

Unpacking Complexity in Teaching Grade Five: Chronicles of Teachers

JOBARIA A. DEGARA

Teacher II

jobaria.degara@deped.gov.ph

Abstract — The study aimed to explore the complexity of teaching Grade Five, highlighting the increased demands on teachers to deliver rigorous academic instruction while supporting students' social and emotional needs. Using a phenomenological research design, the experiences and coping mechanisms of eight Grade Five teachers from Cluster 12, Division of Davao City, were examined through in-depth interviews. Participants were selected based on having at least five years of service, being current Grade Five teachers, and having experience in unpacking the complexity of teaching.

To cope with these challenges, teachers employed various strategies: collaborating with colleagues, seeking professional development, utilizing technology, and prioritizing self-care. These coping mechanisms helped them manage the complexities of teaching and support their students more effectively.

With these different interventions, key findings revealed that teachers felt overwhelmed by complex material and struggled to find effective teaching strategies. They needed to differentiate instruction for diverse learners and recognized the benefits of effective unpacking strategies.

Keywords — *Unpacking complexity, Grade five teachers, in-depth interviews*

I. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of early education, and the pivotal role that grade five teachers play in students' academic and social development. As such, the demands on grade five teachers have increased, as they are tasked with not only delivering rigorous academic instruction but also supporting students' social and emotional needs.

Teaching grade five can be a complex and challenging endeavor, requiring teachers to navigate a wide range of academic, social, and emotional factors that impact student learning and development (Graziano, Reavis, & Keane, 2019). To fully understand the complexities of teaching grade five, it is important to explore the experiences of teachers who work in this critical stage of education.

In the Philippines, teachers unpack the complexity of teaching grade five by adopting a holistic approach that considers the academic, social, and emotional needs of their students. They use various teaching strategies and techniques to cater to the diverse learning styles and abilities of their students. One approach is to use active learning strategies that promote student participation, engagement, and collaboration. Teachers use group work, peer teaching, and project-

based learning to encourage students to take an active role in their learning process (DepEd, 2017). They also use technology-based resources such as educational apps, videos, and online learning platforms to supplement traditional instructional materials and enhance student engagement (Aglipay et al., 2021).

Moreover, teachers in the Philippines prioritize the development of social and emotional skills and competencies, such as empathy, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making (DepEd, 2019). They use techniques such as storytelling, role-playing, and value clarification exercises to foster the development of these skills among their students.

In the local scenario particularly in the schools of Cluster 12, Davao City, Grade five teachers encountered a variety of experiences in navigating complexities in teaching. Some experiences are positive while others are negatively affecting the teaching profession. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized and collected the experiences of grade five teachers as they navigate the complexities in teaching. With this, the researcher, a teacher at the Grade Five level in Pablo M. Piatos Sr. Integrated School, would like to undertake a study to investigate the experiences of Grade Five teachers as they navigate the complexities of teaching this grade.

The participants of this study were Eight (8) grade five teachers from Cluster 12, Division of Davao City. They were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; (2) grade five teachers; and (3) experience in unpacking complexity of teaching.

The invitation to the participants ensured that their participation in the research was completely voluntary in nature, and is based on the understanding of adequate information. They were given an informed consent form before scheduling the interviews and participating in the phenomenological research process. Each participant was required to provide a signed personal acknowledgement, consent, and an indication of a willingness-to-participate-in-the-study release.

Unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five is an important topic of study as it involves breaking down complex concepts into simpler parts that are understandable for students in this age group. This is a crucial aspect of effective teaching as it can help students to better grasp difficult concepts and achieve academic success. However, this process can be challenging, as it requires teachers to have a deep understanding of the subject matter, as well as effective teaching strategies that engage students and promote learning.

Several studies have explored the concept of unpacking the complexity in teaching grade five. For example, a study by Wilson and Mitchell (2019) examined the use of graphic organizers as a tool for unpacking complex concepts in social studies for fifth-grade students. The study found that graphic organizers were effective in helping students to break down complex ideas into simpler parts, and that this approach led to greater understanding and engagement among students.

Similarly, a study by Kim and Kim (2017) explored the use of storytelling as a tool for unpacking the complexity of math concepts for fifth-grade students. The study found that

storytelling was an effective way to help students understand abstract concepts and that it promoted greater engagement and participation in the classroom.

Feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the material. Teachers may feel overwhelmed when faced with complex concepts that are difficult to understand or explain to students (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016). This can lead to frustration and a sense of inadequacy in their ability to effectively teach the material. To overcome this challenge, teachers may need to engage in ongoing professional development and seek out resources to help them better understand the material.

Research has shown that feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the material is a common experience for teachers. In a study by King and Newmann (2001), teachers reported that they felt overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information they needed to cover and the pace at which they were expected to deliver it. This can lead to feelings of stress and burnout, which in turn can impact the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Teachers who feel overwhelmed by the complexity of grade five material may need to develop new strategies for managing their workload, such as prioritizing key concepts and breaking down the material into smaller, more manageable chunks.

To effectively unpack the complexity of teaching grade five, teachers may need to collaborate with their colleagues and administrators to identify best practices and develop effective teaching strategies. Professional development programs can also be a valuable resource for teachers looking to improve their skills and learn new teaching techniques. For example, a study by Vail and Rice (2015) found that teachers who participated in professional development programs focused on teaching methods and classroom management were better able to manage their workload and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all their students. By seeking support and continuously improving their teaching skills, teachers can effectively unpack the complexity of grade five material and help their students achieve positive learning outcomes.

Unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five can be a challenging task for teachers, who may struggle to find effective teaching strategies to engage their students and facilitate learning. Teachers may find that the traditional teaching methods they have used in the past are not as effective with grade five students, who have unique learning needs and styles. As a result, teachers may feel overwhelmed and uncertain about how to approach teaching complex material.

Research has shown that teachers may experience significant challenges in finding effective teaching strategies for grade five students. In a study by Brown and Knowles (2007), teachers reported that they struggled to find ways to effectively engage their students and help them understand complex material. This can lead to feelings of frustration and burnout, and can negatively impact the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Teachers may need to explore new teaching methods and techniques, such as interactive learning activities, collaborative learning, and differentiated instruction, to effectively unpack the complexity of grade five material.

To overcome these challenges, teachers may need to seek support from colleagues and administrators, attend professional development programs, and engage in ongoing self-reflection to continually improve their teaching skills. Collaboration with colleagues can help teachers identify effective teaching strategies and learn from each other's experiences. Professional development programs can provide teachers with new teaching techniques and strategies, as well as opportunities to network with other educators. By engaging in ongoing self-reflection, teachers can assess their teaching methods and make adjustments as needed to better meet the needs of their grade five students. With support, resources, and ongoing self-reflection, teachers can effectively unpack the complexity of grade five material and help their students achieve positive learning outcomes.

Teachers may experience the benefits of effective unpacking strategies when students demonstrate a deeper understanding of complex concepts (Hall, Meyer, & Rose, 2012). This can be a rewarding experience for teachers, as they see their students engage with and succeed in challenging material. By using effective teaching strategies that unpack the complexity of the material, teachers can help their students achieve academic success and develop a love of learning.

Furthermore, effective unpacking strategies can also lead to benefits for teachers, such as increased confidence in their teaching abilities and greater job satisfaction. By using effective unpacking strategies, teachers can more easily facilitate student learning, and may find that they have more success in helping their students to achieve positive learning outcomes. This can lead to greater job satisfaction, and may encourage teachers to continue to seek out new and innovative teaching strategies to further improve their teaching practice.

Teaching grade five can be a complex and challenging task, requiring teachers to have a deep understanding of subject matter, pedagogy, and the diverse needs of their students. In the process of unpacking this complexity, teachers gain valuable insights that can inform their practice and contribute to their professional development. This thesis explores the insights gained by teachers in unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five, and how these insights can be applied to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Research has shown that teachers' insights can have a significant impact on their practice and student learning. For example, a study by Hattie and Timperley (2007) found that teachers who engage in reflective practice and seek feedback from students and colleagues are more likely to improve their teaching and student outcomes. Similarly, a study by Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, and Russell (2004) found that teachers who engage in critical reflection on their practice are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of their subject matter and pedagogy, leading to improved teaching and student learning outcomes. By examining the insights gained by teachers in unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five, this thesis aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on effective teaching and professional development.

This study is anchored on Cognitive Load Theory, proposed by John Sweller in 1988. Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the limited capacity of learners' working memory and how it affects their ability to process information. CLT suggests that the instructional design should take into account the cognitive load imposed on the learner and try to minimize extraneous cognitive load while maximizing germane cognitive load. The goal is to ensure that learners are able to process and retain new information effectively. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CLT in improving learning outcomes (Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2011).

One of the key principles of CLT is the importance of reducing extraneous cognitive load, which refers to the cognitive load imposed by irrelevant or unnecessary elements in the learning environment. This can include extraneous information, confusing graphics, or complex instructions. By reducing extraneous cognitive load, learners are able to focus their attention on the essential information and better process it (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006).

Another important concept in CLT is the idea of schema acquisition, which refers to the process by which learners create mental frameworks or structures to organize new information. CLT suggests that instructional design should help learners develop effective schemas to facilitate learning and retention. For example, presenting information in a meaningful and organized way can help learners create schemas that allow them to better understand and remember new information (van Merriënboer & Sweller, 2005).

Second theory used in this study is Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977. Social learning theory by Bandura (1977) posits that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of behavior exhibited by others in their social environment.

This theory suggests that people learn not only from their own experiences but also from the experiences of others, which can influence their behavior and decision-making processes. Bandura believed that individuals can acquire new behaviors and skills by observing others, and these behaviors can be reinforced through positive feedback or punishment. Thus, in the context of teaching, this theory implies that teachers can model behaviors and skills for their students, which can be imitated and reinforced to enhance learning.

Moreover, social learning theory also emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular task or situation. Bandura argued that self-efficacy is a crucial factor in motivation and learning, as individuals who believe they can succeed are more likely to engage in challenging tasks and persist in the face of difficulties. This theory highlights the role of teachers in fostering self-efficacy in their students by providing opportunities for success and providing feedback that reinforces students' belief in their abilities.

The third theory is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1980. This theory posits that individuals are motivated by three basic psychological needs:

autonomy, competence, and relatedness. SDT can be applied to the experiences of kindergarten teachers in navigating complexities in teaching by examining how their sense of autonomy, competence, and connection with others influences their engagement, satisfaction, and well-being in the teaching profession.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theoretical framework developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan that posits that individuals have an innate psychological need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and that meeting these needs is essential for optimal human functioning and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to SDT, individuals are more likely to be motivated and engaged when they feel a sense of choice and control over their actions, when they feel competent in their abilities, and when they feel connected to others.

