



INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCE OF SCIENCE TEACHERS: BASIS FOR BUDGETED SCHOOL LAC SESSION PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 14 th January 2022 Accepted: 11 th February 2022 Published: 24 th March 2022	<p>This study was conducted to determine the level of knowledge gained in the Science Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and the instructional competence of science teachers in implementing the K-12 curriculum in Sta. Monica Elementary School and Matahimik-Bucana Elementary School of District II of City Division of Puerto Princesa as basis for budgeted school LAC session prioritization matrix. Ten elementary science teachers from the two elementary schools of District II, City Division of Puerto Princesa were involved in this research.</p> <p>The descriptive-correlation research design was used in the study. Data were gathered through questionnaires while frequency, percentage, mean and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient r were the statistical tools used to analyze the data.</p> <p>The respondents indicated that they gained high level of knowledge in the Science LAC Sessions in terms of pedagogical approaches, learning objectives, and learning content.</p> <p>In terms of level of instructional competence, the results implied that teachers are highly proficient in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy, diversity of learners and learning environment while the respondents were distinguished in terms of curriculum planning.</p> <p>There is significant relationship between the knowledge gained in the Science LAC sessions of elementary science teachers and their instructional competence.</p>

Keywords: Knowledge, Instructional, Competence, Curriculum, LAC Session, Matrix

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) is responsible for the management and governance of the Philippine basic education system. It is the chief formulator of the country's educational policies for the primary and secondary school systems which respond to the demand for professional competence, able management and leadership in the educational community. To fulfill this mandate, DepEd identified three components: the training and development, the program and development, and, the research and development component. It also has training materials development function and clearing house and information dissemination component.

In line with the implementation of Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, DepEd issues the enclosed policy on the Learning Action Cell (LAC) as a K to 12 Basic Education Program School-Based Continuing Professional Development Strategy for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning. Through this policy, DepEd fully supports the continuing professional development of its teaching personnel based on the principle of lifelong learning and its commitment to the development of teachers' potential aimed towards their success in the profession. This can be done through the school-based LAC, which primarily functions as a professional learning community for teachers that will help them improve practice and learner achievement.

Teachers play a crucial role in improving the quality of the teaching and learning process. Good teachers are vital to raising student achievement. Hence, enhancing teacher quality ranks foremost in the many educational reform efforts toward quality education. To complement reform initiatives on teacher quality, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) has been developed and nationally validated. This was signed into policy by Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Maria Leonor Briones through DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017. Along with this reform is the strengthening of instructional competence of teachers as reflected in Results-based Performance Management System (RPMS) key result areas.

In the context of the RPMS Tools, the Key Result Areas capture the domains of the PPST – a document that defines teacher quality in the country. The KRAs are: (1) Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, (2) Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners, (3) Curriculum and Planning, (4) Assessment and Reporting, and the, (5) Plus Factor. Four

key result areas are considered in this study such as content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, and curriculum planning.

This undertaking therefore, can be considered as a blueprint of new knowledge and additional document to the existing bank of information for the variables investigated in this study. It is in this context that the researchers decided to conduct study concerning the instructional competence of teachers in a local setting.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Design

The descriptive design, specifically the survey method was used in this study. This study focused on level of knowledge gained in the Science LAC Sessions of elementary science teachers and their instructional competence in the implementation of the K-12 curriculum in Sta. Monica Elementary School and Matahimik- Bucana Elementary School.

The descriptive-correlation research design was used in the study. Descriptive design was used to describe the level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of elementary science teachers and their instructional competence in implementing the K-12 curriculum.

On the other hand, correlation research was utilized to analyze the relationship between the level of assessment of Science teachers in LAC Sessions and their instructional competence.

B. Sampling

The researchers employed total enumeration. All science teachers of Sta. Monica Elementary School and Matahimik- Bucana Elementary School were the respondents of the study. Ten elementary Science teachers were involved in this research. A researcher-made survey questionnaire based on the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) was used. It has two parts which include: Part I, Level of Knowledge Gained in Science LAC Sessions and Part II, Instructional Competence of Science Teachers.

