

Instructional Practices Among Grade IV Teachers in Bridging Language Learning Gaps

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Abstract— Ninety-four (94) Grade IV teachers (GIV-T) who were randomly selected from DepEd School District of Urdaneta City, were involved in this study, as respondents. The study determined the extent of instructional practices (IP) of the respondents in bridging the language learning gaps (LLG) of pupils in the areas of reading writing, listening, and speaking.

The findings include the following: The Respondent (GIV-T) are in their prime productive year, very qualified in terms of highest educational attainment, position, experienced and well- trained in instructional practices (IP) in bridging language learning gaps (LLG).

The extents of IP of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the LLG of pupils are not correlated with the profile variables. The respondent-GIV-T are at their prime productive years, occupying Teacher III position, with a master's degree, adequately experienced in teaching, and more than adequate number of relevant trainings attended. The extents of IP of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the LLG of the pupils are not differentiated by grouping them according to the variable categories of the profile variables used, that these are not associated in any way with the profile variables.

It was recommended to address the instructional challenges faced by Grade IV teachers in bridging language learning gaps (LLG) among pupils. First, teachers are encouraged to engage in advanced studies and participate in literacy-focused seminars and training to improve their instructional competence. Second, the implementation of a proposed action plan is recommended to strengthen instructional strategies specifically designed to address language learning gaps. Lastly, the study advocates for further research on instructional practices (IP) of teachers, incorporating additional variables not explored in the present study. Such future investigations should be conducted under the guidance of expert professors from accredited graduate institutions to ensure academic rigor. These recommendations aim to elevate the quality of literacy education and support teachers in effectively responding to the diverse language needs of their students.

Keywords — *Instructional Practice (IP), language learning gaps (LLG), Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T)*

I. Introduction

Language is an advanced method of communication that humans use to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. It is made up of sounds, symbols, and gestures that are designed to express meaning in a specific way. Language is an essential part of human culture and identity, enabling people to interact, share knowledge, and form communities. There are thousands of languages spoken all over the world, each having its own distinct structure and qualities that reflect the different experiences and circumstances of those who use them.

As we enter the second half of the 2022-2023 school year, we are seeing the long-term effects of learning gaps on our students and it is critical that we help them catch up while also caring for ourselves. Making changes to a learning environment has an impact on both students and educators, so let us pause before proposing any hard and fast solutions. Teachers frequently report a fourth-grade literacy development fall, particularly among learners with limited resources, when they make the essential shift from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

Teachers utilize methods of instruction to help their students, become more independent and active learners. These strategies become effective learning strategies when they selected the most suitable ones and utilized them complete responsibilities. Instructional methods can stimulate. Assist learners in concentrating and integrating information to improve retention and understanding. The influence of teachers in conducting and shaping instructional activities cannot be overemphasized, particularly when it comes to teaching and learning language gaps, these classroom events are referred to as teacher instructional practices. In response to the development of 21st-century knowledge and skills, many educational institutions around the world are looking for teaching approaches that encourage creativity and innovation.

It is focused on teachers' knowledge of language and literacy structures, identifying considerable gaps in their knowledge of spoken and written language structure. Teachers' knowledge levels in her study were insufficient to clearly teach necessary spoken and written language structure to starting readers or struggling older readers. Several studies have since replicated the finding of knowledge gaps in several countries using various methods and studying different areas of language and literacy expertise. (Smith et al., 2022)

Cognitive techniques are essential for helping language learners comprehend and use the target language in a variety of ways. These tactics are used to develop and refine internal mental models, as well as to receive and send communications in the target language. Effective learning requires techniques such as analyzing, reasoning, transferring information, taking notes, and summarizing. This strategy incorporates cognitive processing of the target language and is divided into four major categories: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and structuring input and output.

As humans' nature, they learn language skills through interactions with others, beginning with their native language. Learning extra languages in educational and social situations can broaden perspectives, enhance cross-cultural communication, and provide access to a larger range of opportunities. The acquisition of languages is dynamic and continuous, adjusting as societies change and new kinds of communication, such as digital and online language, develop.

Literature Review

Academic language consists of two aspects: language functions (explaining, justifying, inferring, seeking information, informing) and language features (word, sentence, discourse). Academic language knowledge bridges the gap between English language development and

academic accomplishment for all learners. The educational system has faced challenges due to differences in development between Filipinos and English speakers.