SDT has been applied to various fields, including education, to understand how individuals can be motivated and engaged in their learning. In the context of education, SDT has been used to understand how teachers can support students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs in order to foster intrinsic motivation and enhance learning outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

II. Methodology

This study used a phenomenological research design within a qualitative approach, as defined by Creswell (2012), to explore the common lived experiences of a specific group. Eighth Grade Five teachers from Cluster 12, Division of Davao City, who had firsthand knowledge of the teaching complexities, were interviewed. Additional data were gathered from documents, observations, and art. The data were thoroughly analyzed for phrases and themes, which were then grouped into clusters of meanings. This process enabled the researcher to construct a universal understanding of the phenomenon and gain deeper insights.

The researcher aimed to understand the deeper meaning of Grade Five teachers' experiences in unpacking the complexity of teaching, which justified the use of qualitative research. According to Kalof and Dietz (2008), as cited by Gerodias (2013), qualitative research helps uncover the meanings and motivations behind cultural symbols and personal experiences. By using phenomenology, the study sought to reveal the themes, symbols, and meanings of these experiences, aligning with David's (2005) approach. Phenomenological research operates on two premises: experience is a rich source of knowledge, and it shapes behavior (Becker, 1992, as cited in Morrissey & Higgs, 2006).

According to Corbetta (2003), the phenomenological research design was a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide in-depth methods that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects' perspective. Creswell, (2012) also claimed that interviews were primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audio tapes were

utilized to allow more consistent transcription. Interviews are also useful to follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires, such as to further investigate their responses.

The researcher collected data, typically via long interviews, from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation that extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The researcher incorporated his or her personal meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written such that readers understand better the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience

Since the focus of this study is to explore and assess the grade five teachers' experiences, coping mechanisms and insights gained in unpacking the complexity of teaching, the researcher intends to employ the phenomenology type of qualitative method research.

The participants disclosed their experiences in unpacking the complexity of teaching. The grade five teacher's mechanism for unpacking complexity of teaching was also discussed. A study by Vail and Rice (2015) found that teachers who participated in professional development programs focused on teaching methods and classroom management were better able to manage their workload and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all their students. By seeking support and continuously improving their teaching skills, teachers can effectively unpack the complexity of grade five material and help their students achieve positive learning outcomes. Some of the participants stated that:

As a grade five teacher, I often find myself feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the material. Balancing the diverse learning needs of my students while covering the curriculum can be challenging. (P3)

The complexity of grade five material can be daunting, leaving me feeling overwhelmed at times. To overcome this, I focus on breaking down the content into manageable chunks and incorporating interactive activities to engage my students. (P4)

Teaching grade five students comes with its complexities, and I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the depth and breadth of the material. However, I remind myself that it's essential to maintain a growth mindset and seek continuous learning. (P5)

The complexity of grade five curriculum can be overwhelming, but I see it as an opportunity to enhance my teaching skills. Seeking support from colleagues and engaging in reflective practices help me navigate through the intricacies of teaching and uncover the best strategies for my classroom. (P6)

Teachers may also need to seek support from colleagues and administrators, attend professional development programs, and engage in ongoing self-reflection to continually improve their teaching skills. By engaging in ongoing self-reflection, teachers can assess their teaching methods and make adjustments as needed to better meet the needs of their grade five students. With support, resources, and ongoing self-reflection, teachers can effectively unpack the complexity of grade five material and help their students achieve positive learning outcomes. Here are some of the statements of the participants of this study:

Uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five material can be daunting, and I often find myself searching for effective strategies. Flexibility is key as I experiment with various approaches, assessing what works best for my students' learning styles.(P1)

I sometimes struggle to find effective teaching strategies to uncover the complexities of the material. It's challenging to balance differentiation, classroom management, and engaging activities while ensuring that all students grasp the concepts. (P2)

Teaching grade five brings its unique set of complexities, and at times, I struggle to find the most effective strategies. I embrace the challenge by reflecting on my lessons and seeking feedback from my students. (P6)

Finding effective teaching strategies to uncover the complexities of grade five material can be a journey of trial and error. Some days are challenging, but I remain committed to adapting and evolving my approach. (P8)

Research has shown also that differentiating instruction is a critical component of effective teaching for grade five students. In a study by Tomlinson (2001), teachers reported that they struggled to engage their students when using a one-size-fits-all teaching approach. With this, teachers may need to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners in their classroom (Glass, Meyer, & Rose, 2013). This can involve tailoring instruction to meet the needs of students with different learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. To address this challenge, teachers can use a variety of teaching methods and materials, such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and group work, to engage all learners in the classroom.

Teachers may need to explore a range of differentiated instruction strategies, such as flexible grouping, tiered assignments, and student choice, to effectively unpack the complexity of grade five material. Below are the statements of the participants of the study:

In grade five, I encountered diverse learners with varying abilities and learning styles. To uncover the complexities of teaching, I prioritize differentiation. Adapting instructional methods ensures that every learner feels supported and challenged in their unique learning journey. (P1)

Uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five requires constant differentiation to meet the diverse needs of my students. By incorporating flexible grouping, offering alternative

resources, and providing varied assessments, I ensure that every learner can access the curriculum at their level. (P3)

The complexities of teaching grade five call for a focus on differentiation to address the diverse learning abilities in my classroom. Identifying each student's strengths and challenges allows me to create personalized learning paths. (P5)