C. Data Collection

The researchers personally administered the research instruments to the respondents as identified. The researchers explained further to the respondents how to answer the instrument. The respondents were assured that their responses will be kept confidential.

D. Ethical Issues

The researchers, through the recommendation of the research division personnel secured a written permission from the City Schools Division Superintendent, District Supervisors and school principals to conduct the study.

E. Data Analysis

Frequency counts, percentages, means and Pearson Moment Coefficient *r* were the statistical tools that were utilized in this study. To describe the level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of elementary science teachers, a 5-point Likert scale was used.

Descriptive Interpretation

- 4.51-5.00– Very high
- 3.51-4.50- High
- 2.51-3.50 -Moderate
- 1.51-2.50- Fair
- 1.00-1.50– Low

To determine the level of instructional competence of the Science teachers, the 4-point rating scale below was used.

Descriptive Interpretation

- 4– Distinguished
- 3- Highly Proficient
- 2- Proficient
- 1- Beginning

4	1.51-2.50	Less Aware	Fairly effective
5	1.00-1.50	Unaware	Low effectiveness

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1a. Level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of Elementary Science Teachers in terms of Pedagogical Approaches

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. Encourage learners to continue learning in their own, broaden interest and prospective, and apply the knowledge and skills they develop in out of school situation	4.3	High
2. Experience brings optimum benefit to the learners	4.2	

		High
3. Appropriate real life situation and life patterns of the learners	4.6	Very High
4. Involves the fuse of different senses and sense of perception	4.4	High
5. Experiences stimulate learners to engage in higher levels of thinking and reasoning	4.3	High
6. Contemporary, tunely and relevant	4.2	High
7. Requires different activities and methods that generate interest and motivates students	4.4	High
8. Be within the level of the developmental stage of the learners	4.4	High
9. Appropriate suitable to the content, objectives, domain that provides opportunity for learning the content, developing thinking and psychomotor skills, understanding concepts and reflecting on desirable values and attitudes	4.4	High
10. Providing hands-on experience with real object to examine and manipulate	4.5	High
Overall Mean	4.41	High

Table 1a presents the level of knowledge gained in the Science LAC Sessions of Elementary Science Teachers in terms of Pedagogical Approaches. The statement "Appropriate real life situation and life patterns of the learners" got the highest mean of 4.6 followed by "Appropriate suitable to the content, objectives, domain that provides opportunity for learning the content, developing thinking and psychomotor skills, understanding concepts and reflecting on desirable values and attitudes" with a mean of 4.5. The lowest mean score of 4.2 went to "Contemporary, tunely and relevant."

The over-all mean of 4.41, implies that teachers allow their learners to learn the concept of science using constructivism approach.

This finding is similar with Ayaz and Şekerci (2015) where they claimed that the use of constructivist learning approach in different lessons and subjects has a high effect size for students' academic achievements, except the lesson of religious instructions. Hence, the constructivist learning approach can be used in almost all areas of teaching and learning process.

Table 1b. Level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of Elementary Science Teachers in terms of Learning Objectives

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. Conforms to the national development goals and priorities	4.70	Very High
2. Has clearly defined objectives from the viewpoint	4.40	High
3. Contains a wide range of significant human experiences	4.40	High
4. Focus on learners for the development of humanism/nationhood	4.40	High
5. Promote skills development and requires more complex comprehension	4.50	High
6. Procedure are scientific and technological knowledge through critical and creative thinking, which are important as work skills	4.50	High
7. Systematic development of competencies and values for social living	4.60	Very High
8. Minimum level of performance indicative of acceptable achievement clearly specified	4.00	High
9. Reasonable for both individual and group needs	4.40	High
Overall Mean	4.48	High

Table 1b presents the level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of Elementary Science Teachers in terms of learning objectives. The statement "Conforms to the national development goals and priorities" got the highest mean of 4.70 followed by "Systematic development of competencies and values for social living" with a mean of 4.60.

The respondents agreed give lowest mean score of 4.00 to the statement "Minimum level of performance indicative of acceptable achievement clearly specified".

