Research Article

Contextualized Strategies of Elementary School Teachers in Teaching IP Learners

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Abstract: Contextualized teaching strategies are instructional approaches that relate learning to a specific environment, scenario, or application area to target relevant skills and aid students' learning. This study explored the various contextualized teaching strategies employed by elementary school teachers in their instruction of Indigenous People (IP) learners. This descriptive-qualitative research employed in-depth interviews to gather data and analyzed using thematic analysis. Two significant themes emerged, namely the integration of local materials and the Glocal Approach. Likewise, the integration of local materials includes reading materials, modules, and contextualized storybooks, while the glocal approach includes the use of springboard, differentiated instruction, one-on-one sessions, and equity pedagogy. Providing IP learners with strategic contexts improves their learning process by inspiring interest, curiosity, motivation, and engagement with knowledge.

Keywords: contextualized strategies, elementary school teachers, indigenous people learners

1. Introduction

Quality education for indigenous people entails that it is founded on our distinct culture, understanding, languages, and learning-teaching traditions (Thaman, 2013). Most modern societies are interested in including everyone in the development and progress of their nations; it is no different from the Philippines (Wa-Mbaleka, 2013). The neocolonial foundation of the Philippine educational system creates inequality among particular cultural minorities who are able to attend school (Thaman, 2013). One of the minorities who are vulnerable to this is the Indigenous People, which need to adapt to and survive in the public education system (Rogayan Jr., 2019). Indigenous Peoples are different social and cultural communities that have ancestral links to the land and assets on which they live, occupy, or have been displaced (The Work Bank, 2023). When appropriately "recognized" and given favorable privileges through holistic education, they may be beneficial to society towards national progress (Eduardo & Gabriel, 2021).

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) was enacted in 1997 to preserve indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral territory, sovereignty, history, and social justice. The IP communities' desire educational opportunities that react to local surroundings, respect their identities, and promote the value of their traditional knowledge, skills, and other components of cultural heritage (Education Department, 2011b). Without teachers' acknowledgment on how students live and learn in the context of their cultural differences, the educational system will be meaningless. It's the teacher's responsibility to do all in their capabilities to assist students to connect their learnings to life and to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge (Paz, 2021). Assessing a teacher's point of view will highlight students' difficulties and academic goals in continuing education through diversity and inclusivity, as well as measure the efficacy of teaching approaches and techniques. The DepEd Order No. 22 Series of 2016 was adopted as a guideline for the allocation and use of Indigenous People Education (IPEd) and their right to basic education contextually sensitive to recognize their culture and promote

their indigenous knowledge, abilities, and cultural identity (Valenzuela et al., 2022). Ultimately, teachers must recognize the diversity and complexity of IP learners in order to provide the best quality of education.

This study explores the teacher's strategies, focusing on the context of IP learners' culture and surroundings, as well as the resources they give to IP learners. In this context, Franz Boas' theory (1887), also known as Cultural Relativism, allows a teacher to recognize and transmit universal concepts to learners from diverse cultures. Understanding people's perspectives, knowledge, and actions in connection to their cultural setting is so essential (Cole, 2019). The implications of the Culturally Relevant Education research indicate that teachers from any ethnocultural background may be effective with IP learners when they possess the knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, abilities, and behaviors to fulfill students' needs (Milner IV, 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the numerous contextualized teaching strategies used by elementary school teachers in teaching IP learners.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

This study employed a qualitative research design. It was anchored on Constructivist Epistemology, a theory of how people learn or create meaning, and explains the nature of knowledge and the learning process (Ültanır, 2012). A theoretical viewpoint is a set of beliefs about reality that influence inquiries and developed responses (Crossman, 2020). Likewise, this design was utilized which focuses on details of what, where, when, and why of an event or experience. It sought to understand the human experience through life story interviews, oral histories, or other methods of human experience narrative (Ford, 2020). The study adapted Franz Boas' (1887) theory of Cultural Relativism, which allowed teachers to perceive and impart universal concepts to students from other cultures. It is critical to comprehend teachers' viewpoints, knowledge, and behaviors in relation to their cultural setting (Cole, 2019). In this sense, this design may be viewed as a lens through which we can look at the many contextualized strategies used by Elementary Teachers in teaching IP learners.

