



**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE (ILE)
APPROACH BY GRADE ONE TEACHERS IN
THE PROVINCE OF ALBAY**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach among Grade One teachers in Albay, focusing on curriculum integration, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and teacher readiness (competence, confidence, and self-efficacy). Using a descriptive-correlational design with data collected via Google Forms, findings showed moderate implementation, with self-efficacy as the strongest predictor. Readiness and implementation were positively correlated, though not significantly, indicating bidirectional growth. Teachers faced constraints in curriculum, resources, culture, organization, students, and pedagogy. A training program was proposed that emphasizes job-embedded professional development, peer mentoring, contextualized assessment, and communities of practice, while highlighting the roles of self-efficacy and contextual responsiveness in adaptive learning.

Keywords: *Integrated Learning Experience (ILE), teacher readiness, self-efficacy, curriculum integration, instructional strategies*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Education serves as the cornerstone of a child's holistic development, and the early years of formal schooling lay the foundation for lifelong learning. In the Philippines, the Department of Education has recognized the importance of innovative and developmentally appropriate pedagogical approaches that address the diverse needs of young learners. Among these approaches is the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE), a framework that seeks to connect learning areas in meaningful and coherent ways, enabling Grade One pupils to make sense of their world through interconnected concepts rather than fragmented, subject-isolated instruction. The ILE approach is particularly significant in the context of early childhood education, where the integration of knowledge, skills, and values across disciplines mirrors how children naturally perceive and understand their environment.

The Province of Albay, nestled in the Bicol Region of the Philippines, is home to a diverse network of public elementary schools serving communities across urban and rural areas. Grade One teachers in this province are entrusted with the formidable task of translating national curriculum mandates into classroom practice that is both engaging and responsive to local contexts. Implementing the ILE approach in this setting presents both opportunities and challenges as teachers navigate the demands of curriculum integration across varying levels of training, resources, and institutional support. Understanding how these educators put the ILE approach into practice is essential not only to improving

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instructional delivery but also to informing professional development initiatives that can strengthen early grade teaching across the province.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the implementation of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach by Grade One teachers in the Province of Albay. Specifically, it aims to explore the extent to which teachers integrate learning experiences across subject areas, the strategies and methods they employ in doing so, and the challenges they encounter in the process. By generating empirical insights from classroom teachers' experiences, this research aims to offer meaningful recommendations to curriculum planners, school administrators, and policymakers committed to enhancing the quality of early childhood education in Albay and beyond. Ultimately, this study affirms the belief that effective implementation of the ILE approach is a vital step toward nurturing well-rounded, curious, and capable learners in the foundational years of schooling.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive-correlational research design utilizing a cross-sectional approach. This combined methodology is strategically chosen to provide comprehensive insights into both the current state of ILE implementation and the factors that predict successful adoption.

Descriptive-correlational research designs enable researchers to examine associations between variables in their natural states, without experimental manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This methodological approach serves dual purposes: providing a detailed

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description of variables as they exist in actual contexts and identifying patterns of relationship between these variables. As Siedlecki (2020) notes, descriptive components offer rich characterization of phenomena, while correlational analyses reveal the strength and direction of associations. This design proves particularly valuable when experimental manipulation would be impractical or unethical, as in examining relationships between teacher characteristics and instructional practices in authentic educational settings. According to Siedlecki (2020), descriptive research is devoted to the detailed description of a situation, enabling identification of the most subtle opinions through respondents' perspectives. Correlational research, as described by Copeland (2022), seeks to identify relationships between variables without manipulating any of them, thereby preserving the natural context in which these relationships occur.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study were Grade 1 teachers from public elementary schools in the Province of Albay. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants possessed direct experience with the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach, thereby providing relevant and reliable data for the investigation. Grade 1 teachers were chosen as the focal group because they are at the frontline of implementing foundational learning strategies and are directly responsible for introducing integrated instruction to young learners. Their perspectives and practices are critical in assessing the level of ILE implementation, their readiness to deliver the approach, and the constraints they encounter in classroom contexts.

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Research Instrument

The primary research instrument employed in this study was a structured questionnaire explicitly developed to assess the implementation of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach among Grade 1 teachers in the Province of Albay. The instrument was designed to capture data across four major domains: (1) the level of ILE implementation, (2) teachers' readiness, (3) the relationship between readiness and implementation, and (4) the constraints encountered in ILE delivery. Each section was carefully aligned with the study objectives and the statistical tools used for analysis.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection procedures were conducted systematically to ensure the reliability and validity of research findings while adhering to ethical standards. Before data collection commenced, the researcher secured formal approval from the four Schools Division Offices in the province of Albay through official communication channels. Following SDO approval, permission was obtained from individual school heads of participating schools.

Grade 1 teachers were provided with comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and their rights as participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before any data collection, ensuring voluntary participation.

Questionnaires were distributed electronically via Google Forms links shared through official school channels. Respondents were given a reasonable timeframe of two weeks for questionnaire completion, striking a balance between the need for thoughtful responses and the practical constraints of the academic calendar.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study found significant variation in ILE implementation across the four School Division Offices (SDOs) in Albay. SDO B and SDO A achieved "Always Implemented" ratings in curriculum implementation, strategies, and assessment, while SDO C and SDO D fell into the "Often Implemented" range. A key insight is that implementation quality appeared to be a division-wide, systemic phenomenon — when one component was strong, all were strong, and vice versa — pointing to organizational capacity (leadership, support systems, resources) rather than individual teacher ability as the primary driver of outcomes.

