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## KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES: BASES FOR PRE-SCHOOL IN-SERVICE TRAINING

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### ABSTRACT

The descriptive-qualitative study determined the kindergarten teachers' classroom practices as bases for preschool in-service training in the Schools District of San Joaquin - North, during the school year 2022-2023. It was found out based on the results of the in-depth interview with the kindergarten teachers that their classroom practices were learning through play, using real object, developing values, introducing early language skill, molding the seven domains of development, integrating technology, and classroom-centered strategy. Kindergarten teachers' ways on how they perform their classroom practices were through the utilization of technology, proper management, and utilization of learning materials. The challenges encountered by them in performing their classroom practices were the resources needed, learners' ability, teachers' ancillary services, school location, and learners' attitude. Their ways on how they manage the challenges were using games and dance, use of varied activities, provision of learning materials, time management, and patience.

**Keywords:** *Kindergarten Teachers, Classroom Practices, Preschool, In-Service Training*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

A Kindergarten Education Act known as Republic Act number 10157 ensures that every five-year-old Filipino child has an equal opportunity to receive a kindergarten education that is accessible and mandatory, promoting their holistic development and adequately preparing them for a more rigorous formal education and for lifelong learning (Luistro, 2011). It opens more opportunities and challenges for universal kindergarten education (Dimaano, 2011).

The Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education supported implementing kindergarten education under the K to 12 curriculum issued last school year 2016-2017. Therefore, the fundamental requirements for a productive and successful kindergarten education program are established by this DepEd Order. It depends on additional resources that stakeholders offer, particularly regarding kindergarten teachers' practices in the classroom, which include classroom organization, instructional support, and socio-emotional climate.

According to Catalano et al. (2004), a classroom that meets high standards values courteous interactions, granting autonomy in the learning process, well-organized education, equitable discipline, and suitable and efficient instructions. All the same, a lot of educational settings need to be academically stimulating, have unexploited learning potential, and offer limited organized opportunities for pro-social skill development.

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Peer bullying and learner-teacher conflict are prevalent high-academic failures that typically occur in the worst circumstances (Aud et al., 2010).

As a result, intervention programs that focus on classroom interaction to support students' social-emotional and academic well-being are receiving more and more attention (Durlak et al., 2011).

The learners' performance is significantly affected by how the teachers in kindergarten facilitate learning through their classroom practices, and these practices should be looked into to improve performance.

As a kindergarten teacher, the researcher observes that some of the teachers assigned to teach kindergarten classes in public schools are not graduates of Early Childhood Education (ECE) nor have taken units in ECE. Others have yet to undergo rigid kindergarten training to equip them with the necessary skills to teach kindergarten learners. Some of these teachers are considered excess in other grade levels or schools due to the increase in teacher-learner ratio and decreasing enrolment. Some kindergarten teachers who taught kindergarten classes before and trained with enough units in ECE are now handling other grade levels because they prefer to apply to elementary due to the lack of permanent items for kindergarten to cater to those already teaching kindergarten. All of these kindergarten teachers teaching in the public schools are board passers and met the requirements of the Teacher-1 position at the Department of Education (DepEd).

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The resources and teaching aids that kindergarten instructors offer differ from one another, including the support that parents give to the classroom and the invaluable assistance of the internet, which offers engaging interactive graphics to stimulate active participation from learners.

Through their actions in the classroom, this type of incident impacted the caliber of the educational setting. However, the validity of the researcher's findings must be established through the study in order to provide appropriate and timely actions to enhance the kindergarten curriculum in public schools.

The researcher, as a kindergarten teacher herself, studied this phenomenon in the educational system, which affects the teaching and learning process when dealing with heterogeneous groups of learners. Their expertise in teaching young learners may be a factor in changing a child's life and preparing them for their future.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, data-gathering procedures, research instrument, and data analysis used in this study. This study aimed to determine the Kindergarten Teachers' Classroom practices as bases for preschool In-

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service training in the Schools District of San Joaquin-North, Schools Division of Iloilo during the school year 2022-2023.

## Research Method

The research method utilized in the study was descriptive qualitative research method using in-depth interviews to gather data.

During the interview session, both the interviewer and interviewee were given the chance to carefully consider and reflect upon a set of questions related to a particular topic. The objective was to encourage the participants to share their key insights and opinions on a specific situation within a social context by responding to these thought-provoking questions. This interview aimed to gather the essential thoughts and perspectives of the kindergarten teachers, thus shedding light on the given issue from different angles.

## Research Design

A phenomenological research design was employed in the study. It was thought that phenomenology was a philosophical method for conducting qualitative research. Phenomenology focuses on an individual's subjective interpretations of her experiences to comprehend how others view the world and how this view may differ from widely held ideas. Phenomenology, commonly applied in disciplines like psychology, sociology, and social work, involves interviewing the subjects to learn about their impressions.

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According to Smith (2013), phenomenology is the study of first-person perceptions of consciousness structures. An experience's primary characteristic is its intentionality, or its direction toward something, since it is an experience of or about an object.. When the proper enabling conditions are available, an incident is directed toward an object under its content or meaning (representing the object).

### Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were fifteen (15) kindergarten teachers, selected at random from a total of nineteen kindergarten teachers across fifteen (15) schools in the district. Each school was represented by one kindergarten teacher who participated in the survey. The purpose of this study is to provide a clearer understanding of the perspectives and experiences of teachers in the district. It aims to shed light on the challenges and opportunities.

