

EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE K TO 12 PRINCIPLES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine how the six K-12 principles, prescribed by the Department of Education for teaching English in the K to 12, were manifested in the teaching and learning processes in a public school in Misamis Oriental. These principles are spiral progression, learner-centeredness, interaction, contextualization, integration and construction.

The case study qualitative design and random sampling method were utilized in the study. An in-depth interview with the teachers was conducted and was triangulated with focused-group discussion with the students. Ethical clearance was secured before the data were gathered.

Results showed the following which include: 1) the tendency for teachers to go back to the lower levels in order to fill in gaps in the teaching and learning process; 2) that there were interactions occurring in class but are not always performed using the target language which is English; 3) that contextualization was not yet implemented fully in the class activities; and 4) All principles were well-implemented but other principles have inadequacies in their implementation.

These results support the constructivist view of learning by constructing ideas based on prior knowledge through inquiry-based, discovery approach and active learning. Future research called for the investigation of these principles in the flexible learning modality of the Department of Education.

KEYWORDS: *Spiral Progression, Learner-Centeredness, Interaction, Contextualization, Integration, Construction*

INTRODUCTION

The K to 12 curriculum which was implemented in the school year 2012-2013, aimed to provide sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills, develop lifelong learners, and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship. This program was carefully studied and designed based on research from other countries and our own local successes and failures in education.

This study sought to determine how the six K-12 principles, prescribed by the Department of Education for teaching English in the K to 12, were manifested in the teaching and learning processes in a public school in Misamis Oriental. These principles are spiral progression, learner-centeredness, interaction, contextualization, integration and construction.

One of the salient principles of K to 12 is contextualization. Examples, activities, songs, poems, stories, and illustrations are based on local culture, history, and reality. This makes the lessons relevant to the learners and easy to understand. Students acquire in-depth knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through continuity and consistency across all

levels and subjects. Discussions on issues such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change Adaptation, and Information & Communication Technology (ICT) are included in the enhanced curriculum.

Another salient feature of K to 12 is spiral progression. Subjects are taught from the simplest concepts to more complicated concepts through grade levels in spiral progression. As early as elementary, students gain knowledge in areas such as Biology, Geometry, Earth Science, Chemistry, and Algebra. This ensures a mastery of knowledge and skills after each level. For example, currently in High School, Biology is taught in 2nd Year, Chemistry in 3rd Year, and Physics in 4th Year. In K to 12, these subjects are connected and integrated from Grades 7 to 10. This same method is used in other Learning Areas like Math.

Other principles like learner-centeredness, interaction, integration and construction are also emphasized in this research because these are part of the six principles of K-12 Language teaching principles. Considering that the focus of this research is in K-12 curriculum language acquisition and learning, these principles are very significant to encourage the active participation from learners. With all these principles coupled with the three major applications of the macro skills of the language - which develop interacting with others, understanding and learning other content areas and finding for themselves different field of endeavor through communicative competence and multiliteracies - effective language use will be in its full blast (Almario, 2016).

This study is anchored on constructivist learning theory John Dewey. The constructivist theory is based around the idea that learners are active participants in their learning journey; knowledge is constructed based on experiences. As events occur, each person reflects on their experience and incorporates the new ideas with their prior knowledge (Kurt, 2021). Since the six principles - contextualization, spiral progression, interaction, integration, learner-centeredness and construction, have common denominator of giving students the learning experience within real world tasks and new learning depends on current understanding of: relatable contexts which connects to prior knowledge, being active learners who can learn from interacting with others and making meaningful experiences in their learning.

However, there were only few studies which focuses on how the principles of teaching English are implemented. There were also challenges experienced by the teachers in effectively teaching English following the K-12 curriculum. Hence, this study looks into how these six K-12 principles are implemented in the curriculum.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study made use of a case study, qualitative method. An instrument for focused group discussion was utilized to hear and record explanations and elaborations from some of the students. Likewise, teachers were subjected to an in-depth interview to know more deeply about their implementation of the six principles in their respective classes. Random sampling method was used to select five English teachers, with representatives from each grade level.