In my grade five classroom, I navigate the complexities of teaching by differentiating instruction to accommodate the diverse learners. By using a mix of visuals, hands-on activities, and collaborative work, I cater to various learning preferences. (P7)

While unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five can be challenging, effective unpacking strategies can lead to a range of benefits for both teachers and students. By facilitating deeper learning, increasing engagement, and improving student outcomes, effective unpacking strategies can help to improve the overall quality of education for grade five students. The participants state that:

Effective unpacking strategies have been a game-changer in uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five. Breaking down complex concepts into manageable parts helps students grasp the material more comprehensively. (P1)

Using effective unpacking strategies has been transformative in my grade five classroom. Guiding students through step-by-step analysis of complex topics enables them to connect the dots and build a solid foundation of knowledge. (P4)

Uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five becomes more manageable with effective unpacking strategies. Taking the time to explore key ideas and providing students with clear learning objectives helps them stay focused and retain information better. (P6)

I have experienced the significant benefits of effective unpacking strategies in teaching grade five. By gradually delving into complex concepts, my students develop a deeper understanding of the material. (P8)

Research has shown that collaborative teaching practices can have a positive impact on both teacher well-being and student outcomes. In a study by Hargreaves and Dawe (1990), collaborative teaching was found to enhance teacher satisfaction and to improve student performance. The study found that teachers who collaborated with their colleagues felt more supported and less stressed, and were able to more effectively address the needs of their diverse learners.

Effective collaboration can take many forms, including team-teaching, co-planning, and peer mentoring. In a review of research on collaborative teaching practices, Hattie (2012) found that effective collaboration requires a shared vision, a focus on student learning, and a commitment to ongoing professional development. By working collaboratively, teachers can develop new and

effective strategies for unpacking complex material and supporting diverse learners, and can contribute to a culture of professional growth and learning within their school community. Some of the participants state that:

Collaborating with colleagues has been a powerful coping mechanism when facing challenges in uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five. Sharing experiences and strategies in team meetings enables us to brainstorm solutions and learn from one another. (P2)

When navigating the complexities of grade five instruction, collaborating with colleagues is my go-to coping mechanism. Engaging in professional learning communities and discussing common challenges fosters a strong support network. (P3)

Facing challenges in uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five can be overwhelming, but collaborating with my colleagues provides a sense of reassurance and motivation. Openly discussing our struggles and successes enables us to pool resources and devise creative approaches. (P4)

In my grade five teaching journey, collaborating with colleagues has been instrumental in coping with challenges. Whether it's seeking advice or exchanging innovative ideas, the camaraderie among teachers creates a sense of belonging and camaraderie. (P8)

Seeking professional development is another coping mechanism that many teachers use to manage the challenges of teaching grade five. Professional development can provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their teaching skills, stay current with research and best practices, and develop new strategies for unpacking complex material and supporting diverse learners. By engaging in ongoing professional development, teachers can feel more confident and capable in their roles, and can better meet the needs of their students (Tomlinson, 2001).

Research has shown that effective professional development can have a positive impact on both teacher well-being and student outcomes. In a review of research on teacher professional development, Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) found that effective professional development should be ongoing, job-embedded, and focused on student learning. They also found that effective professional development should be collaborative and include opportunities for teachers to practice and receive feedback on new skills and strategies.

Effective professional development can take many forms, including workshops, conferences, online courses, and coaching. In a study by Abell and Bryan (1997), science teachers who participated in a year-long professional development program reported feeling more confident and competent in their teaching, and reported using more student-centered teaching practices. The study found that the program was effective because it was ongoing, collaborative, and focused on improving student learning outcomes. Here are some of the statements of the participants of the study:

Seeking professional development has been a vital coping mechanism for me. Attending workshops and webinars allows me to learn about new instructional strategies and educational trends. The knowledge gained from these opportunities empowers me to refine my teaching techniques and better support my students' diverse needs. (P1)

Facing challenges in teaching grade five complexities, I turn to professional development as a coping mechanism. By participating in relevant courses and seminars, I continuously expand my pedagogical toolkit. (P2)

Professional development has proven to be a valuable coping mechanism as I tackle the complexities of teaching grade five. Engaging in ongoing learning equips me with new approaches to break down complex concepts effectively. (P3)

By attending conferences and collaborating with experts in the field, I stay up-to-date with innovative teaching strategies. This continuous learning journey empowers me to navigate challenges with a growth mindset and adapt my teaching to meet my students' evolving needs. (P8)

Utilizing technology is another coping mechanism that teachers can use to manage the complexity of teaching grade five. With the increasing availability of educational technology, teachers can use a wide range of digital tools and resources to support teaching and learning. For example, teachers can use interactive whiteboards, tablets, educational apps, and online platforms to create engaging and interactive lessons that help students understand complex concepts. By using technology, teachers can also personalize instruction and provide differentiated support to meet the needs of diverse learners (Bebell & Kay, 2010).

Research has shown that using technology can have a positive impact on both teacher well-being and student outcomes. A study by Schacter, Fagnano, and Dede (2004) found that using technology-based instructional strategies can lead to improved student learning outcomes and increased teacher confidence and motivation. The study also found that using technology can enhance teacher creativity and flexibility in lesson planning, and can provide new opportunities for collaboration and professional development.

