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Analysis on the Pilot Implementation of Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) as an Intervention for Key Stage 1: The SDO Masbate City Experience

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) as an instructional intervention for Key Stage 1 learners in the Schools Division Office of Masbate City during School Year 2023–2024. Anchored in learner-centered and problem-centered curriculum designs and the Integrated, Webbed, and Threaded models of curriculum integration, the study employed a school-based action research approach using a two-group pretest–posttest design. Grade 1 to Grade 3 learners from Antonio Dela Rosa Sr. Elementary School participated in a 10-day intervention, while three teachers provided feedback through a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using percentages, means, mean differences, and statistical significance tests. Findings revealed statistically significant improvements in the ILE group's Grade 2 English and Filipino and Grade 3 Mathematics, English, Filipino, and Science competencies. However, Grades 1 and 2 Mathematics showed no statistically significant improvements. Several learning areas in the control group also demonstrated significant gains. Teachers perceived ILE as effective in enhancing learner engagement, interdisciplinary connections, and holistic learning. Implementation challenges included time constraints and learner resistance, which were addressed through differentiated activities, learner motivation, and time-management strategies. The study concluded that ILE demonstrated potential for improving selected foundational competencies but required adequate instructional resources, teacher preparation, and continuous evaluation. Recommendations emphasized comprehensive teacher training, instructional material development, collaborative practices, and gradual implementation expansion. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through contextualized instructional improvement and educational stakeholder collaboration. Its sustainability contribution lies in strengthening educational and institutional sustainability through evidence-based curriculum development, inclusive learning practices, and continuous instructional improvement.

Keywords: *Academic Competencies, Contextualized Curriculum, Curriculum Integration, Educational Sustainability, Integrated Learning Experiences, Key Stage 1, Learner Engagement, Teacher Perceptions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) is an instructional approach that integrates different subject areas, skills, and concepts to promote holistic, interconnected, and meaningful learning. By linking knowledge across disciplines and applying it to real-life situations, ILE seeks to enhance learners' academic competencies, engagement, and overall development. Recognizing the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy, the Department of Education (DepEd) Region V introduced a contextualized integrated curriculum aligned with the MATATAG curriculum to strengthen learning experiences among early-grade learners. Within this initiative, the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Masbate City piloted ILE as an educational intervention for Key Stage 1 learners in Grades 1 to 3. The implementation emphasized learner-centered and problem-centered instruction, interdisciplinary integration, social and emotional learning, and inclusive educational practices. This study examined the effectiveness of ILE in improving learners' competencies and explored teachers' perceptions, implementation challenges, and implications for curriculum development. Its findings were intended to provide evidence for instructional improvement, resource allocation, and educational planning within SDO Masbate City

Research Problem

Strengthening foundational competencies among Key Stage 1 learners remains an important consideration in improving the quality of basic education. Traditional subject boundaries may limit opportunities for learners to establish interdisciplinary connections and apply knowledge meaningfully. These concerns underscore the need to examine instructional approaches that integrate learning competencies while responding to learners' developmental needs. Although ILE was introduced to promote contextualized, holistic, and interconnected instruction, its effectiveness during the pilot implementation in SDO Masbate City required systematic evaluation. Specifically, the study addressed the need to determine changes in learners' academic competencies, examine teachers' experiences with the intervention, identify implementation challenges, and generate evidence-based recommendations for future curriculum enhancement.

Assumptions of the Study

The study was guided by the premise that integrating related concepts, competencies, and learning experiences across subject areas could support learners' understanding, engagement, and holistic development. It further recognized that learner-centered and problem-centered instruction could provide meaningful opportunities for developing literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and transferable skills. The implementation framework also emphasized the importance of curriculum alignment, teacher capacity building, adequate instructional resources, monitoring and evaluation, and collaboration among educational stakeholders. These considerations provided the basis for examining the potential effectiveness and implementation requirements of ILE in Key Stage 1 classrooms.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) as an intervention for Key Stage 1 learners in SDO Masbate City. Specifically, it sought to determine the initial and post-intervention competency levels of learners in the control and experimental groups; examine significant differences between their pretest and posttest performance; assess teachers' perceptions of ILE effectiveness; identify implementation challenges and the strategies employed to address them; examine the implications of the pilot

