

Teacher Competence in Unpacking Learning Competencies and Its Relationship to Curriculum Implementation Fidelity in the Schools Division of Santa Rosa City

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Index Terms:

K to 10 Curriculum, Unpacking Learning Competencies, teacher competencies, curriculum decongestion, professional development, DepEd, Curriculum Implementation Fidelity

Abstract. This study evaluates the implementation and relevance of the revised K to 10 Basic Education Curriculum, as well as teacher competence in Unpacking Learning Competencies and its Relationship to Curriculum Implementation Fidelity. This study used a descriptive-correlational research design and collected data through a quantitative survey of 137 basic education Mathematics teachers across the Schools Division of Santa Rosa City. The results of this study were gathered using frequency count (f) and percentage (P) in analyzing the demographic profile of respondents and challenges encountered and Technical assistance needed; while Likert Scale and Weighted Mean were used to determine the level of teacher readiness, experience, and proficiency across training familiarity, competency unpacking, and classroom delivery; and Spearman rank Correlation (rs) was used to test the relationship between years in teaching and self-efficacy in unpacking learning competencies. Findings indicate that while curriculum decongestion and target learning competencies positively influence instructional delivery, challenges related to teacher workload and resource availability persist. Furthermore, structured LAC sessions and mentoring significantly enhanced teachers' capacity to unpack competencies and apply learner-centered pedagogy. The results underscore the necessity of sustained professional development, targeted administrative support, and streamlined instructional requirements to optimize curriculum delivery and prevent teacher burnout. These findings offer practical insights for educational policymakers and school leaders seeking to strengthen school-based mentoring and curriculum alignment strategies.

Introduction

Curriculum transformation is a critical aspect of educational change globally. As technology advances and global needs evolve, educational programs must be continually updated to ensure that learning remains relevant, rigorous, and accessible (OECD, 2020). A prevalent challenge is "curriculum overload," where an excessive number of standards compels teachers to prioritize coverage over deep student understanding (OECD, 2020; Schweisfurth, 2019). In response, many countries are pursuing "curriculum decongestion," emphasizing core skills, critical thinking, and student-centered learning rather than attempting to address every possible topic.

To address both global and local demands, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines introduced the Revised K to 10 Curriculum. Following a comprehensive review, this update aims to resolve the issue of "curriculum overcrowding" identified in the 2012 K to 12 programs by reducing learning competencies by nearly 70 percent. The revised curriculum emphasizes foundational literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills in the early years, with a progression toward deeper subject knowledge in higher grades. The primary objective is to enable teachers to concentrate on essential lessons and allocate sufficient time to facilitate meaningful learning.

However, simplifying the national curriculum guide does not inherently improve classroom instruction. The effectiveness of educational reform is contingent upon the skills and professional judgment of classroom teachers (Fullan, 2016). A

critical mechanism for translating broad curriculum policies into daily practice is unpacking learning competencies (Acosta & Acosta, 2020). This process requires teachers to deconstruct broad standards into specific, actionable daily learning objectives and to align instructional strategies and assessments with these objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 2018; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Despite the importance of unpacking competencies, this process presents significant challenges for teachers in basic education. Teachers frequently encounter difficulties in aligning daily lessons with learning objectives, managing instructional time, addressing the needs of students with varying abilities, and sourcing appropriate materials (Dela Cruz & Santos, 2022; Mercado & Ramos, 2022). The introduction of the school-based Learning Action Cell (LAC) in 2016 aimed to support ongoing teacher development. Nevertheless, further research is required to understand how teachers unpack the Revised K to 10 Curriculum Framework, as existing studies tend to emphasize broad policy objectives rather than the practical realities teachers face across different Key Stages.

This study seeks to address these gaps by evaluating public school teachers' readiness, experiences, proficiency in unpacking the curriculum, and the technological support required. The findings will inform the development of an Intervention Plan designed to provide targeted and sustainable support for teachers implementing the Revised K to 10 Curriculum.

Research Questions

This study intends to evaluate teachers' readiness, experiences, and difficulties in implementing the Revised K to 10 Curriculum, with a specific focus on their proficiency in unpacking learning competencies.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Key Stage/ Grade Level taught
 - 1.2. Years in Service
2. What is the level of teacher readiness and experience in implementing the Revised K to 10 Curriculum regarding:
 - 2.1. Training and Curriculum Familiarity;
 - 2.2. Unpacking of learning competencies; and Classroom delivery and Workload Management?
3. What main challenges do teachers encounter in implementing the revised curriculum and unpacking competencies?
4. What technical assistance do teachers perceive as most needed to enhance curriculum implementation?
5. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' training or years in service and their self-efficacy in unpacking learning competencies?
6. Based on the findings of the study, what Learning Action Cell (LAC) intervention plan can be proposed?