However, it is important to note that utilizing technology effectively requires careful planning, training, and ongoing support. Teachers need to be able to select appropriate technology tools and resources, integrate them effectively into their teaching practice, and ensure that they align with curriculum standards and learning goals (Harris & Hofer, 2011). Additionally, teachers need to be aware of issues related to digital equity and access, and need to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to use technology for learning. Below are some of the statements of the participants:

Digital tools, such as interactive apps and educational software, enable me to present complex concepts in engaging and accessible ways. Integrating technology in the classroom has proven to be an effective strategy in helping my students grasp difficult material. (P2)

Technology has become an invaluable coping mechanism for me as a grade five teacher navigating teaching complexities. Interactive presentations, online resources, and virtual simulations are powerful tools that enhance student understanding and cater to diverse learning styles. (P3)

Facing challenges in teaching grade five complexities, technology has been my trusted ally. Educational platforms, video tutorials, and virtual collaboration tools enable me to personalize instruction and provide immediate feedback. (P4)

When grappling with the complexities of teaching grade five, I find solace in utilizing technology as my coping mechanism. Digital platforms and online learning resources allow me to offer differentiated instruction and scaffold complex concepts. (P8)

Moreover, teachers prioritize self-care as a coping mechanism for managing the stresses of teaching grade five. This may include strategies such as exercise, mindfulness, and taking time off to recharge. Teachers face high levels of stress and burnout due to the demands of the job, and it is essential for them to take care of their own physical, emotional, and mental well-being in order to maintain their effectiveness and avoid burnout. Prioritizing self-care can include a range of activities, such as exercise, meditation, hobbies, and spending time with friends and family (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 2017). Prioritizing self-care can help teachers to maintain their energy and focus, and can contribute to their overall well-being (Kaplan, 2011).

Research has shown that prioritizing self-care can have a positive impact on teacher well-being and job satisfaction. A study by Wagner, Reeves, and Post (2020) found that teachers who engaged in regular self-care activities reported lower levels of stress and burnout, and higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. The study also found that self-care activities can help teachers maintain a positive outlook and approach to teaching, even in the face of challenging situations.

However, prioritizing self-care can be challenging for teachers due to the demands of the job and the perception that taking time for oneself is selfish or indulgent. It is important for schools and administrators to create a culture that supports and encourages self-care among teachers, and to provide resources and support to help teachers prioritize their own well-being (Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 2017). The participants state that:

Taking time for personal hobbies and relaxation helps me recharge and maintain a positive mindset. This practice enables me to approach challenges with renewed energy and a clear perspective. (P3)

In navigating the complexities of teaching grade five, I recognize the importance of prioritizing self-care. By establishing work-life boundaries and practicing mindfulness, I reduce stress and stay mentally and emotionally balanced. (P4)

Facing challenges in teaching grade five complexities, I make it a point to prioritize self-care. Engaging in regular exercise, spending time with loved ones, and practicing mindfulness are essential in maintaining my well-being. (P7)

Adequate rest, healthy eating, and leisure activities provide the balance I need to tackle challenges with resilience. Nurturing my well-being empowers me to handle difficulties with a positive outlook and unwavering dedication to my students' growth. (P8)

In addition, building strong relationships with students can also help teachers to create a positive and inclusive classroom culture (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). When students feel valued and respected by their teachers, they are more likely to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom, which can lead to improved student engagement and academic performance. Overall, the importance of building strong relationships with students is a critical insight gained by teachers in unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five, as it can lead to improved student outcomes and a more positive classroom culture. Below are the insights of the participants:insights of the participants:

Trust and mutual respect form the basis for effective learning. When students feel valued and supported, they are more willing to take risks and engage in the complexities of learning, creating a positive and productive classroom environment. (P2)

By getting to know them individually, I can tailor my instruction to their unique needs and interests. Building rapport establishes a sense of belonging, empowering students to embrace challenges and take ownership of their learning journey. (P1)

A positive teacher-student connection nurtures a growth mindset and encourages active participation in learning. This approach enables me to uncover the complexities of teaching by effectively meeting my students' academic and emotional needs. (P4)

By creating a supportive and empathetic classroom culture, I foster a safe space for students to ask questions, seek help, and collaborate with peers. This sense of community empowers them to explore the complexities of learning with confidence and enthusiasm. (P7)

Another key insight gained by teachers in unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five is the value of differentiation and personalized learning. Every student comes to the classroom with unique strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. Teachers who can differentiate instruction and provide personalized learning experiences are better equipped to meet the needs of all their students and improve their academic outcomes (Tomlinson, 2014). When students feel that their individual needs and learning styles are being met, they are more likely to feel valued and included in the classroom. By incorporating differentiation and personalized learning into their teaching practices, teachers can help to create a classroom culture that values diversity and promotes academic success for all students. Here are their insights:

Tailoring instruction to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities ensures that each student can access the curriculum effectively. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and motivation, enabling students to tackle the complexities of learning with greater confidence and success. (P3)

Adapting my approach to meet individual needs allows me to address learning gaps and challenge high achievers effectively. This student-centered approach promotes a deeper understanding and long-term retention of complex concepts. (P5)

Recognizing that each student is unique, I provide varied learning opportunities, resources, and assessments to accommodate diverse learning preferences and abilities. This tailored approach fosters a positive learning experience and empowers students to take an active role in their education. (P6)

Uncovering the complexities of teaching grade five is made more attainable through differentiation and personalized learning. This approach fosters an inclusive and supportive learning environment, enabling students to excel in their academic journey. (P8)