implementation for future curriculum development and educational interventions; and formulate recommendations to improve ILE implementation in Key Stage 1 classrooms.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in learner-centered and problem-centered curriculum designs, which emphasize learners' experiences, needs, interests, and active participation in meaningful learning activities. Learner-centered instruction promotes relevant and engaging educational experiences, while problem-centered instruction develops learners' ability to examine real-life situations, formulate solutions, and apply acquired competencies. The ILE framework further adopted three of Robin Fogarty's curriculum integration models: Integrated, Webbed, and Threaded. The Integrated model connects overlapping concepts and patterns across learning areas; the Webbed model uses common themes to establish interdisciplinary relationships; and the Threaded model incorporates essential thinking, social, and study skills across subjects. These approaches were operationalized through DepEd Region V's H.I.K.E.S. framework, or Highlighting Integration in Instruction through Knowledge-based Experiences and Strategies. The framework emphasized contextualized curriculum integration, vertical and horizontal curriculum articulation, foundational literacy and numeracy development, social and emotional learning (SEL), and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). Its implementation required coordinated participation among the regional office, schools division offices, schools, and community stakeholders through policy guidance, technical assistance, teacher development, resource provision, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Collectively, these principles provided the conceptual foundation for assessing ILE as an integrated instructional intervention.

The study primarily aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by examining an instructional intervention intended to improve foundational learning competencies, promote inclusive and meaningful instruction, and strengthen educational quality among early-grade learners. Its emphasis on curriculum integration, teacher development, and evidence-based instructional improvement supports educational sustainability. The ILE framework also reflects SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through its attention to learners' welfare and social and emotional learning, and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) through the integration of gender equality and social inclusion within instructional design. These alignments represent the educational priorities embedded in the intervention rather than independently measured health or gender-equality outcomes. Furthermore, the study supports SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by emphasizing collaboration among educational authorities, school administrators, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders in curriculum implementation and improvement. From a multidisciplinary sustainability perspective, the study contributes primarily to educational, social, community, and institutional sustainability by generating evidence that can inform responsive curriculum development, inclusive instructional practices, teacher capacity building, resource management, and continuous educational improvement. Its findings may support the development of more relevant and sustainable learning interventions within SDO Masbate City.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a school-based action research approach utilizing a two-group pretest–posttest design to evaluate the effectiveness of Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) as an instructional intervention for Key Stage 1 learners. The design involved a control group that did not receive the ILE intervention and an experimental group that participated in ILE instruction. Both groups underwent pretest and posttest assessments to determine changes in academic competencies. This approach was appropriate for examining learners' performance before and

after the intervention and assessing the potential contribution of integrated instruction to foundational learning. The study also incorporated a descriptive assessment of teachers' perceptions, implementation challenges, and recommendations to provide additional insights into the intervention's applicability and improvement.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted at Antonio Dela Rosa Sr. Elementary School, District 5, under the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Masbate City, during School Year 2023–2024. The school participated in the pilot implementation of ILE under the contextualized curriculum initiative of the Department of Education Region V. The intervention focused on Key Stage 1, covering Grades 1 to 3, where the development of foundational literacy, numeracy, and other essential learning competencies is emphasized. This setting provided an opportunity to examine the implementation of interdisciplinary instruction within an actual elementary school environment and generate evidence relevant to curriculum development in SDO Masbate City.

Participants or Data Sources

The study involved Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 learners from Antonio Dela Rosa Sr. Elementary School. The original methodology identified simple random sampling as the technique used in organizing participants into control and experimental groups. The participant distribution was presented separately for Grade 1 Mathematics; Grade 2 Mathematics, English, and Filipino; and Grade 3 Mathematics, English, Filipino, and Science. Across these grade–subject categories, the original participant distribution recorded 105 control-group and 116 experimental-group entries. These figures represent the summed subject-specific counts and do not independently establish the number of unique learners. Additionally, three Key Stage 1 teachers involved in the pilot implementation participated in the assessment of ILE effectiveness. Their responses provided information concerning learner engagement, interdisciplinary learning, instructional support, implementation difficulties, and recommended improvements. Including both learner performance data and teacher perspectives enabled the study to examine academic outcomes alongside practical classroom implementation experiences.