According to Bastida Jr., et al., (2022), language literacy refers to the acquisition and use of a target language in real-world communication. Learning a language helps learners express their emotions, thoughts, and experiences, leading to stronger relationships and harmony with others. Advanced literacy abilities are essential in every area of knowledge. To put it. To be an experienced reader, one must not only recognize and decode words, but also have the capacity to synthesize and analyze information from multiple sources. Poor reading abilities may be linked to early language development and attention.

Takahata (2022) emphasizes the importance of languages in preserving and promoting the Philippines' unique cultural past. However, teachers typically taught the curriculum in English, which made it challenging for students to improve their literacy skills in formal education, especially at the intermediate level Meneses & Dela Cruz, (2023). Numerous studies have addressed the problems that teachers face when teaching. Gelilio and Janer (2021) emphasized teachers' knowledge and skills gaps, particularly in instructional materials and teaching methods.

To assist a young child in developing coping techniques in a new setting, plan, design, and deliver it's critical to monitor students' academic and overall improvement. The educational system has faced challenges due to differences in development between Filipinos and English speakers. Contextualizing language training can be challenging for teachers as well as the leaners, due to limited resources and cultural/literary competence Tica-a & Wangdali, (2023).

There are issues in Educational Research (2020), that technological tools can improve pupils' listening comprehension when prior information is considered. Interactive multimedia tools can significantly improve pupils' listening skills compared to audio-only materials. Including pictures, graphics, text, and interactivity in audio products improves students' listening comprehension.

It is interesting for all students unless they develop sufficient competence in necessary reading skills and background knowledge, feel some connection to the activity, such as a sense of belonging to the community of teachers and classmates, and have some autonomy in relation to the activity in terms of text selection and interpretation. According to Ryan and Deci (2020), "because extrinsically motivated behaviors are not inherently interesting and thus must initially be externally prompted, the primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the behaviors is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society."

The relationship between teacher instructional practices and the techniques they employ to share, coordinate, and collaborate on educational activities is a critical component of the current study. Teacher cooperation refers to the collaborative effort of teachers sharing, coordinating, and collaborating to attain instructional learning objectives (Bellibaş et al., 2021). It has been described

as an important characteristic of teachers who can positively impact both student results and other teachers.

II. Methodology

This chapter explained the methodologies and processes used in the current study, which included the research design, population and locale of the study and location of the study, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and statistical data treatment. The descriptive – correlational research method was used to collect data in order to meet the study’s objectives through open-ended questions. Using the survey form the researcher was able to explore the participants’ perspectives, providing insights into the meaning of quantitative results, or uncovering unexpected patterns and nuances. As a descriptive study, an in-depth evaluation and interpretation of the characteristics of its respondent population, as well as other variables relevant to them was conducted descriptive categories refer to the attributes used to characterize a situation or population using a descriptive method. The descriptive technique was used in this study to provide a complete description of multiple data sets, including: (a) teacher factors based on respondent profiles; and (b) teachers' challenges in bridging language transition gaps among grade 4 learners.

The population of the study included grade 4 teachers from the School Division of Urdaneta City. They are the teachers handling English subject during the S.Y. 2024 – 2025. It comprises of 94 English teachers from the ten (10) clusters of the Schools Division OF Urdaneta City. Hence, a purposive selection and complete enumeration of the respondents was utilized. Purposive sampling is a non – probability sampling techniques where participants are selected based on their specific characteristics or knowledge relevant to the research question

The data gathering procedure the researchers used a self-created questionnaire with two parts. The first part established the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, length of service, and relevant training attended. The second part was a questionnaire checklist on difficulties in bridging language gaps among Grade 4 students in terms of reading (phonics instruction, guided reading, independent reading), writing (e.g., essay, spelling), and listening and speaking, which examined the challenges faced by Grade 4 teachers in bridging language gaps among their students. An additional section specified the types of suggestions or assessments used to monitor literacy growth among fourth-grade students.

In treating the data, the research instrument focused on gathering respondents' profiles and assessing the instructional practices among grade 4 teachers. The study aimed to address specific research questions through a thorough survey questionnaire of the gathered information.

III. Results and Discussion

In order to determine the instructional practices among grade IV teachers in bridging language learning gaps, the results, analysis, and interpretation of data related to the questions posed are presented in this chapter.

The majority of the respondent Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T) are in the 31–40 age bracket (65.8%), indicating they are in their prime productive years, while 34.2% are aged 21–30. A significant number are female (72.3%), which aligns with the trend of female dominance in elementary education. In terms of educational attainment, most GIV-T respondents are highly qualified, with 58.5% holding a Master’s degree and 21.8% possessing units toward a doctoral degree. Only 20.2% have a Bachelor’s degree with some Master's units. This reflects a high academic profile among the respondents.