The result implies that learning of teachers from the LAC session is aligned with Department of Education’s goals and priorities focusing on competencies and values of learners.

Biggs and Tang (2007) conform that curriculum alignment at program level, that is, the constructive coherence between teaching, learning, and assessment, is crucial for the quality of teaching.

Table 1c.Level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of Elementary Science Teachers in terms of Learning Content

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. High frequency of occurrence and use in common life	4.30	High
2. Suited to the different maturity levels and abilities of students	4.20	High
3. Have value in meeting the needs and competencies for future career	4.60	Very High
4. Maximum correlation with other subject areas	4.80	Very High
5. Usefulness in contributing to the attainment of conceptual process, skills and objectives	4.40	High
6. Relevance to the significant human experiences, problems and issue and frequency of critical use	4.40	High
7. Availability in textbooks, audio-video resources	3.70	High
8. Usefulness in developing competence in clarifying values, attitudes, and value-ladder issues and problems with social relevance	4.20	High
9. Usefulness in planning and organizing instruction in generating questions and learning activities, and in making applications in variety of situation	4.20	High
10. Usefulness in explaining a wide variety of phenomenon and developing a sense of structure of the field study	4.20	High
Overall Mean	4.30	High

Table 1c presents the level of knowledge gained in Science LAC Sessions of Elementary Science Teachers in terms of learning content. The respondents gave highest mean of 4.80 to the statement "Maximum correlation with other subject areas". The statement "Have value in meeting the needs and competencies for future career " ranked second with the mean of 4.60 while the statement "Availability in textbooks, audio-video resources" got the lowest mean of 3.70.

This implies that LAC Session in Science is also beneficial within and across the curriculum to prepare the learners in their chosen field in the future.

According to Das et.al (2014) science allows students to explore their world and discover new things. It is also an active subject, containing activities such as hands-on labs and experiments. This makes science well-suited to active younger children. Science is an important part of the foundation for education for all children.

Table 2a.Level of Instructional Competence of Science Teachers in terms of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. recognize the importance of mastery of content knowledge	4.50	Highly Proficient
2. demonstrate understanding of content standard	4.50	Highly Proficient
3. observe interconnectedness of learn within and across curriculum areas,	4.60	Distinguished
4. couple with a sound and critical understanding of the application of theories and principles of teaching and learning.	4.20	Highly Proficient

5. apply developmentally appropriate and meaningful pedagogy grounded on content knowledge and current research.	4.20	Highly Proficient
6. display proficiency in English as medium of instruction	3.70	Highly Proficient
7. facilitate the teaching and learning process in line with the curriculum	4.80	Distinguished
8. exhibit the needed skills in the use of communication strategies.	4.20	Highly Proficient
9. apply technology in delivery of the lesson	4.70	Distinguished
10. promote high-quality learning outcomes	4.30	Highly Proficient
Over all Mean	4.37	Highly Proficient

Table 2a presents the level of Instructional Competence of Science Teachers in terms of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy. The respondents gave highest mean of 4.80 to the statement "Facilitate the teaching and learning process in line with the curriculum". The statement "Apply technology in delivery of the lesson" ranked second with the mean of 4.70 while the statement "Display proficiency in English as medium of instruction" earned the least mean of 3.70.

The over-all mean of 4.37 implies that the teachers facilitate teaching and learning process in Science with the integration of ICT and use appropriate medium of instruction that address the learners' needs and interests must be aligned with the curriculum.

The National Research Council (2012) reported that Curriculum is collectively defined by teachers, curriculum coordinators (at both the school and the district levels), state agencies, curriculum development organizations, textbook publishers, and (in the case of science) curriculum kit publishers. Although standards do not prescribe specific curricula, they do provide some criteria for designing curricula. To further realize the vision of the framework and standards, it is necessary that aligned instructional materials, textbooks, and computer or other media-based materials be developed as well.

This is also similar with the study of Bahr (2009) on technological barriers to learning' found that the complex ICT environments may adversely impact on student learning. Learning is enhanced when integrating pedagogies are employed to soften the sometimes high-load information environments of ICT. Further, a framework for ICT in education needs to consider the professional capacities of teachers in their differing abilities to effectively design and integrate technologies for learning.