Across all four divisions, teachers reported relatively uniform levels of competence, all rating themselves in the "Very Much Ready" range. However, a striking disconnect emerged: despite similarly high self-assessed competence, implementation outcomes varied dramatically across divisions. Confidence levels showed more variation, with SDO A paradoxically reporting the lowest confidence yet demonstrating among the strongest actual implementation, suggesting that organizational supports matter more than individual self-belief. The most critical finding involved self-efficacy: SDO D recorded a deeply concerning rating of 2.45 (Less Ready) for the belief that ILE can help learners achieve integrated outcomes — the only "Less Agree" rating across all readiness measures — indicating a crisis of pedagogical agency threatening to perpetuate a self-fulfilling cycle of low effort, weak implementation, and poor outcomes.

Correlation analysis yielded a moderate Pearson's r of 0.50 between overall readiness and implementation, but this was not statistically significant ($t = 1.00 < 1.96$) due to the small

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sample size and limited data variance. The findings suggest that while teacher readiness is necessary, it explains only about 25% of implementation variance — with the remaining 75% attributed to contextual and organizational factors. Self-efficacy showed the strongest alignment with implementation, while competence and confidence showed weak or inconsistent correlations with actual practice, fundamentally challenging deficit narratives that attribute implementation gaps to insufficient teacher training.

Six categories of constraints were examined. In terms of curriculum and assessment, the most frequently cited barrier was the difficulty of assessing learning across multiple integrated subjects simultaneously, compounded by a lack of appropriate assessment tools and a misalignment between integrated approaches and traditional accountability systems — particularly acute in SDO D. Resource and infrastructure constraints were pervasive, with inadequate internet connectivity ranking as the most cited barrier across most divisions, followed closely by insufficient budgets for materials and a shortage of age-appropriate manipulatives — both of which directly undermine the hands-on instruction that Grade 1 learners require. Contextual and cultural barriers were significant, particularly the language complexity in this multilingual region and cultural expectations favoring traditional, subject-separated instruction. SDO D uniquely ranked parental preference for traditional instruction as their top cultural constraint, suggesting community resistance is a key factor in their low implementation. Professional and organizational constraints revealed that the absence of formal mentoring programs ranked first across most divisions, with limited peer collaboration a close second, leaving teachers professionally isolated and unable to develop the complex

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skills required for integration. Student-specific constraints centered on the lack of home follow-up and short attention spans, raising equity concerns about implementation models that depend on family support outside school hours. Finally, planning and pedagogical barriers highlighted the absence of concrete, locally relevant implementation models as the most universally cited obstacle, with teachers struggling to translate policy mandates into contextually appropriate practice.

Based on all findings, the study proposes a training program grounded in addressing the specific gaps identified: building self-efficacy through supported mastery experiences; establishing formal mentoring systems and collaborative planning structures; providing concrete, locally contextualized implementation models and assessment tools; developing community engagement strategies to build trust and address cultural resistance; and reforming accountability systems to align with integrated learning goals. The program recognizes that improving implementation requires comprehensive organizational reform, not merely additional individual teacher training, and emphasizes sustained, job-embedded professional learning over episodic workshops.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that ILE implementation quality varies widely across divisions due to differences in resources and support, underscoring the need for tailored, division-specific strategies to ensure equitable delivery.

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Teacher readiness has three interconnected dimensions: competence, confidence, and self-efficacy that must be developed together rather than separately. Of these, self-efficacy is the most critical factor: teachers who believe in their own ability are better at working around obstacles and adapting to different classroom settings. Professional development, mentoring, and peer communities are seen as key to building this.

Finally, Grade One teachers in Albay face multiple overlapping, systemic barriers to ILE implementation, not just isolated problems, which means solutions need to be coordinated and comprehensive rather than piecemeal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations focus on six areas to strengthen ILE implementation in Albay.

Coordination and Assessment. Each division should form its own ILE Coordination Team for localized support, and a province-wide Assessment Tool Bank should be established to provide teachers with ready-made rubrics and templates.

Teacher Readiness. Training should shift away from one-time cascade sessions toward ongoing, job-embedded learning, such as lesson study cycles and peer observation. Confidence should be built gradually through manageable tasks, while self-efficacy is developed using Bandura's four sources, supported by coaching and demonstration classrooms.

Readiness-to-Practice Gap. The "train then implement" model should be replaced with a supported "learning by doing" approach, where teachers start with short integrated activities

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and scale up over time with mentoring. Systemic barriers such as time constraints, policy conflicts, and resource gaps must be addressed simultaneously.

Broader Support Systems. Assessment should be reformed to prioritize integrated tasks. Resource centers and offline tools should address material and connectivity gaps. Cultural and multilingual strategies, family engagement, and professional learning communities should be strengthened. Grade 1 lessons should be chunked into shorter segments to address student attention issues, and better continuity from kindergarten to Grade 1 should be established.

Monitoring and Evaluation. The current M&E system relies too heavily on administrative observations. Teacher feedback should be elevated to an equal data source alongside supervisory observations and student performance, creating a more complete and triangulated picture of implementation quality.

Sustained Reform — A comprehensive training program should operate at all levels (provincial, division, school, and individual) with self-efficacy development embedded throughout. University partnerships should support ongoing research and continuous improvement.

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