Hypothesis of the Study

There is no significant relationship between teachers' training or years in service and their self-efficacy in unpacking learning competencies.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design and collected data through a quantitative survey.

The descriptive research design helps to describe, analyze, and map how ready teachers are for curriculum decongestion, how well they can unpack learning competencies, and how they deliver lessons under the Revised K to 10 Curriculum. It also identifies and ranks the main technical and pedagogical challenges teachers face, as well as the types of support they prefer from their institutions.

The correlational research design is used to find out how selected demographic factors, such as years of teaching experience and training, relate to teachers' confidence in unpacking learning competencies and delivering daily lessons.

By using both descriptive and correlational methods, the study gives a complete baseline assessment. This serves as a solid foundation for creating a focused School Learning Action Cell (LAC) intervention plan.

The target population for this study consists of all public-school teachers actively teaching across Key Stage 1 (Grades 1 to 3), Key Stage 2 (Grades 4 to 6), and Key Stage 3 (Grades 7 to 10) within the Schools Division of Santa Rosa City during the Academic Year 2026-2027.

To ensure statistical representation of the total teacher population, the minimum sample size (n) will be calculated using the Raosoft Calculator at a 5% margin of error.

This study will employ Stratified Random Sampling to guarantee proportional representation among the different Key Stages. Stratification minimizes sampling bias and ensures that subgroups with varying curriculum demands are sufficiently represented.

To collect reliable and valid data while following all administrative and ethical protocols, this study will use a three-phase process. In the Preparation Phase, the researcher will request formal approval from the school division superintendent and get endorsements from the school heads. During the Administration and Collection Phase, the survey will be administered and collected digitally via Google Forms. In the Data Processing and Tabulation Phase, responses will be coded and tabulated using Likert's scale.

To safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of the respondents, and to ensure the methodological integrity of the research, this study adheres rigorously to established ethical standards for educational research. Guidance is drawn from the Department of Education (DepEd) Research Management Guidelines (DepEd Order No. 16, 2017) and Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Results and Discussion

This study sought to evaluate teachers' readiness, experiences, and difficulties in implementing the Revised K to 10 Curriculum, with a specific focus on their proficiency in unpacking learning competencies.

Profile Variable	Category Key Stage/Grade Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Key Stage 1	Grades 1-3	68	49.6%
Key Stage 2	Grades 4-6	34	24.8%
Key Stage 3	Grades 7-10	35	25.5%
Years in Service			
Novice	0-3 years	11	8%
Mid-Career	4-10 years	42	30.7%
Experienced	11 years and above	84	61.3%

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Teacher-Respondents (N= 137)

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the teacher-respondents, evaluated by Key Stage/Grade Level and Years in Service.

In terms of Key Stage/Grade Level, most respondents belong to Key Stage 1 (Grades 1–3), accounting for 68 teachers (49.6% of the total sample). This is followed by Key Stage 3 (Grades 7–10) with 35 respondents (25.5%), and Key Stage 2 (Grades 4–6) with 34 respondents (24.8%). The data show that primary-grade teachers account for nearly half of the study's participant pool. Regarding Years in Service, the experienced category (11 years and above) is the largest subgroup, comprising 84 respondents (61.3%). Mid-career teachers (4–10 years) account for 42 respondents (30.7%), while novice teachers (0–3 years) represent the smallest group with 11 respondents (8.0%). This indicates that the respondent group is mainly composed of veteran educators with substantial teaching experience.

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Received adequate training on the key features of the Revised K to 10 Curriculum.	3.31	Agree
2. Clear understanding of the decongested learning competencies in Mathematics	3.38	Agree

3. Access to necessary learning resources and instructional materials aligned with the curriculum.	3.09	Agree
Overall Category Mean	3.26	Agree

Table 2.1. Teachers' Level of Readiness in Terms of Training and Curriculum Familiarity

Table 2.1 presents the assessment of the teacher-respondents' level of readiness regarding training and curriculum familiarity. Overall, the dimension obtained an Overall Category Mean of 3.26, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of "Agree". This indicates that teachers generally consider themselves ready and sufficiently prepared to implement the revised curriculum. A high level of comprehension regarding curriculum content and subject competencies (WM=3.38). Access to instructional materials and aligned resources (WM=3.09), which represents the weakest link in their implementation readiness.