In gathering the data needed for the study, letters to the School Division Superintendent, Principal, English Department Head, English teachers, parents of the students, and the students themselves, were sent to secure their permission to collect the information needed. Then, a list of teachers and their English classes were secured. They were visited individually to get their profile, their perception to K to 12, through their responses to interview questions. The teachers were also asked to guide the researcher in selecting students from the sections they handled to ask them to participate in the focused group discussion provided that their parents granted permission that they undergo the said data

gathering and that they themselves agreed willingly to participate in the study. Thematic Analysis was done to generate themes from the gathered data. Sufficient caution and care was exercised to ensure respect to the privacy of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following themes were highlighted after analyzing the responses of the respondents during the in-depth interview.

Spiral Progression is Implemented in Teaching English but with some Challenges

According to the teachers, the students can connect with some lessons. This is confirmed by the students when they shared that there are interrelatedness in the lessons especially in the discussion of Parts of speech, figures of speech, elements of stories, grammar rules, and composition writing. Furthermore, the students mentioned that other topics sound familiar especially when reviewed and more learning are experienced with the additional information to familiar concepts. Topics from the past are taken again with added ideas or applied already like in speech delivery. There are new topics such as genres of literature, APA citation, and mythology. Also, the literary texts are new. Activities like reading stories, recitations, role play and reporting are familiar tasks.

However, the teachers can hardly follow-up on lessons which were not taken in the lower years. They would go back to the basic topics and teach them all over again. The teacher would do recaps: highlighting basic topics in compact and not scattered. Often, this happens when teaching grammar, as shared by one teacher. Sometimes, they would deviate from the module and deal more on topics that are already familiar. This is in contrast to the expectation on the implementation of spiral progression by Corpuz (2014) whereby learning is revisited to be extended, reinforced, and broadened, prior to which students have already developed some understanding of the concept.

Moreover, according to the students, there are more outputs and presentations required. They further shared that there are new and different words and word pronunciation introduced, topics are becoming more detailed and complicated and there is more depth. They also highlighted that new culture are introduced like the Greek in Grade 10 and activities advanced like delivering impromptu speech performances, answering harder recitation questions, composing our own literary pieces, and performing plays.

Integration of Topics, Skills, Themes and Values are evident

In terms of the principle of integration, integration was evident in the use of varied materials like pictures, songs and audio apart from reading materials and the conduct of activities, where many skills are covered like reporting. The teachers further shared that when there is integration of real-life contexts of students, cultures and traditions as well as the values needed. To further implement integration, more activities were implemented that will cover many skills in a session, hence, macro skills were covered naturally. Themes are also integrated during readings or speeches. Student deficiencies and different needs of the students were addressed immediately through integrated methods and approaches.

These observations are consistent to the students' sharing when they mentioned how topics are combined. They look at grammar items, spelling, and vocabulary items in stories and there are times also when the topic is focused on one. Furthermore, the students emphasized that in one session, the different macro skills are practiced. Other talents such as singing and dancing are also integrated. Traditional instructional materials and technologies are used. Print materials in the module are utilized mostly. But in Grade 7, there are no individual books yet. Photocopies/ manually copied supplementary materials are used.

In terms of Values integration, the students mentioned about their teachers sharing their personal experiences or when they correct the students' behavior. Values were also identified from reading materials and inspirational or motivational videos are used to in still values. Moreover, the students also highlighted that in a quiz, they were asked to distinguish good from bad and in their writing activities, themes and values are sometimes the subject/topic.

Learner-Centeredness can be Practiced in the Classroom through Well-Planned Activities

In terms of Learner-centeredness, the teachers encourage their students to participate in interactive activities such as debate, pair or group sharing, reporting and writing tasks. Students collaborating with others in pairs or in groups was highly encouraged. Student engagement was really exhibited through motivating class discussions and performance-based assessments such as speech choir, choral reading, declamation and dance. These imply that the students are given the chance to explore by themselves, in order for them to maximize their potential, while the teachers monitor, facilitate and guide the students. The teachers further cited that they would let students suggest in terms of performance/rubrics and choose pieces. There were also venues where students are encouraged to ask questions aside from teachers asking questions to students. These observations are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Marwan (2017), which is entitled "Implementing Learner-Centered Teaching in an English Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom. *Celt: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching & Literature*," The findings of this study overall proved that the implementation of this learner-centered teaching framework could make a difference in students' learning. Their learning became more meaningful, interesting and democratic. Apart from this positive change, it was identified that the teacher's understanding of implementing this framework was still limited resulting in the inconsistency of implementing all aspects of the learner centered teaching approach. This limitation which is dependent on the teachers' understanding of implementing this principle of learner-centeredness is very true and is confirmed by the study of Nonkukhetkhong, Kittiporn & Jr, Richard & Moni, Karen. (2006), stating that teachers were attempting to implement the learner-centered approach, but that they were not confident about its underlying theory, and therefore the degree of the implementation depended on how the teachers used their understanding of that theory in their practice within the contextual constraints.