2.2. Informants

The informants of this study were six (6) elementary teachers who teach Indigeous People (IP) learners in the first District of Iloilo. Specifically, these informants teach a variety of subjects, including English, Science, Filipino, Math, AralingPanlipunan, and Mother Tongue-Based Education (MTBE). To find teacher informants who met the predetermined criteria, this study employed purposeful sampling, referred to as subjective or judgmental sampling, is a set of sampling processes that utilize the researcher's discretion in determining the units to be investigated (Sharma, 2017; Pedroso, 2021). Furthermore, the informants were chosen based on the following inclusion criteria: (a) elementary school teacher who teaches IP learners, particularly in Tigbauan Central Elementary School in the Municipality of Tigbauan, Iloilo, and (b) has at least a year of teaching experience with IP learners. In labeling the informants' responses per topic, pseudonyms were used to maintain their identities. Table 1 shows the profile of informants.

Table 1. Profile of the informants

Name	Age	Subject taught	Highest Educational Attainment	No. of years in teaching IP learners
Racqui	49	English	BEED w/ MA units	2
Kris	40	Filipino	Master's Degree	1
Chy	51	Math	BEED w/ MA units	1
Lyn	55	Science	BEED w/ MA units	2
Ara	42	AralingPanipunan	Bachelor's Degree	1
Jho	43	Mother Tongue-Based	BEED w/ MA units	2

2.3. Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made interview guide duly- validated by experts in qualitative research was employed (McLeod, 2023) to conduct an in-depth interview. The

interview huide is divided into two (2) parts. Part I includes demographics that allow researchers to better understand particular backgrounds or details about the informants. Part II consisted a major question meant to obtain information regarding the various contextualized strategies utilized and implemented by the informants in teaching IP learners. To get the necessary information, the researchers asked a follow-up question to better grasp and comprehend what the informants genuinely intended.

2.4. Data collection

The researchers first requested permission by sending a letter to the College Dean outlining their study. Then, letters were sent to the school principal and the coordinator IPEd requesting permission to conduct a study at the institution where the informants teach. Following approval from the authorities, the researchers approached the informants to ask for their consent to participate in the study and to confirm that the researchers were permitted to use their data. They were also provided with a data privacy letter that was signed by the researchers to ensure confidentiality to make sure that informants were aware of the nature of the study. In conducting the study, an in depth interview was utilized with the use of meticulous note-taking, audio recording, and soft wares like Microsoft Word & Excel to track the variations of responses.

2.5. Data analysis

This study used thematic analysis by Clarke and Braun (2012) to analyze data where the researcher's personal experience is essential for making meaning and understanding qualitative data patterns. This approach could help researchers find commonalities in the manner that a subject is discussed or written about and interpret them. Additionally, it would add precision and complexity and strengthen the overall meaning of the research (Alhojailan, 2012).

3. Results

Contextualized strategies are educational processes that connect to learning in a given environment, circumstance, or application area to target relevant, meaningful, and beneficial capabilities for all learners and assist them in deepening their comprehension of the subject matter(Amos, Folasayo & Oluwatoyin, 2015; Abad 2020).There were two themes that were identified as relating to the contextualized strategies of elementary teachers in teaching IP learners, namely integration of local materials and Glocal Approach.

3.1. Integration of Local Materials

This contextualized strategy exhibits the integration of local cultural material in teaching material developed for IP learners. This is divided into three sub-themes namely Reading materials, Modules, and Contextualized Storybooks:

• **Reading Materials:** Proficiency in reading is crucial for an IP learner the same goes for the other learners' academic performance since it enables them to access the full range of the curriculum and enhances their language and communication abilities.
Under this sub-theme lies a sub-category namely Reading Cut-outs.
*Reading Cut-outs:*Reading materials are cut and pasted into the learner's notebook as an actual activity and a homework assignment.