In addition to enhancing teacher knowledge and skills, ongoing professional development can also help to foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement in schools. Teachers who engage in professional development are more likely to collaborate with their colleagues, share their knowledge and expertise, and work together to improve their instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017). By creating a supportive and collaborative professional learning community, teachers can work together to develop effective instructional strategies and improve student outcomes. The participants state that:

Ongoing professional development is a crucial educational management insight in teaching grade five. The educational landscape is constantly evolving, and staying updated on the latest pedagogical approaches and resources is essential. (P3)

Participating in workshops, seminars, and collaborative discussions keeps me abreast of best practices and innovative methodologies. This commitment to growth empowers me to provide high-quality education that meets my students' evolving needs. (P4)

By engaging in continuous learning, I gain new perspectives and evidence-based strategies to tackle complex teaching challenges. Embracing professional development not only enhances my effectiveness but also benefits my students' learning outcomes. (P5)

By attending conferences, seeking mentorship, and collaborating with colleagues, I acquire new knowledge and refine my instructional techniques. This educational management insight empowers me to cultivate a dynamic and impactful learning experience for my students. (P8)

Finally, teachers who unpack the complexity of teaching grade five often realize the importance of reflection and self-evaluation. This includes reflecting on their teaching practices,

seeking feedback from students and colleagues, and continually evaluating their effectiveness as a teacher. Research has shown that engaging in reflection and self-evaluation can lead to improved teaching practices and student outcomes (Van Manen, 1991).

In the study of Dinham (2013) it was noted that reflective practice can help teachers to identify areas for improvement, enhance their teaching strategies, and improve student outcomes. John-Steiner (1999) emphasizes the value of collaboration in reflective practice, as working with colleagues can provide new perspectives and insights. Schön (1983) stresses the importance of "reflection-in-action," or the ability to think critically and make adjustments in the moment, as well as "reflection-on-action," or the ability to review and evaluate past experiences and make changes for future improvement. Below are some of the statements of the participants:

Regularly reviewing my teaching practices and student outcomes allows me to identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions. This self-awareness helps me adapt and refine my approach to effectively uncover the complexities of teaching. (P2)

Taking time to assess my instructional strategies and their impact on students' learning enables me to refine my methods. This continuous improvement process fosters a more enriching and student-centered learning environment. (P3)

By examining my teaching practices and student progress, I gain insights into what works best for my students' needs. This self-directed learning process equips me to address teaching complexities with greater efficiency and effectiveness. (P4)

Analyzing my teaching techniques and their effect on student learning allows me to adjust my strategies to better meet the needs of each individual. This continuous cycle of improvement enables me to navigate the complexities of teaching with confidence and purpose. (P8)

III. Results and Discussion

Findings of the study on the experiences of grade five teachers' in unpacking complexity of teaching was revealed that it was feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the material, struggling to find effective teaching strategies, needing to differentiate instruction for diverse learners, and seeing the benefits of effective unpacking strategies.

In terms of the coping mechanisms of the grade five teachers' in unpacking complexity of teaching it was revealed that they cope through collaborating with colleagues, seeking professional development, utilizing technology, and prioritizing self-care.

As to the educational management insights gained from the participants, the grade five teachers proposed the importance of building strong relationships with students, value of differentiation and personalized learning, need for ongoing professional development, and

importance of reflection and self-evaluation as important insights in their experiences in uncovering the complexities of teaching.

Analysis

The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. Based on the experiences of grade five teachers' in unpacking complexity of teaching, results of the interview revealed the following themes: First, feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the material, as teachers may feel overwhelmed when faced with complex concepts that are difficult to understand or explain to students. Second, struggling to find effective teaching strategies, wherein teachers may struggle to find effective teaching strategies that are appropriate for grade five students and that effectively unpack complex concepts. Third, needing to differentiate instruction for diverse learners. Teachers may need to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners in their classroom. This can involve tailoring instruction to meet the needs of students with different learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. Fourth, seeing the benefits of effective unpacking strategies. Teachers may experience the benefits of effective unpacking strategies when students demonstrate a deeper understanding of complex concepts. This can be a rewarding experience for teachers, as they see their students engage with and succeed in challenging material.

On the coping mechanisms of grade five teachers' in unpacking complexity of teaching, one of the themes that was shown was collaborating with colleagues. Teachers collaborate with their colleagues to share resources, strategies, and approaches to unpacking complex material and supporting diverse learners. Collaboration can help teachers to feel supported and can lead to the development of new and effective teaching techniques. The second theme identified was seeking professional development, as teachers seek out professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching skills and develop new strategies for unpacking complex material. Professional development can help teachers to stay current with research and best practices, and can provide opportunities to network with other educators. The third theme identified was utilizing technology. Teachers use technology to support their instruction, such as online resources, educational apps, and interactive whiteboards. Technology can provide teachers with new and engaging ways to present complex material and support diverse learners. Fourth, prioritizing self-care. Teachers face high levels of stress and burnout due to the demands of the job, and it is essential for them to take care of their own physical, emotional, and mental well-being in order to maintain their effectiveness and avoid burnout.

On the educational management insights gained from grade five teachers' unpacking complexity of teaching, the first theme identified was the importance of building strong relationships with students, teachers who unpack the complexity of teaching grade five often realize the importance of building strong relationships with their students. This includes taking the time to get to know each student, understanding their individual needs and interests, and creating a supportive classroom environment.

The second theme identified was the value of differentiation and personalized learning. Another insight gained by teachers in unpacking the complexity of teaching grade five is the importance of differentiation and personalized learning. Teachers who understand the diverse needs and learning styles of their students can tailor their instruction to meet the individual needs of each student. This can lead to improved learning outcomes and engagement for all students.