Consistent to the observations of the teachers, students also explained how learner-centeredness was practiced in class. For individual activities, the following were conducted: Solo singing, class sharing, solo report, story reading then quiz, storytelling, research work, speech delivery, poem writing, star of the day, board work, puzzle games, spelling, quizzes, scrapbooking. For group activities, the following were examples of activities conducted: Dialogue, interacting with the teacher, pair critiquing.

Group: Speech choir, jazz chants, pronunciation drills, radio play, role play, choral singing, reporting, interpretative dance

Interaction can be Promoted through Engaging Activities

Interaction as highlighted by the teachers is consistent with learner-centeredness through the activities that encourage collaboration by pair and by group. They further emphasized that pair/group activities or presentations allow students to interact. This is supported by Patrick Howarth (2013), a teacher from Portugal, who emphasized that collaborative learning, particularly through the use of collaborative tasks, has been shown to foster language development since learners can see a reason to use language in order to interact. Interaction helps learners develop language learning and social skills and so maximizing interaction in the classroom is an important part of the teacher's role.

According to teachers, reporting was one of the activities where the students have the opportunity to discuss and practice promoting interactive atmosphere. The teachers would tap on life issues relatable to the students to engage the students more in the discussion. Also, formative assessments through oral recitations and questioning skills exhibited by the teacher were implemented by encouraging students to answer in complete sentences. Speaking English was encouraged during the class sessions but this was not fully practiced.

Furthermore, when the teacher shares her personal life experiences, stories, life problems, life lessons, and current issues or stories of culture which were introduced, interaction really happens because the students can relate, hence, they are motivated to interact. When the teacher facilitates and monitors the students in their performance tasks, the teachers would interact with the students to check their progress. Consultation was also encouraged to address the difficulties of the students. Students highlighted activities that require interaction such as during acting or role playing, class sharing, debating, reporting, brainstorming, and other pair and group activities. They stressed that preparing the product or performance requires interaction

However, it also appears from the responses of the students that the vernacular is often used in interactions. Precisely, this coincides with the finding from the interview where teachers revealed that the use of the target language in class interactions still has to be implemented. Littlewood and Yu in the study they conducted in 2009, declare that while using the vernacular or first language is sometimes permissible, it can pose a threat or danger to second language learning and acquisition if it threatens the primacy of the target language. Further, it is held that the first language may be used as long as it is done so systematically, selectively, and judiciously to promote second language learning.

Contextualization Facilitates Effective Instruction through Student Activities

Relating the lessons to real-life issues also sparked interest in students. Thus, the principle of contextualization was also evident in their English classes, as testified by the teachers. Asking hypothetical questions or questions about relatable situations, and activities like telling stories about cultures and traditions, were included in the lessons. Specific instructions for the tasks were provided and providing relatable materials like videos, then conducting discussions and activities were conducted. Their performance tasks would require them to write with a specific purpose (to inform, describe, persuade, or argue) and assume real life roles which they can relate and appreciate. Maximilian (2014) highlighted that the features of context describe a situation the students should feel themselves into and gives information about how to use certain grammatical or vocabulary related constructions in situations that are not just to learn but which are similar to real life situations. So seen with a focus on teaching and learning, contextualization means to put different actions of speech or writing that occur in classrooms in different and varying situations, basically setting up a context for these communicative interactions to happen in. (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000 as cited by Maximilian (2014))

