

## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TEACHING PRACTICES: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

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### **Abstract**

21<sup>st</sup> century skills teaching practices is a challenging task of a teacher nowadays. It reflects belief and ethics in teaching. This study dealt on the barriers and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills teaching practices of Junior High School teachers. It aimed to determine the barriers and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills teaching practices. Based on the interview conducted, most of the teachers mentioned “lack of educational facilities”, and “difference in individual capacities” were the common barriers experienced by teachers in teaching. Thus, several teachers mentioned “giving of localized learning materials” as their opportunity used on the identified barriers in utilizing the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in teaching.

**Keywords:** 21<sup>st</sup> century Skills, Teaching Practices, Barriers, Opportunities.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching practice refers to the range of experiences to which student teachers are exposed when they work in classrooms and schools (Marais and Meier, 2004). A venue where the students and teachers will work together to achieve common goals in learning. This approach allows for easy alignment of the Key Skills with the six widely recognized 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, self-direction, and technological proficiency in learning (Bray, Byrne, and O’Kelly 2020).

This 21<sup>st</sup> century skills incorporate higher-order thinking skills, multiple intelligences, technology and multi-media literacies (Bilbao et al., 2020). Indeed, teaching is teaching if learners learn these different 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Moreover, Howard Gardner (2006) mentions the five frames of thinking such as the disciplined mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind, and ethical mind. These thinking skills can help students survive in the future.

Moreover, providing information about social norms in a supportive and empowering environment encourages reflective thinking and leads to enduring and impactful behavioral changes (Seidman, 2012). This shows that the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can have positive impact on students’ learning. Bilbao (2018) believes that the development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills is a necessary tool for teachers. It is a tool that help teachers to be effective in teaching.

She further stress that without these 21<sup>st</sup> century tools, no teacher can survive. The interaction between mentor teachers and student teachers during practice are significant (Louw & du Toit, 2010). In this way teachers must establish rapport to the students to make learning gain meaningfully. Time on task measurements fall short in capturing critical elements of modern educational settings.

This metrics fail to account for student engagement levels, the implementation of effective pedagogical approaches, or the emotional components that contribute to a child's growth and development (Seidman et al., 2018). Such crucial aspects of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments remain undetected by traditional time-based evaluation methods. This shows that there are barriers that hindered the successful implementation of the said demands for quality education. This is challenging on the part of the teachers in achieving quality education.

With this, the study seeks to fill this gap by determine the barriers and opportunities of Junior high school teachers utilizing 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study tried to determine the barriers and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching practices utilized by Junior High School teachers. The study used a qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling was used to collect data on the responses of the teachers. There were 11 (3 English, 4 Mathematics, and 4 Science) teachers from Mat-I National High School and Lubilan Integrated School involved in the study.

The two small schools were situated in far-flung area of the town. This study is a “one-shot” study that generated exploratory findings. Interview and focus group discussion were used to collect data from the respondents. Informed consent was distributed and retrieved to insure confidentiality and voluntary participation of the respondents. The data was done through thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns of their responses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the interview, most of the teachers mentioned “lack of educational facilities”, and “difference in individual capacities” are common experienced by teachers in teaching. This reflects on the limited educational facilities supplies to schools. Problem on individual differences maybe the result when only few enrollees and heterogeneously group in one classroom in which all will receive same teaching practices.

This is quite challenging to the part of the teachers. Some teachers also mentioned “lack of motivation”, “don't have interests in reading books”, and “difficult to choose what type of facing to follow”, these reactions pertain to type of students in far-flung places that need to consider in teaching. Teachers inspire students to learn more in the classroom activities. Few of them mentioned “Anxiety towards the subject”, this refers to courses that need computation like mathematics, Physics and others. Moreover, they mentioned also “time constraint on curriculum delivery” results of a lot interruptions in the schedule of classes due to extra activities in school and teachers' meetings.

Although efforts to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into educational settings are now common globally, there are substantial obstacles hindering their effective implementation in teaching and learning practices (Tangney, et al.2023). But despite of the barriers, teachers can adapt their teaching in spite of the little available tools (Jansen & van der Merwe, 2015). This shows that teachers are flexible enough in managing classroom to have quality teaching.

Moreover, majority of the teachers mentioned “giving of localized learning materials” as their opportunity to address the barriers in the utilization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the classroom. Teachers utilize materials found in their locality to ensure better understanding on the concept given. They mentioned also “fostering an interactive and engaging learning environment”.

Teachers employ different teaching strategies such as games, interactive discussion, experimentation and others. Some teachers mentioned “employing focus group discussion” to incorporate higher-order thinking skills and collaboration. Teachers encourage the students to talk to the class despite of the barriers in the language.

They also mentioned “producing evaluation sheets based on individual differences” and level of intelligence”, “downloading supplementary videos and worksheets”, and using differentiated instructions, Teachers prepare instructional materials based on the needs and interest of the students. Interactive approach will be used in classroom interactions. According to them, they “Innovating technologies to make teaching fun”, “improvising science equipment”, “reporting on the assigned topics”, and “providing clear guidelines, rubric, support”, and “follow-up activities”.

These show that teachers innovate things or materials despite of limited resources in order to achieve quality education. Teachers incorporate higher-order thinking skills, skills and values in preparation for students’ future life.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The researchers believe that despite of these barriers into the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching practices, the teachers continue to look for better opportunities to resolved such problems. It is recommended to conduct this study to other schools for better comparison of the barriers and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching practices.

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