The third theme was needed for ongoing professional development. Teachers who unpack the complexity of teaching grade five often realize the need for ongoing professional development to stay up-to-date with the latest research and best practices in teaching. This includes attending conferences, participating in workshops, and collaborating with colleagues to share ideas and resources. Ongoing professional development can lead to improved teaching practices and student outcomes.

The fourth theme was the importance of reflection and self-evaluation. Teachers who unpack the complexity of teaching grade five often realize the importance of reflection and self-evaluation. This includes reflecting on their teaching practices, seeking feedback from students and colleagues, and continually evaluating their effectiveness as a teacher. Research has shown that engaging in reflection and self-evaluation can lead to improved teaching practices and student outcomes.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it is important that some significant moves must be taken into consideration and be made available for the grade five teachers considering the bulk of their work on their assigned function and in uncovering the complexities of teaching.

This study may provide an avenue for school heads to encourage regular teacher reflections and promote peer support networks to share effective unpacking strategies. Providing opportunities for ongoing professional development and targeted training in instructional techniques will empower grade five teachers to continuously enhance their pedagogical skills. Additionally, school heads should consider creating a supportive environment that values innovation and experimentation, encouraging teachers to explore new approaches in unpacking complex concepts to meet the diverse needs of their students effectively.

As for the grade five teachers themselves, they could work on engaging in regular workshops, seminars, and collaborative discussions that will allow them to stay updated on effective unpacking strategies and innovative teaching methodologies. Additionally, cultivating a culture of continuous learning within their classrooms will empower students to take an active role in their education and foster a growth mindset. By regularly reflecting on their teaching practices and seeking feedback from students and colleagues, grade five teachers can identify areas for improvement and make data-driven decisions to enhance their instructional approaches and uncover the complexities of teaching more effectively.

The learners, along with their parents, should look into their possible contributions they could work on to further make their experience with developing a positive classroom climate better for them as learners, parents, and teachers.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abell, S. K., & Bryan, L. A. (1997). Science teacher professional development: The role of collaborative education reform projects. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 34(3), 199-217.
- [2] Aglipay, M. A. R., Cabansag, M. G. M., Lata, J. S. B., & Olino, F. V. (2021). Use of educational technology in the new normal: Experiences of selected public school teachers in the Philippines. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 20, 407-427.
- [3] Barnes, R., & Todd, F. (2018). The social and emotional needs of fifth-grade students: implications for teaching and learning. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 8(2), 204-215.
- [4] Bebell, D., & Kay, R. (2010). One to one computing: A summary of the quantitative results from the Berkshire Wireless Learning Initiative. *Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment*, 9(2).
- [5] Brown, J., & Knowles, G. (2007). The struggle to make a difference: Teachers' efforts to transform the education of students in poverty. *Teachers College Record*, 109(5), 1183-1209.
- [6] Bruna, K. R., Frederickson, N., & White, A. L. (2017). Collaborative learning as a tool for unpacking the complexity of grade five English language arts. *Journal of Educational Research*, 110(5), 497-508. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2016.1151952
- [7] Creswell, J. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications
- [8] Darling-Hammond, L., Hyer, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- [9] Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, R. C., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the United States and abroad*. National Staff Development Council.
- [10] Department for Education. (2017). *Differentiation in the classroom*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/differentiation-in-the-classroom>
- [11] Department for Education. (2018). *Assessment: Guidance for schools*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara/key-stage-2-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-2018>
- [12] DepEd. (2017). *Policy guidelines on daily lesson preparation for the K to 12 basic education program*. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/DO_s2017_042.pdf
- [13] DepEd. (2019). *Learning competencies in the K to 12 curriculum*. Retrieved from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/DO_s2019_023.pdf
- [14] Dinham, S. (2013). *Reflective practice for teachers*. Australian Council for Educational Research.
- [15] Dewis, C. C., & Tsuchida, I. (1998). A lesson is like a swiftly flowing river: Research lessons and the improvement of Japanese education. *American Educator*, 22(4), 12-16, 50-52.