According to the students, interaction, integration and contextualization were really encouraged especially with the variety of activities conducted. In assuming roles in performance tasks, the students explained that when they are assigned roles, they would research about the role and they would follow guidelines in the module. They would practice then perform using some costumes and props. They would do their part as leader or member with focus, confidence, and cooperation with others. The students also explained that the teacher has a big role in the effective implementation of the lesson. The students highlighted the observed activities which include the following: the teacher presents summaries or video animations; students were tasked to read stories from book, photocopy, or notebook then share orally about them,

such as sharing the moral lessons or answer comprehension questions then perform them in a presentation; students would pick words/lines from the text then explain what it means to them; students would read then identify figures of speech or verbs; the teacher would present the plot and defines unfamiliar terms. If it is a poem/song, the teacher presents it line by line; the teacher would engage students in composition writing tasks such as “Explain the title” and “Explain the moral lesson”; After listening to music, the students orally share about what they read - their thoughts, feelings and reactions - often relating the story to their personal life. They also share partial understanding before the formal discussions; the students would perform the story through reporting, acting, drawing, or film – making; the teacher would present a picture then make a narrative; After reading about bullying, they make a persuasive speech about it.

As stated by Baker, Elaine DeLott, Hope, Laura and Karandjef, Kelley (2009), Interactive teaching plays a prominent role in Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) implementation. Furthermore, a literature review also indicates that CTL is grounded in a range of interrelated theories about how people learn. These include research on motivation theory, problem-based learning, social cognitive theory, and learning styles. While each is distinct in focus, these theories combine to underscore CTL as a means for advancing student success by increasing interest and motivation, heightening the utility of skills and information, enhancing connectivity to peers, and accommodating diverse ways of learning. Working with a contextualized curriculum offers instructors an array of opportunities to construct complex and engaging interactive activities for and with students including teamwork, peer to peer review, real-world data collection and problem-solving, experiences with community partners, authentic assessments, and reflective essays.

The Teacher has a Vital Role in Encouraging and Guiding Students in Meaningful Learning Activities

The concept of construction was implemented through meaningful activities. Although difficulties of the students were observed, different techniques were done to assist them which includes unlocking difficult terms, guiding students in their interpretation in every stanza to facilitate reading between lines, letting students express their reflection and their genuine thoughts, reactions and opinions, through affective or reflective questions and showcase their creativity through different activities such as posters, an original work/compositions, alternative endings of stories, and other creative outputs and performance tasks such as dialogues, dances, role plays, taps.

Moreover, the students also have observed how the teachers’ role can be very significant in their effective learning. The teachers would sometimes watch or go around while students are working. The teachers would raise pop up questions while the students read. They would also ask questions during and after a report or performance. They would suddenly insert explanations or to correct mistakes or to explain difficult words and phrases. During practices, the teacher would check and give tips and would remind the students against cheating, use of cell phones, and other gadgets. The teacher would ask partial compliance if the work cannot be finished instantly.

In the implementation of construction and making meaning in the different activities conducted by the teacher, such as creating a persuasive speech, narratives, compositions, etc, the students really highlighted the different performance tasks they did in order for them to share what they understand and have related to their contexts. Research evidence has shown that when engaging with texts, children in early childhood use very similar comprehension processes as older children (van den Brock, Kindeou, Kremer, Lynch, Butler, White and PuzlesLorch, 2005). This supports the view that educators should engage children in meaningful discussions about texts to support their literal, figurative, and evaluative comprehension.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings from the in-depth interview led to the conclusion that while overall, the teaching principles may be well implemented, still there are lacking essential elements in the implementation such as the teachers' familiarity with the mentors of contextualization, readiness of students for higher level of tasks and lessons, the use of non-print materials, and the use of English language in class activities and interactions. The results confirm to the constructivist learning theory, wherein the students' new learning also depends on their current understanding that for education to be most effective, content must be presented in a way that allows the student to relate the information to prior experiences and should be context-embedded, that teachers should be facilitators and act as guide in the learning process, and students are active learners who can learn through interaction, integrating cooperative work, and integration of other knowledge, skills and values, or language, content and process, and making meaning through construction. Hence, based on the teachers' and students' experiences and based on the theory, it is empirical to say that teachers have a big role in the effective implementation of the K-12 principles in teaching English, for students to be actively engaged in the learning process and have more effective learning.

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