Ara: *"gapadala man ko saila sang reading notes, mga simple lang bala."*

Ara: *"tapos may mga notebooks sandakaday a ngaginapatapikanko kangmga readings."*

• **Modules:** A printed teaching resource teacher's use when a child's learning falls behind schedule due to circumstances such as recurrent absences because they need money to survive daily. Under this sub-theme lies the one sub-category namely Annotated PDF's.
*Annotated PDFs:*Giving them specific coursework ensures that they have   the opportunity to continue their education despite the difficulties they are   facing. This useful technology gradually remediates so that IP learners   grasp the lesson at home while the teacher monitors their progress at school.

Chy: *"Yung mga absences niyapinahabol ko through modules."*

Lyn: *"Amo ray a eh taw-anlng tana siguro remediations gd man kung may mga modules gina send mn namon kay ga dura tana or ga absent."*

• **Contextualized Storybooks:** Students are provided with a critical chance to connect what they are learning to their personal experiences and the actual world, and to internalize it

in line with their current beliefs and ideas. It is essential to establish a learning environment where students may build their own intellectual grasp for the course material (Pinoliad, 2021). Under this sub-theme lies the sub-categories namely indigenized and manipulative.

Indigenized: This refers to the process of enhancing education by incorporating valuable indigenous knowledge, culture, beliefs, and traditions into course curricula, student services, and administration, among other things (Johnson & Segura, 2022).

Kris: *"May story akonga ga portray man sa source of living man nanda then para nga at least ang mga classmates nanda ma inchindihannanda ang sitwasyon."*

Manipulative: In education, manipulatives are tactile and visual aids used to help students understand a topic, which is a form of constructivism due to active learning (McCarthy, 2022).

O Ara: *"Ginagamitnakonmakaisaambisa story ang bataambi IP tana, na include namon ka ja for example,"maybata ka ja ngalanyasiamoni, bata ka ja ka ati."*

3.2. Glocal Approach

This contextualized strategy focuses on blending and connecting local and global contexts when teaching and learning concepts that apply across different scale levels. This is divided into four sub-themes which are (1) Use of Springboard (2) Differentiated Instruction (3) One-on-one session (4) Equity Pedagogy:

- **Use of Springboard:** This provides standards-aligned lessons and assessments, as well as student-centered instruction, classroom-tested tools, and lessons and assessments. Under this sub-theme lies the sub-categories namely (1) Amalgamation, and (2) Meaning-Based.

Amalgamation: This refers to merging instruction and IP learners' relatable contexts during class.

Kris: *"For example, ang springboard ko, sometimes ang springboard ko is about man sa mga Ati."*

Meaning-Based: This ensures that adequate instructional time is devoted to teaching children how to read, think, write, and speak in all subject areas.

Kris: *"Pero sometimes may mga springboard kami nga stories or mga situations ngagina expose ang anda classmates saila culture para at least aware ang ilang mga classmates."*

- **Differentiated Instruction:** Teachers modify their instruction and syllabus to ensure that all learners learn as much as possible. It's also a framework that teachers can use to implement a variety of strategies, many of which are evidence-based (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Under this sub -theme lies the sub-category namely (1) Scaffolding.

Scaffolding: It is a process in which teachers provide specific help to learners while they learn and develop a new concept or ability. A teacher may convey new information or demonstrate how to address a problem using instructional scaffolding techniques (GCU, 2022).

Racqui: *"Sa pagtao sang exam, iba man ang exam sang mgabatanga below, below average, kag above average kay intelligence na ang (ano)."*

Racqui: *"Sa mga below, iba man ang strategies ngaginagamitnatonsaanda para maka check man kagmakamaansanda."*

- **One-on-one session:** This teaching technique is the most effective way to provide a student with a hands-on learning experience. They get the teacher's complete attention, and teaching is personalized. The instruction is totally personalized for each student and learner-centered, allowing them to use their knowledge to enhance the learning objectives. Under this sub- theme lies the sub-category (1) Traditional Mentoring.