- [16] Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2016). Visible learning for literacy, grades K-12: Implementing the practices that work best to accelerate student learning. Corwin Press.
- [17] Foster & Newman, (2005) "Going going....." Why are Males Underrepresented in Pre-Service Primary Education Courses at University.
- [18] Gasson, S. (2004). Rigor in grounded theory research: An interpretive perspective on generating theory from qualitative field studies. In M. E. Whitman & A. B. Woszczyński (Eds.), *The handbook of information systems research* (pp. 79–102). Hershey, PA: Idea Group.
- [19] Giorgi, Amadeo (2007) Concerning the phenomenological methods of Husserl and Heidegger and their application in psychology. <http://www.cirp.uqam.ca/documents%20pdf/Collection%20vol.%20>
- [20] Glass, C. R., Meyer, K. A., & Rose, D. H. (2013). Universal design for learning and the arts. *Harvard Educational Review*, 83(1), 98-118.
- [21] Graziano, P. A., Reavis, R. D., & Keane, S. P. (2019). Teaching fifth-grade students: challenges and opportunities. *Educational Psychology Review*, 31(4), 785-802.
- [22] Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105– 117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [23] Hall, T. E., Meyer, A., & Rose, D. H. (2012). *Universal design for learning in the classroom: Practical applications*. Guilford Press.
- [24] Hargreaves, A., & Dawe, R. (1990). Paths of professional development: Contrived collegiality, collaborative culture, and the case of peer coaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 6(3), 227-241.
- [25] Harris, J. B., & Hofer, M. J. (2011). Technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) in action: A descriptive study of secondary teachers' curriculum-based, technology-related instructional planning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 43(3), 211-229.
- [26] Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.
- [27] Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.
- [28] John-Steiner, V. (1999). *Creative collaboration*. Oxford University Press.
- [29] Kalof and Dietz (2008), *Essentials of social research*. McGraw-Hill Education, 1 Oct 2008 - Social Science
- [30] Kaplan, L. S. (2011). Teacher coping with complexity: Problems of practice and proposals for the field. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 434-443.
- [31] Kim, K. H., & Kim, M. S. (2017). The effects of storytelling on fifth graders' understanding of mathematical concepts. *Journal of Educational Research*, 110(3), 262-271. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2015.1065795
- [32] Kosko, K. W. (2018). Differentiated instruction: A research basis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research*, 6(1), 49-53.
- [33] Kyriacou, C., & Sutcliffe, J. (2017). Teacher stress: Directions for future research. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 35(3), 162-176.
- [34] Lee, S. Y., & Pekrun, R. (2018). Academic emotions in fifth-grade classrooms: their relationships with teacher support and achievement. *Learning and Instruction*, 56, 68-7
- [35] Maxwell, Joseph Alex (2013), *Qualitative research design : an interactive approach* J.A. Maxwell.

- [36] Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2017). Educational reforms in Japan. Retrieved from https://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/education_reform/
- [37] Miyamoto, K., & Ishii, E. (2018). The implementation and challenges of social and emotional learning in Japan. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 111(1), 95-106.
- [38] Morrison, D. (2016). Personalized learning in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 86(3), 303-306.
- [39] Morrissey & Higgs, (2006), Phenomenological research and adolescent female sexuality: discoveries and applications
- [40] Moustakas, (1995) Phenomenological research methods.
- [41] National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2016). Professional Standards for Teachers.
- [42] OECD. (2019). Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/education/teachers-and-school-leaders-as-lifelong-learners-9789264311670-en.htm>
- [43] Ofsted. (2019). Education inspection framework. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805472/Education_inspection_framework.pdf
- [44] Patton, Michael (2000) Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: a personal, experiential perspective. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1473325002001003636>
- [45] Pekrun, R., & Elliot, A. J. (2009). Competence, autonomy, and relatedness in the classroom: Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(4), 443-477.
- [46] Roorda, D. L., Koomen, H. M. Y., Spilt, J. L., & Oort, F. J. (2011). The influence of affective teacher–student relationships on students’ school engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic approach. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(4), 493-529.
- [47] Schacter, J., Fagnano, C., & Dede, C. (2004). Using technology as a means of enabling educational reform: A study of teacher perceptions. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 36(2), 285-307.
- [48] Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- [49] Stanage, S. M. (2017). *Adult education and phenomenological research: New directions for theory, practice and research*. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger.
- [50] Taber, T. A., Cook, C. M., & Riga, F. (2019). The impact of hands-on science activities on fifth grade students' understanding of science concepts. *Journal of Educational Research*, 112(1), 1-10. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2017.1364828
- [51] Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- [52] Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. ASCD.
- [53] Tomlinson, C. A., & Allan, S. D. (2000). *Leadership for differentiating schools and classrooms*. ASCD.
- [54] Tsai, Y., Liu, Y., & Chen, I. (2019). The Effects of Differentiated Instruction Professional Development on Teacher Knowledge, Student Achievement, and Classroom Instruction. *Journal of Educational Research*, 112(2), 163-176. doi: 10.1080/00220671.2017.1417557

- [55] Vail, J., & Rice, J. K. (2015). Professional development and teacher change: A perspective on learning to teach. *Professional Development in Education*, 41(5), 857-875.
- [56] Van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. State University of New York Press.
- [57] Wagner, C., Reeves, T. D., & Post, J. (2020). The relationship between teacher self-care and burnout: A multiple case study of elementary school teachers. *Journal of School Psychology*, 79, 107-125.
- [58] Wilson, E. K., & Mitchell, T. D. (2019). Graphic organizers as a tool for unpacking complex concepts in social studies. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, 43(3), 183-191. doi: 10.1016/j.jssr.2018.12.001

AUTHOR'S PROFILE



JOBARIA A. DEGARA

The author, aged 31, is married with one child, and was born on October 30, 1992, in Panabo, Davao del Norte. She presently resides in Little Panay, Panabo City, Davao del Norte. Currently, she has served for 7 years in the public sector and continues to do so at Pablo M. Piatos Sr. Integrated School, as she belongs to the Muslim community. In 2015, she graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Elementary Education (Generalist) from Gabriel Taborin College of Foundation, Incorporated in Lasang, Davao City. During the same year, she was employed at New Ilang Achievers Academy, Inc. While practicing her profession, she underwent licensure examinations for Teachers and successfully passed. After two years in a private school, she applied to the Department of Education and was hired in 2017. Fortunately, she is a part time teacher at Gabriel Taborin College of Davao, Foundation Inc. during mock board review for students taking up Bachelor of Elementary Education.

Presently, she is completing her Master's degree in Educational Management (MA-EM) at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. She is also enjoying her promotion as Teacher II and continues to attend as a Research Coordinator and School Paper Adviser in the Elementary Department.