Table 2b. Level of Instructional Competence of Science Teachers in terms of Diversity of Learners

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. establish learning environment that are responsive to learner diversity	4.50	Highly Proficient
2. respect learners' diverse characteristics and experiences	4.70	Distinguished
3. consider learners' difference in planning and designing learning activities	4.30	Highly Proficient
4. encourage the celebration of diversity in the classroom	4.30	Highly Proficient
5. understand the need for modification of teaching practice	4.60	Distinguished
6. encourage all learners to be successful citizens in a changing local and global environment	4.80	Distinguished
7. apply a variety of assessment tools and strategies in monitoring, evaluating, documenting and reporting learners' needs, progress and achievement.	4.40	Highly Proficient
8. manage learning behavior of each learners	4.60	Distinguished
9. handle difficult circumstances due different culture, socio-economics and religious background.	4.20	

10. consider learners' preference in learning Science	4.20	Highly Proficient
Overall Mean	4.46	Highly Proficient

Table 2b presents the level of instructional competence of science teachers in terms of diversity of learners. The respondents rated the highest mean of 4.80 to the statement "encourage all learners to be successful citizens in a changing local and global environment". The statement "respect learners' diverse characteristics and experiences" ranked second with the mean of 4.60. While the statements "handle difficult circumstances due different culture, socio-economics and religious background" and "consider learners' preference in learning Science" got the lowest mean of 4.20.

The result implies that in teaching science, teachers should encourage all learners to cooperate in the protecting the environment to be catalysts for change by providing different approaches and activities related to science.

According to Guo (2014) students in the 21st century need global citizenship education in order to be empowered with the knowledge, skills, and values that can assist them in taking actions to address the interconnected social, political, cultural and global realities of the 21st century.

Table 2c . Level of Instructional Competence of Science Teachers in terms of Learning Environment

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. provide learning environment that are safe and secure	4.80	Distinguished
2. create an environment that is learning-focused	4.70	Distinguished
3. utilize a range of resources for successful facilitation of learning	4.10	Highly Proficient
4. provide intellectually challenging and stimulating activities	4.20	Highly Proficient
5. efficiently manage learner behavior in a physical and virtual space	4.20	Highly Proficient
6. encourage constructive classroom interactions geared towards the attainment of high standards of learning	4.20	Highly Proficient
7. promote learner responsibility and achievement.	4.40	Highly Proficient
8. establish school-community partnerships which aimed to enrich the learning environment	3.60	Highly Proficient
9. stimulate fair and supportive learning environment	4.20	Highly Proficient
10. manage of classroom structure and activities	4.40	Highly Proficient
Overall Mean	4.28	Highly Proficient

Table 2c presents the level of instructional competence of science teachers in terms of learning environment. The highest mean of 4.80 was given by the respondents to the statement "Provide learning environment that are safe and secure" while the statement "Create an environment that is learning-focused" ranked second with a mean of 4.70 and lowest mean of 3.60 was rated by the respondents to the statement "Establish school-community partnerships which aimed to enrich the learning environment."

This implies that the security and safety of the learners' learning environment must be given priority by the teachers and administrators.

According to Berry (2002), the healthy school environment is kept in a steady state only with a thoughtfully organized cleaning and maintenance program. When a school environment is transformed from a state of hopeless deterioration to a healthy condition, attitudes of the students, teachers, parents, and surrounding community turn energetically positive so as to allow for effective teaching and learning.