Regarding teaching experience, 34.0% have served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 8–13 years, 16.0% for 14–19 years, and only a few (6 respondents) are relatively new with one year or less in the service, highlighting that most are seasoned educators. In terms of position, the majority (40.4%) hold the rank of Teacher III, followed by Teacher II (18.1%) and Teacher I (10.6%). Most respondents have also undergone in-service training related to addressing learners' learning gaps (LLG), with 40.4% attending 8–10 relevant trainings, 22.3% attending 5–7, and 37.2% attending 1–4 trainings, suggesting active professional development efforts.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondent-
Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T)
N=94

Profile Variable	Variable Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-30 years old	23	34.2
	31-40 years old	71	65.8
Sex	Male	26	27.7
	Female	68	72.3
Highest Educational Attainment	BS w/ MA units	19	20.2
	MA/MS	55	58.5
	MA/MS w/ EdD units	20	21.3
No. of Years Teaching	1 year & below	6	6.4
	2- 7 years	26	27.7
	8-13 years	32	34.0
	14- 19 years	15	16.0
	20 years or more	15	16.0
Position	Teacher 1	10	10.6
	Teacher 2	17	18.1
	Teacher 3	67	71.3
Relevant In-Service Trainings	1-4 Trainings	35	37.2
	5-7 Trainings	21	22.3
	8-10 Trainings	38	40.4

Summary of Instructional Practices of the Respondent-GIV-T in Bridging the Language Learning Gaps (LLG) in all areas.

The summary of the extent of instructional practices of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the LLG of their pupils. The OWM indicates the overall weighted mean scores in every area of the LLG and the GOWM indicates the general average extent of instructional practices of the respondents.

The grand overall weighted mean (GOWM)=4.56 is equivalent to “A” in descriptive rating and “VEP” in transmuted rating. All the areas of implementation of bridging the LLG which are namely: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, obtained OWM=4.59, OWM=4.57, OWM=4.51, and OWM=4.7, respectively. These OWMs are all equivalent to “VEP” in transmuted rating. This implies that the respondent-GIV-T are doing outstanding work in bridging the language learning gaps (LLG) of their pupils.

Areas of Instructional Practices of Grade IV Teachers in Bridging the Language Gaps in	Total	OWM	DR	TR
Reading	68.808	4.59	A	VE
Writing	68.532	4.57	A	VE
Listening	67.702	4.51	A	VE
Speaking	68.564	4.57	A	VE
GRAND TOTAL	273.606			
Grand Overall Weighted Mean (GOWM)		4.56	A	VE

LEGEND

Literal Rating	WM-Range	Descriptive Rating	Transmuted Rating
A	4.50 – 5.00	Always (A)	Very Extensively Practiced (VEP)
B	3.50 – 4.49	Often (O)	Extensively Practiced (EP)
C	2.50 – 3.49	Sometimes (S)	Moderately Practiced (MP)
D	1.50 – 2.49	Seldom (Sl)	Slightly Practiced (SP)
E	1.00 – 1.49	Never (N)	Least Practiced (LP)

Relationships between the Extent of IP Of the Respondent-GIV-T in Bridging the LLG of their Pupils and the Profile Variables

The table on the next page shows the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the extent of IP of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the LLG of their pupils and the profile variables. The significance of the r- values is compared with the alpha level of significance which is 0.05 to determine whether or not these are significant.

The r- values resulting from the Pearson Coefficient of correlations analysis indicate that these have significance greater than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis, stating “there are no significant relationship between the extent of instructional practices (IP) of

the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the language learning gaps (LLG) of their pupils, and the profile variables” is accepted.

This simply mean that the extent of instructional practices (IP) of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the LLG of their pupils is not associated in any way with the profile variables used in this study.

Correlation Coefficient Results on the Extent of Instructional Practices of GIV-T in Bridging the Language Learning Gaps and the Profile Variables
N=94

Variables	Pearson Coefficient of correlation	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Grand Total
Age	r-value	-.086	-.047	.093	.101	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.412	.653	.375	.332	.851
Gender	r-value	.121	.107	.082	.047	.102
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.246	.305	.434	.650	.329
HEA	r-value	-.025	-.049	.126	.019	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.814	.636	.225	.853	.840
Years Teaching	r-value	.101	.048	.100	.035	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.334	.645	.337	.738	.438
Position	r-value	-.040	-.042	.041	-.040	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.699	.690	.696	.700	.823
Relevant In-Service Trainings	r-value	-.040	-.066	.021	-.102	-.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.704	.530	.839	.327	.605

Mean Differences of the Extent of Instructional Practices (IP) of the GIV-T in Bridging the LLG across the Variable, Highest Educational Attainment.