Research Instruments or Materials

The study utilized grade- and subject-specific pretests and posttests to measure learners' academic competencies before and after the instructional intervention. These assessments provided quantitative data for evaluating performance changes in Mathematics, English, Filipino, and Science, as applicable to the participating grade levels. The resulting scores were converted into percentages and interpreted using five competency categories: Very Low (0–20%), Low (21–40%), Average (41–60%), High (61–80%), and Very High (81–100%). A structured questionnaire was also used to collect teachers' perceptions of ILE implementation. The instrument, reproduced in the study's annex as an online questionnaire, contained scaled-response items assessing student engagement, connections across learning areas, critical thinking, holistic learning, implementation support, and satisfaction with intervention outcomes. Additional multiple-choice and open-ended questions addressed implementation challenges, strategies employed to overcome difficulties, implications for curriculum development, and suggested improvements. The ILE instructional materials were based on the contextualized integrated curriculum of DepEd Region V, incorporating learner-centered and problem-centered instruction and the Integrated, Webbed, and Threaded approaches to curriculum integration. The original report did not provide specific documentation of the achievement tests' validation, questionnaire reliability coefficients, or instrument pilot-testing procedures.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection began with the administration of pretests to learners in both the control and experimental groups to establish their initial levels of competency in the identified learning areas. The pretest results served as baseline measurements for subsequent performance comparisons. Following the initial assessment, the experimental group participated in the ILE intervention for 10 days, while the control group did not receive the ILE treatment. The intervention incorporated integrated learning competencies and contextualized instructional activities intended to promote interdisciplinary understanding and meaningful learning experiences. After completing the intervention period, posttests were administered to both groups. The resulting scores were recorded, tabulated, and compared with the corresponding pretest results to determine changes in academic performance. The study also gathered responses from three participating teachers using the structured ILE questionnaire. Their responses documented perceived instructional effectiveness, difficulties encountered during implementation, strategies used to address these challenges, and recommendations for improving future implementation. The quantitative assessment results and teacher responses were subsequently consolidated for analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis

The study employed descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, mean differences, and paired-sample t-tests, to assess learners' pretest and posttest performance in the control and experimental groups. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level using two-tailed p-values, with 95% confidence intervals. Competency levels were interpreted using a five-category percentage scale. Teachers' questionnaire responses were summarized descriptively, while open-ended responses on implementation challenges and recommendations were presented narratively. The original study did not specify statistical software or formal qualitative analysis procedures.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted within the school-based research context of the Department of Education and involved elementary learners and participating teachers. The research documentation included a Declaration of Anti-Plagiarism affirming the originality of the research and proper acknowledgment of sources. It also included a Declaration of Absence of Conflict of Interest, in which the researcher declared no personal conflict of interest and acknowledged responsibilities under Department of Education Order No. 16, s. 2017, or the Research Management Guidelines. The original manuscript did not explicitly document research ethics committee approval, parental or guardian consent, learner assent, teacher informed consent, or specific procedures for participant anonymity, confidentiality, and data security. Consequently, compliance with these additional ethical requirements cannot be independently established from the available research documentation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Learners' Competency Levels Before and After the Intervention

3.1.1 Initial Competency Levels of the Control and Experimental Groups

The pretest results revealed varying competency levels across grade levels and subject areas. In the control group, Grade 1 Mathematics recorded a very low competency level (16.67%), while Grade 2 Mathematics (33.82%) and Filipino (37.82%) were classified as low, and English (50.67%) as average. In Grade 3, Mathematics (40.71%) and English (46.41%) were reported at average levels, while Filipino (38.00%) and Science (36.43%) were low. Similarly, the experimental group recorded low competency levels in Grade 1 Mathematics (31.00%), Grade 2

Mathematics (25.14%), Filipino (34.40%), and Grade 3 Science (27.69%). Average competency levels were reported in Grade 2 English (44.70%) and Grade 3 Mathematics (46.22%), English (51.30%), and Filipino (40.44%). These findings indicated that learners in both groups entered the study with differing levels of foundational competencies, particularly in Mathematics, Filipino, and Science. The relatively low pretest performance in several learning areas underscored the need for targeted instructional support and contextualized learning activities. The differences across grade levels and subjects also emphasized the importance of continuous competency assessment in identifying learning gaps and informing appropriate instructional interventions.