Table 2d.Level of Instructional Competence of Science Teachers in terms of Curriculum Planning

Statement	Mean Score	Descriptive Rating
1. comply with the national and local curriculum requirements.	4.30	Highly Proficient
2. translate curriculum content into learning activities that are relevant to learners and based on the principles of effective teaching and learning	4.60	Distinguished
3. apply my professional knowledge in planning and designing lesson plan	4.20	Highly Proficient
4. collaborate with colleagues about the current trends in teaching and learning process	4.30	Highly Proficient
5. sequence lessons that are contextually relevant and responsive to learners’ needs	4.40	Highly Proficient
6. incorporate a range of teaching and learning resources	3.80	Highly Proficient
7. communicate learning goals to support learner participation, understanding and achievement with colleagues and parents.	4.60	Distinguished
8. align learning outcomes with learning competencies	4.60	Distinguished
9. ensure the relevance and responsiveness of learning to the needs of learners	4.60	Distinguished
10. incorporate the positive use of ICT	4.70	Distinguished
Overall Mean	4.51	Distinguished

Table 2d presents the level of instructional competence of science teachers in terms of curriculum planning. The highest mean of 4.70 was given to the statement “Incorporate the positive use of ICT” while the statement “Incorporate a range of teaching and learning resources” has the lowest mean of 3.80.

The result implies that the positive use of ICT in planning Science curriculum had a great impact in the instructional competence of Science teachers; therefore, they must be provided with training to use new learning technologies into their teaching programs.

UNESCO (2005) reported that teachers, professors, technical and administrative staff must be given training that enables them to integrate new information and communication technologies into their teaching programs. The lack of technical skills of maintaining the functionality of computers confused teachers to integrate ICT in the classroom.

Bahr (2009) in his study on technological barriers to learning found that the complex ICT environments may adversely impact on student learning. Learning is enhanced when integrating pedagogies are employed to soften the sometimes high-load information environments of ICT. Further, a framework for ICT in education needs to consider the professional capacities of teachers in their differing abilities to effectively design and integrate technologies for learning.

Table 3 Relationship between the knowledge gained in Science LAC sessions of elementary science teachers and their instructional competence

Pearson R	Computed T-Value	Tabular T- Value	Decision
0.559	-1.906	2.306	H0: Reject

The computed t- value of -1.906 is less than tabular t-value of 2.306. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The data revealed that there is significant relationship between the knowledge gained in Science LAC sessions of elementary science teachers and their instructional competence.

To effectively teach science as prescribed by the standards identified by DepEd in the curriculum, teachers must have theoretical and practical knowledge in carrying out the teaching and learning process in science classrooms. Teachers should likewise possess instructional competence in science.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Summary of Findings

Teachers and school heads agreed that the Science LAC sessions of elementary school teachers in terms of pedagogical approaches are appropriate for real life situations and life patterns of the learners. The respondents strongly agreed that the learning objectives conform to the national development goals and priorities. Therefore the learning objectives have maximum correlation with other subject areas in terms of learning content.

The result revealed that Science teachers facilitate teaching and learning process in line with the curriculum while they encourage the learners to be successful citizens in a changing local and global environment.

Similarly, the Science teachers provide a learning environment that is conducive for learners. Generally, teachers can incorporate the positive use of ICT in teaching and learning process.

Further, the significant relationship exists between the knowledge gained in the Science LAC sessions of elementary Science teachers and their instructional competence.

Conclusions

Based on the significant findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents indicated that they gained high level of knowledge in the Science LAC Sessions in terms of pedagogical, learning objectives, and learning content.
2. In terms of level of instructional competence, the results implied that science teachers are highly proficient in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy, diversity of learners and learning environment while the respondents were distinguished in terms of curriculum planning.
3. Knowledge gained in Science LAC sessions of Elementary Science Teachers and their instructional competence have a significant relationship which means that to effectively teach Science teachers must have theoretical and practical knowledge and should possess instructional competence in carrying out the teaching and learning process in Science classrooms.
4. Science LAC sessions enhance the instructional competence of elementary Science Teachers.

Recommendations

After a thorough analysis of data, the following recommendations are hereby made:

The Science Supervisor should constantly monitor the implementation and outputs of the SLAC sessions.

The School Administrators should commit and allocate budget for school LAC to improve the delivery of learning content, include communication strategies address the needs of teachers, monitor and assess the teachers' competence in teaching Science through classroom observations.

The Science Teachers should take active roles and maximize the budget allocated through utilizing the available learning resources in Learning Resource Portal, utilizing the use of available materials in the community applying the concept of localization and contextualization, and diagnose the learning differences of learners. They may also make use of class profiling in planning and designing differentiated instruction.

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