structures and professional learning communities (Schleifer et al., 2017; Teachers Institute, 2023). These insights reaffirm that leadership engagement is critical in enabling teachers to implement integrative pedagogy effectively.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study highlights that teachers truly appreciate the importance of integrating content and pedagogy to make learning more meaningful and engaging for their learners. Despite this awareness, they often face obstacles such as limited time, insufficient resources, and insufficient training, which make fully implementing integrated instruction challenging. The role of school management is crucial, supportive leadership that fosters trust, provides mentoring, and encourages collaboration can greatly enhance teachers' confidence and effectiveness in applying integrated approaches, ultimately leading to stronger classroom performance and more observable positive outcomes for learners. Recommendations such as regular coaching, collaborative planning time, provision of ICT tools, and recognition of innovative practices align with DepEd's RPMS-PPST framework, emphasizing reflective practice and collaboration. Addressing these gaps through systemic support and leadership engagement is essential for advancing integrative pedagogy and improving instructional quality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Schools should enhance professional development by providing continuous training through workshops, webinars, and collaborative mentoring to strengthen teachers' integration skills. Resources must be allocated to invest in instructional materials and technology that support integrated teaching strategies. Observation tools should be improved by utilizing technology-driven systems to provide real-time feedback on integrated practices. Collaboration can be fostered by establishing teacher learning communities to share best practices and promote teamwork. Leadership support is essential, with school leaders adopting an approachable and facilitative role, offering mentorship and creating opportunities for collaborative planning. Finally, policy development should prioritize integrated instruction and include incentives for teachers who successfully apply integration in their classrooms.

All these recommendations move DepEd forward in creating learner-centered, dynamic, and transformative teaching.

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