### Sampling Design

The study's sampling strategy was purposive. The population's characteristics and the purpose of the study will determine whether to use a purposive or non-probability sample. Other words for deliberate sampling are judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling.

### Research Instrument

The study employed a researcher-created interview schedule as its research instrument.

Four questions centered on the study's goal were included in the interview schedule.

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For the purpose of data collection and documentation, voice and video recorders were also employed, with participants' consent.

## Validity of the Research Instrument

A panel of jurors, chosen for their qualifications in research, English, and testing and assessment, was asked to validate each question for review and revision prior to the validity of the interview schedule being determined by the researcher, adviser, and Graduate School Dean.

Validity is the appropriateness, meaningfulness, accuracy, and usefulness of an investigator's inferences. The format and substance of content-related proof of reality must match the variables' definitions and a sample of the subject to be measured; this also aids in verifying the questionnaire's items (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007).

Using the appropriate form of Good and Scates, the panel of validators' comments, corrections, and suggestions about the interview schedule were taken into consideration. (Appendix A).

## Data Gathering Procedures

The necessary permissions were acquired from a diverse range of individuals and authorities, such as the advisor, Graduate School Dean, Schools Division Superintendent's Office, District Supervisors' Office, school principals, and individual participants, to facilitate the execution of this research. The researcher personally visited schools, communities, and other suitable locations to conduct the interviews, taking into consideration the convenience of the participants.

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The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the participants after convincing them to sign a disclaimer or consent form regarding the conduct of the study.

In the comprehensive interview, both voice and video recording devices were provided to ensure the full capture of the interviewee's remarks. After conducting a series of interviews, the researcher gathered and compiled all the acquired data.

### Data Analyses

The information gathered was analyzed using a thematic approach.

Identifying patterns or themes in qualitative data is the process of thematic analysis. To address the research or make a point about a problem, Maguire & Delahunt (2017) claim that a thematic analysis seeks to find melodies, such as noteworthy or fascinating patterns in the data. This involves condensing, evaluating, and interpreting the information gathered and giving it meaning.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was conducted to determine the kindergarten teachers' classroom practices as bases for preschool in-service training assigned in public schools in the District of San Joaquin - North, Schools Division of Iloilo during the school year 2022-2023.

The study employed a qualitative research approach that involved conducting in-depth interviews, utilizing a phenomenological research design.

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The participants of the study were fifteen 15 randomly selected teachers and 19 Kindergarten teachers in the whole Schools District of San Joaquin North. Each school was represented in the study.

Data was gathered using an interview schedule that the researcher created.

With the participants' consent, voice and video recorders were also used for data collection and documentation.

The questionnaire underwent content validation by the panel of experts. The Criteria for the Content Validation by Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) were used to determine the validity of the questions in the interview schedule. Regarding the tool's validation, the researcher took into account all feedback and recommendations. After the questionnaire had been found valid, permits were prepared to allow the researcher to start conducting the in-depth interview.

To conduct the study, the researcher obtained permissions from the adviser, the dean of the graduate school, the superintendent of the schools division, the head of the school, and individual participants. The interview was conducted by the researcher in person at the communities, schools, and other locations that worked well for the participants.

Following several interviews, the researcher combined all of the data that was gathered. A thematic approach was taken in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data.

The following are the findings of the study:

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Based on the results of the in-depth interview with the kindergarten teachers, it was found that their classroom practices were learning through play, using real objects, developing values, introducing early language skills, molding the seven domains of development, integrating technology, and classroom-centered strategy.

It was found that kindergarten teachers' ways of performing their classroom practices were through the utilization of technology, proper management, and utilization of learning materials.

It was also found that the challenges they encountered in performing their classroom practices were the resources needed, learners' ability, teachers' ancillary services, school location, and learners' attitudes.

Likewise, based on the results of the in-depth interview with the kindergarten teachers, they found that their ways of managing the challenges were using games and dance, varied activities, providing learning materials, time management, and patience.

### Insights

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

Kindergarten teachers should see to it that the way they teach their learners will always be lively and exciting by using varied instructional materials according to the needs and interests of the learners. A productive teaching-learning process should be ensured.

Learners' interests and motivation are always the priority of the kindergarten teachers by providing them the necessary materials and equipment.

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Despite their resourcefulness, kindergarten teachers still require more materials, more time, fair and reasonable teaching loads and tasks, and more training in how to deal with students who have various potentials, needs, and attention spans.

Teachers assigned to teach kindergarten learners should be resilient in dealing with challenges. They should develop the attitude of being upbeat, resourceful, versatile, and flexible to any challenge they may encounter in their classroom practices.

### CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived in this study, the following recommendations were forwarded:

Kindergarten teachers should also be given priority in providing instructional materials and other resources needed in the classroom.

School heads should include in their priority list the needs of the kindergarten teachers and provide them with the necessary support for improving instruction.

Kindergarten teachers should also be extended with additional professional growth and development through in-service training and other related activities to address their needs adequately.

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Teachers assigned to teach kindergarten should have a separate awards and recognition program to recognize their specific outstanding performances and to let them feel that they are also given importance in the school.

A copy of the in-service training for kindergarten teachers should be given to the office of the Schools Division Superintendent for approval and a special budget for implementation.

If a copy of this recommended in-service training is not approved, school heads are encouraged to implement these on a local arrangement basis only.

It is also recommended that a similar study be carried out in the future, taking into account additional variables that were neither used nor mentioned in the study.

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