Traditional Mentoring: This describes an individual learning from and engaging with a teacher; with education adapted to the student's own specific pace and learning needs. This is in contrast to a traditional classroom environment or a one-to-many experience with a single teacher instructing a big group of students (Ryan, 2022).

Ara: *"Gina taw-an ko sila time ngamagbuhi, ga one-on-one gid ako mag pabasaginaamat-amat ko man kag ja tulad."*

Ara: *"Pay mas nami kung ga reading ang batagina individual gid tana mong."*

- **Equity Pedagogy:** It's an approach to education in which teachers develop teaching strategies and cultivate classroom environments that better support all students, especially those who have been disadvantaged in school and outside society (Banks & Banks, 1995).

Under this sub-theme lies the sub-categories namely (1) Specificity, (2) Work-Integrated Learning, and (3) Empowering School Culture and Social Structure.

*Specificity:*Establishing one goal to every learner regarding its ethnicity, social affiliations, status and background. Teachers prefer curriculum objectives that are expressed in equitably general terms because they give the teacher a great deal of freedom in choosing the types of learning activities to use, the learning objectives to pursue during these activities, the assessment tasks to use at the end of the activity, and the level of student performance that defines a "successful" classroom learning activity (Church, 2010).

Kris: *"So ang number 1 nga strategy is gina adopt ko saila culture."*

Ara: *"So, kung ano man nga strategy ngaginagamit ko saakonestudyante, amo ma ran saanda."*

Work -Integrated Learning: It's a well-theorized pedagogical practice that facilitates students' learning through connecting or integrating experiences across academic and workplace contexts (Billett, 2009).

Chy: *"I've also integrated some of the lessons related to the IPs, I set an example to the children."*

Lyn: *"In terms of the needs of individuals? wara kami it mga special exams para kana."*

Empowering School Culture and Social Structure: When the school's culture and organization are modified in ways that allow learners from different racial, ethnic, and gender groupings to feel equality and equal standing (Banks, 1995).

Lyn: *"nag start tana as a regular class, kung ano strategy ang nagamitnamonsa regular class, amo mn lng gid ra."*

Jho: *"Ang strategies same man samgakabataanngaindi IP kay ano man ang kinalainniladiba? Ang ila color [ma lang]."*

Ara: *"Way ko ma siya gina pain kay as one mandyapon ang paglantaw".*

4. Discussion

Contextualized strategies are educational processes that connect to learning in a given environment, circumstance, or application area to target relevant, meaningful, and beneficial capabilities for all learners (Abad, 2020). Two significant themes were identified as relating to the contextualized strategies of elementary teachers in teaching IP learners, namely integration of local materials and Glocal Approach. A study by Perin (2011) discovered that by adopting an actual-life scenario, contextualized instructions can improve low-skilled students' academic achievement and long-term college advancement.

This study revealed that Reading materials enables students to access the full range of the curriculum and enhance their language and communication abilities. In making use of reading materials, reading cut-outs are utilized which are cut and pasted into the learner's notebook as an activity and homework assignment. The study by Estuarso et al., (2016) claims that 61% of students believed that reading books about their local culture was necessary as learning source materials. Moreover, Wulandari et al., (2018) also suggests that the use of local cultural reading materials in teaching is beneficial; however, it is difficult due to limited availability. Utilization of modules were given to the IP learners as an ordered collection of topic-relevant information meant to teach a subject or skill. Nambiar et al. (2020) and Betlen (2021) both found that the modular teaching approach was superior to the traditional teaching method in their study of the effective learning strategy for secondary school pupils. They feature annotated PDFs, allowing instructors and students to access the content, print it off, or produce it for use at home. This strategy can assist students in improving their learning capacity and making it simpler for them to read self-study materials. However, Nambiar et al. (2020) argues that non-native instructors in the state were concerned about not knowing enough about the local culture to manage many themes in class. To avoid appearing incompetent, they decided not to teach these things.