The ANOVA results on the mean differences of the extents of instructional practices (IP) of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the language learning gaps (LLG), when grouped according to the variable categories of “highest educational attainment.”

The analysis revealed that the F-values for the extent of instructional practices (IP) in bridging the learning gaps (LLG) in reading, writing, listening, and speaking showed no significant differences across the variable "highest educational attainment," as all significance levels were above the 0.05 threshold. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that the extent of IP among respondent Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T) is consistent regardless of their educational attainment. Whether the teachers hold a Master’s degree or a Bachelor’s degree with additional units, their instructional practices in addressing LLG are generally similar.

Mean Differences of the Extent of Instructional Practices (IP) of the GIV-T in Bridging the LLG across the Variable, Years in Teaching

The ANOVA results on the mean differences of the extents of instructional practices (IP) of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the then language learning gaps (LLG), when grouped according to the variable categories of “years in teaching.”

The findings show that the F-values for the extent of instructional practices (IP) in addressing learning gaps (LLG) across reading, writing, listening, and speaking yielded significance levels above the 0.05 threshold when grouped by "years in teaching." Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant differences in IP based on teaching experience. This suggests that the respondent Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T), most of whom are experienced educators, employ similar instructional practices in bridging LLG, regardless of how long they have been teaching. This uniformity is likely influenced by consistent grade level assignments across school years in many elementary schools.

Mean Differences of the Extent of Instructional Practices (IP) of the GIV-T in Bridging the LLG across the Variable, Position

The ANOVA results on the mean differences of the extents of instructional practices (IP) of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the then language learning gaps (LLG), when grouped according to the variable categories of “position.”

The results indicate that the F-values for the extent of instructional practices (IP) in bridging learning gaps (LLG) across reading, writing, listening, and speaking showed significance levels above the 0.05 threshold when analyzed by the variable “position.” Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, confirming that there are no significant differences in IP among respondent Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T) based on their position. This suggests that whether a teacher holds the rank of Teacher I, II, or III, their instructional practices in addressing LLG are generally similar. It is also worth noting that the majority of the respondents are Teacher III, reflecting a high level of experience and competence across the group.

Mean Differences of the Extent of Instructional Practices (IP) of the GIV-T in Bridging the LLG across the Variable, Relevant In-Service Trainings

The ANOVA results on the mean differences of the extents of instructional practices (IP) of the respondent-GIV-T in bridging the then language learning gaps (LLG), when grouped according to the variable categories of “relevant in-service trainings.”

The analysis reveals that the F-values for the extent of instructional practices (IP) in bridging learning gaps (LLG) across reading, writing, listening, and speaking have significance levels above the 0.05 threshold when grouped by the variable “relevant in-service trainings.” As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant differences in IP among respondent

Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T) based on the number of relevant trainings attended. This suggests that all respondents, regardless of how many in-service trainings they have completed, apply similar instructional practices in addressing LLG. Notably, all GIV-T respondents have attended in-service trainings related to IP, reflecting a shared foundation of professional development in this area.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the respondent Grade IV Teachers (GIV-T) represent a highly competent and professionally mature group. They are in their prime working years, hold the position of Teacher III, and possess strong academic backgrounds, with most having attained a master's degree. In addition, they have substantial teaching experience and have participated in multiple relevant in-service trainings focused on instructional practices (IP). These characteristics reflect a high level of preparedness and commitment among the teachers to effectively address the learning needs of their pupils, particularly in bridging learning gaps (LLG) in core literacy areas such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the extent of instructional practices employed by the respondent-GIV-T in bridging LLG does not significantly vary when grouped according to profile variables such as highest educational attainment, years of teaching, position, and relevant in-service trainings. This suggests a consistent application of instructional strategies across different teacher profiles. The results imply that regardless of their individual backgrounds or levels of experience and training, these teachers implement similar methods in addressing the learning needs of their students. Therefore, the extent of their instructional practices appears to be independent of the demographic or professional profile variables examined, indicating a standardized or widely accepted approach to teaching practices within this education.

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