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Confidence in breaking down broad learning competencies into daily/weekly objectives.	3.20	Agree
2. Effective alignment of assessment tools with unpacked learning objectives.	3.22	Agree
3. Active engagement in collaborative sessions (e.g., LAC sessions) for competency unpacking.	3.25	Agree
4. Ability to integrate local context and real-world applications into unpacked competencies.	3.28	Agree
Overall Category Mean	3.24	Agree

Table 2.2. Teachers' Level of Proficiency in Unpacking Learning Competencies

Table 2.2 presents the assessment of the teacher-respondents' level of proficiency in unpacking learning competencies. Overall, the dimension obtained an Overall Category Mean of 3.24, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of "Agree". This indicates that teachers commonly perceive themselves as proficient in breaking down and contextualizing learning standards for classroom delivery. The daily and weekly objective breakdown (WM=3.20) indicates a slight gap in individual confidence in translating broad learning standards into lesson-level targets.

In the study by Mercado, E.T., & Ramos, V.S. (2022), public school teachers' proficiency was evaluated using constructive alignment, making certain that daily formative assessments mirror the specific cognitive levels of unpacked learning competencies. Their findings showed that misaligned assessments remain a top challenge.

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Sufficient instructional time provided to cover core competencies deeply.	3.09	Agree
2. Ease and precision in daily lesson planning resulting from unpacked competencies.	3.21	Agree
3. Student engagement during the delivery of the revised curriculum focus.	3.07	Agree
Overall Category Mean	3.12	Agree

Table 2.3. Teacher's Level of Implementation in Classroom Delivery and Workload Management

Table 2.3 presents the assessment of the teacher-respondents' level of implementation regarding classroom delivery and workload management. Overall, the dimension yielded a Category Mean of 3.13, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of "Agree". This indicates that teachers generally agree that classroom execution and workload handling under the revised curriculum are manageable and progressing positively. Daily lesson planning clarity (WM = 3.21). Unpacking competencies effectively simplifies the lesson design process. While learner engagement (WM = 3.07) and instructional time availability (WM = 3.09) remain positive, these two areas are the lowest-scoring dimensions.

Reyes, C.A., & Dizon, R.B. (2023) examined how reducing learning competencies impacts classroom delivery and instructional pacing. They found that curriculum decongestion substantially reduces teacher burnout and improves lesson depth if teachers receive adequate guidance on unpacking complex standards without jeopardizing subject integrity.

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Training & Curriculum Familiarity	3.26	Agree
2. Unpacking Learning Competencies	3.24	Agree
3. Classroom Delivery & Workload	3.13	Agree
Composite Mean	3.21	Agree

Table 2.4. Summary Table on Teachers' Level of Readiness and Implementation of the Revised K to 10 Curriculum

Table 2.4 summarizes the overall level of readiness and implementation of the revised K to 10 Curriculum among the teacher-respondents across three main dimensions. The study revealed a composite mean of 3.21, corresponding to a verbal interpretation of "Agree". This shows a high overall level of readiness and positive execution of the revised curriculum among the teachers. Among the three main dimensions evaluated, "Training & Curriculum Familiarity" registered the highest weighted mean of 3.26 (Agree). Ranked second is "Unpacking Learning Competencies," which obtained a weighted mean of 3.24 (Agree), and "Classroom Delivery and Workload" recorded the lowest weighted mean of 3.13 (Agree).

Identified Challenge	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
1. Lack of aligned instructional materials/textbooks.	103	75.7%	1
2. Difficulty in unpacking complex or abstract learning competencies.	52	38.2%	4
3. Insufficient time for lesson preparation and unpacking.	74	54.4%	2
4. Inadequate training or orientation sessions.	42	30.9%	5
5. Mixed-ability classroom dynamics making coverage difficult.	59	43.4%	3

Note: Multiple response item; percentages are computed based on the total respondents (N).