Following are contextualized storybooks enables students to connect learning to their personal experiences and the world. It allows them to understand in accordance with their values and ideals. Similarly, it improved students' motivation to learn and read (Villacorte, 2022). In contrast, Adichie (2009) argued that telling a single story about a group of individuals dehumanizes them and makes it harder to see equal humanity in all of the characters. To amplify, embracing diversity and tolerating cultural differences are important, but they cannot help students achieve knowledge, empathy, and cultural responsiveness (Ferris, 2020).

Correspondingly, manipulatives are visual aids used to help students understand a topic, while indigenous is the process of infusing indigenous knowledge, culture, beliefs, and traditions into education. Hence, these contextualized storybooks were used to communicate indigenous information, such as the introducing the IP's culture and   the way of life.

Moreover, our study found out that the Use of Springboard provides standards aligned lessons and assessments, as well as student-centered instruction, classroom-tested tools, and lessons and assessments. Amalgamation and Meaning-Based are the sub categories that fall under this sub-theme. While Meaning-Based assures that sufficient instructional time is allocated to teaching students how to read, think, write, and speak in all subject areas, amalgamation refers to the merging of instruction with IP learners' related settings during class. In a study conducted by Roehr (2012), it was found out that the majority of the learners who adopted the springboard instructions expressed satisfaction with their academic proficiency, indicating a positive attitude towards learning.

It's also noteworthy that teachers used Differentiated Instructions to implement variety of strategies towards both IP learners. On the basis of a study by West (2013), differentiated instruction is a culturally responsive strategy that recognizes that learners may succeed in the classroom when their culture, language, background, and experiences are respected and used to support their learning and growth. Meanwhile, she also found that Indigenous learners are substantially over represented in special education due to poverty and systemic prejudice. To address this issue, scaffolding is being utilized wherein teachers provide specific help to learners while they learn and develop a new concept or ability.

Our study found out that one-on-one sessions are an effective way to provide an IP learner with a hands-on learning experience. Wisniewska (2019) asserts that one-on-one sessions allow teachers to get to know their students and develop lessons tailored to their needs and preferences. However, Meldrum and Clandfield (2016) argued that one-on-one sessions may not be enough time for solo study and learners may not experience the same sink in time as if they were around other people. Traditional Mentoring was implemented to contrast traditional classroom environment or a one-to-many experience with a single teacher instructing a big group of students.

Moreover, our study found out that teachers imply Equity Pedagogy as an approach to education in which teachers develop teaching strategies and cultivate classroom environments that better support all students, especially those who have been disadvantaged. A study conducted by Qualla (2022) asserts that representation counts and has an impact on learners' feelings of belonging in academic subjects, divisions, and programs by implementing inclusive pedagogical techniques in the classroom and highlighting the views of everyone regardless of its ethnicity and status quo. Work-Integrated learning is utilized in facilitating learners' learning through connecting or integrating experiences across academic and workplace contexts. The school's culture and organization are modified to allow learners from different racial, ethnic, and gender groupings to feel equality and equal standing. Exploring the contextualized strategies employed by elementary school teachers reveals that the teaching approaches they used are relevant to all learners, regardless of their cultural origins. They have devised methods to support every child's learning process, but in a way that is equitable and tailored to the needs of each learner.

This study has several limitations that should be addressed in future studies. Firstly, only six informants were qualified to the inclusion criteria being set by the researchers. Secondly, this study only focuses on elementary school teachers who utilize contextualized strategies in teaching IP learners. Thirdly, our findings are generated within a general context on contextualized strategies of elementary teachers in teaching IP learners. Fourthly, our study used self-report questionnaires and may be subject to self-report bias. Despite these limitations, this research generated additional information on the contextualized strategies of elementary teachers in teaching IP learners.

5. Conclusions

Teaching Indigenous Peoples requires a thoughtful, culturally sensitive approach that recognizes and respects their unique histories, languages, cultures, and worldviews. Contextualized teaching strategies are essential for creating a warm and productive learning environment. Indigenous communities are distinct, and teaching strategies should be tailored to the students' specific cultural contexts and needs. Building relationships and trust with students

and their communities is essential for successful Indigenous teaching and learning experiences.

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