3.1.2 Competency Levels Following the Intervention

Posttest results showed improvements in several learning areas. In the control group, Grade 1 Mathematics remained low (40.00%), while Grade 2 Mathematics (48.73%), English (57.67%), and Filipino (51.27%) reached average levels. Grade 3 Mathematics (77.86%) and English (77.95%) achieved high competency levels, while Filipino (57.33%) and Science (51.43%) remained average. In the experimental group, Grade 1 Mathematics (26.67%) and Grade 2 Mathematics (32.28%) remained low. However, Grade 2 English reached a high level (70.28%), while Filipino increased to average (49.60%). Grade 3 Mathematics achieved a high level (69.78%), English reached a very high level (83.52%), and Filipino (52.00%) and Science (46.15%) attained average levels.

The posttest findings demonstrated improvements in selected competencies following the instructional period, particularly in English and Grade 3 Mathematics. The experimental group's high performance in Grade 2 English and very high performance in Grade 3 English highlighted the potential of integrated instruction to support language learning. Nevertheless, persistent low competency levels in Grades 1 and 2 Mathematics indicated the need for further instructional refinement, differentiated activities, and sustained intervention. The improvements observed in the control group also demonstrated that competency development occurred under both instructional conditions.

3.2 Significant Differences Between Pretest and Posttest Performance

3.2.1 Grade 1 Mathematics Performance

In Grade 1 Mathematics, the control group's mean score increased from 3.333 to 8.000, producing a mean difference of 4.667 and a statistically significant result ($p = 0.0081$). Conversely, the experimental group's mean decreased from 6.200 to 5.333, representing a mean difference of -0.867, which was not statistically significant ($p = 0.3252$). These results indicated significant improvement in Grade 1 Mathematics among learners in the control group but not among those receiving ILE instruction. The decline in the experimental group's mean score suggested that the intervention did not produce the anticipated improvement within the implementation period. The findings highlighted the need to reconsider instructional approaches, learning activities, and support mechanisms for developing foundational mathematical competencies among Grade 1 learners.

3.2.2 Grade 2 Mathematics, English, and Filipino Performance

The Grade 2 control group demonstrated a significant improvement in Mathematics, with mean scores increasing from 8.456 to 12.182 ($p = 0.0093$). However, improvements in English, from 12.667 to 14.417 ($p = 0.2008$), and Filipino, from 9.456 to 12.818 ($p = 0.1667$), were not statistically significant. In the experimental group, Mathematics increased from 6.286 to 8.071, but the difference was not significant ($p = 0.1206$). In contrast, English improved from 11.176 to 17.571 ($p = 0.0001$), while Filipino increased from 8.600 to 12.400 ($p = 0.0102$), with both subjects showing statistically significant improvements. The findings demonstrated differences in performance across learning areas. While the control group achieved significant improvement in

Mathematics, the experimental group showed significant gains in English and Filipino. These results suggested that ILE was associated with improved language competencies among Grade 2 learners but showed limited effectiveness in Mathematics during the pilot implementation. The variation in outcomes emphasized the importance of subject-specific instructional strategies and activities responsive to learners' competency needs.

3.2.3 Grade 3 Mathematics, English, Filipino, and Science Performance

The Grade 3 control group demonstrated statistically significant improvements across all assessed subjects. Mathematics increased from 12.214 to 23.357 ($p = 0.0003$), English from 13.923 to 23.385 ($p = 0.0017$), Filipino from 11.400 to 17.200 ($p = 0.0039$), and Science from 3.643 to 5.143 ($p = 0.0170$). Similarly, the experimental group recorded significant increases in Mathematics, from 13.867 to 20.933 ($p = 0.0042$); English, from 15.389 to 25.056 ($p < 0.0001$); Filipino, from 12.133 to 15.600 ($p = 0.0167$); and Science, from 2.769 to 4.615 ($p = 0.0056$). These findings indicated significant improvements in Grade 3 competencies under both instructional conditions. Within the experimental group, English demonstrated the largest mean improvement, followed by Mathematics, Filipino, and Science. The results supported the potential usefulness of integrated instruction in developing competencies across multiple learning areas, particularly among Grade 3 learners. However, improvements in the control group indicated that positive learning outcomes were not exclusive to ILE implementation. The findings therefore highlighted the importance of examining both instructional conditions when evaluating intervention effectiveness.

3.3 Teachers' Perceptions of ILE Effectiveness

The assessment of three Key Stage 1 teachers revealed generally favorable perceptions of ILE implementation. All three respondents rated ILE as very effective in enhancing student engagement. Regarding interdisciplinary connections, two teachers indicated that ILE mostly helped learners establish relationships among subject areas, while one reported that it did so completely. Two respondents perceived a positive impact on critical thinking, while one provided a neutral response. All three expressed strong agreement that ILE contributed to holistic and interconnected learning. Regarding implementation training and support, two respondents rated these as effective and one as very effective. Overall satisfaction was also favorable, with two teachers reporting satisfaction and one indicating high satisfaction. These responses reflected teachers' positive experiences with interdisciplinary instruction and learner engagement during the pilot implementation. The favorable assessments suggested that ILE supported meaningful learning activities and connections across subject areas. However, the neutral assessment of critical thinking and differing evaluations of implementation support indicated opportunities for instructional improvement and additional teacher development. The findings emphasized the importance of teacher feedback in evaluating curriculum innovations and identifying areas requiring continued support.

3.4 Challenges Encountered During ILE Implementation

The participating teachers identified time constraints and learner resistance as challenges during the pilot implementation. Difficulties involved preparing and delivering integrated activities within the available instructional period and encouraging learners to participate in unfamiliar learning experiences. These challenges were addressed through learner motivation, differentiated activities suited to students' needs, and classroom time-management strategies. The findings indicated that successful ILE implementation required sufficient preparation time, adaptable instructional materials, and strategies responsive to learners' abilities and interests. The challenges further highlighted the need for appropriate teacher preparation and instructional support to facilitate integrated learning activities. Addressing these concerns was considered

important in improving classroom participation, strengthening instructional delivery, and supporting more effective implementation of contextualized learning experiences.

3.5 Implications for Curriculum Development and Educational Interventions

Teachers' experiences during the pilot implementation identified ILE as a potentially useful approach for supporting learners' mastery of integrated competencies. The findings also emphasized the need for additional teacher training, adequate preparation time, and readily available instructional resources. Suggested improvements included designing activities responsive to diverse learning abilities, strengthening the quality assurance of instructional materials, promoting teacher collaboration, and establishing regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The study further recommended gradual expansion of ILE implementation based on the experiences and outcomes of participating schools. These findings underscored the importance of institutional and instructional support in sustaining integrated curriculum implementation. Teacher capacity building, adequate resource provision, instructional differentiation, and systematic evaluation were identified as essential considerations for enhancing ILE effectiveness. The pilot implementation provided practical insights for improving curriculum planning and instructional delivery in SDO Masbate City, particularly in addressing foundational learning gaps and strengthening contextualized educational interventions. Continuous refinement based on learner performance and stakeholder feedback may support more responsive and sustainable implementation of ILE in Key Stage 1 classrooms.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pilot implementation of Integrated Learning Experiences (ILE) in SDO Masbate City demonstrated varying levels of effectiveness in improving Key Stage 1 learners' academic competencies. Significant improvements were observed in Grade 2 English and Filipino and in Grade 3 Mathematics, English, Filipino, and Science, while Grades 1 and 2 Mathematics showed no statistically significant improvements in the ILE group. Improvements were also recorded in several learning areas within the control group. Teachers generally perceived ILE as effective in promoting student engagement, interdisciplinary connections, and holistic learning despite challenges involving time constraints and learner resistance. Overall, the findings highlighted the potential of ILE as a contextualized instructional approach while emphasizing the importance of adequate teacher preparation, instructional resources, and continuous implementation support.

It is recommended that comprehensive teacher training be conducted before expanding ILE implementation to other schools, particularly in curriculum integration, instructional material preparation, and differentiated teaching strategies. Adequate preparation time, learning materials, and instructional resources should be provided to support effective classroom implementation. Collaboration among teachers and schools should be strengthened through professional learning communities and the sharing of instructional practices. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and quality assurance of instructional materials should also be undertaken to assess learner progress and address implementation challenges. Furthermore, ILE should be expanded gradually based on pilot implementation outcomes and stakeholder feedback to support continuous curriculum improvement.

The study was limited to the pilot implementation conducted at Antonio Dela Rosa Sr. Elementary School in SDO Masbate City during School Year 2023–2024. The intervention covered 10 days, while teacher perceptions were obtained from three Key Stage 1 teachers. Consequently, the findings reflect the specific implementation setting, participants, and intervention period examined in the study.

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