Table 3. Main Challenges Encountered in Implementing the Revised Curriculum and Unpacking Competencies (N=137)

Table 3 presents the main challenges encountered by the teacher-respondents in implementing the revised curriculum and unpacking competencies. The most prominent issue identified by the respondents is the "Lack of aligned instructional materials/textbooks," ranking 1st with 103 respondents (75.7%). This indicates that a large majority of teachers face operational difficulties due to a shortage or absence of learning resources customized to the new curriculum. The second most prevalent challenge is "Insufficient time for lesson preparation and unpacking," ranked 2nd with 74 respondents (54.4%). This highlights time constraints as an essential factor impacting teachers' capacity to plan and break down learning competencies effectively.

This is followed by "Mixed-ability classroom processes making coverage difficult," which ranks 3rd with 59 respondents (43.4%), and "Difficulty in unpacking complex or abstract learning competencies," ranking 4th with 52 respondents (38.2%). Finally, "Inadequate training or orientation sessions" ranks 5th (lowest among the listed challenges) with 42 respondents (30.9%). While still reported by nearly a third of the participants, it represents the least pressing challenge relative to material resources and time management.

Form of Support/Technical Assistance	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
1. Sufficient instructional time provided to cover core competencies deeply.	77	57%	3
2. Ease and precision in daily lesson planning resulting from unpacked competencies.	92	68.1%	1
3. Student engagement during the delivery of the revised curriculum focus.	80	59.3%	2
4. Mentoring/Coaching from Master Teachers or Department Heads	54	40%	4

Note: Multiple response item; percentages are computed based on the total respondents (N).

Table 4. Technical Assistance and Instructional Support Preferred by Teachers (N=137)

Table 4 displays the preferred forms of technical assistance and instructional support identified by the teacher-respondents to aid in curriculum implementation. The most requested form of support is "sufficient instructional time provided to cover competencies deeply," ranking 1st with 77 respondents (77%). Over half of the respondents requested ongoing guidance on lesson planning efficiency and participation approaches. Though administrative/peer coaching (40%) is valued, practical tools and time management support take higher priority.

Variables Tested	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Alpha level α	Decision on H_0	Verbal Interpretation
Years in Service vs. Unpacking Proficiency	-0.212	0.013	0.05	Reject H_0	Significant

Note: Evaluated using Spearman's Rank-Order correlation coefficient (rs)

Table 5. Test of Significant Relationship Between Teachers' Years in Service and Proficiency in Unpacking Competencies

Table 5 shows that the relationship between teachers' years of service and their skill in unpacking competencies has a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (rs) of -0.212 and a p-value of 0.013. Because the p-value is below the standard level, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This means there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The negative correlation (rs = -0.212) indicates that as teachers have more years of service, their self-rated skill in unpacking competencies under the new curriculum decreases slightly. This suggests that experienced teachers, who were trained under older curriculum frameworks, may find it harder to adjust to the new standards and taxonomies. On the other hand, newer teachers may be more comfortable with the latest instructional techniques because of their recent training. These results show the need for different types of professional development in School Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, so experienced teachers get the support they need to adapt to the Revised K to 10 Curriculum.

Findings:

Based on the above results, the following findings were generalized;

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents shows that

Out of the 137 teacher-respondents from the Schools Division of Santa Rosa City, 49.6% (f=68) teach in Key Stage 1 (Grades 1–3), 25.5% (f = 35) teach in Key Stage 3 (Grades 7–10), and 24.8% (f = 34) teach in Key Stage 2 (Grades 4–6). And in terms of teaching experience, 61 (84) are experienced teachers (11 years and above), 30.7% (f = 42) are mid-career teachers (4–10 years), and 8.0% (f = 8.0%) are novice teachers (0–3 years).

2. Teacher Readiness and Implementation Levels

Teachers demonstrated an overall positive level of readiness and implementation across the revised curriculum, yielding a composite mean of 3.21 ("Agree"). Training and Curriculum Familiarity: Ranked highest with a weighted mean of 3.26 ("Agree"). Teachers reported the highest rating in understanding decongested Mathematics competencies (Agree) but noted lower agreement regarding access to aligned instructional materials and resources (Agree). Unpacking Learning Competencies: Ranked second with a weighted mean of 3.24 ("Agree"). Teachers showed a strong ability to incorporate local context and real-life applications (Agree) but reported lower confidence in breaking down broad standards into daily/weekly objectives (Agree). Classroom Delivery and Workload Management: Ranked lowest among the three domains

with a weighted mean of 3.13 ("Agree"). While daily lesson planning ease received positive ratings (Agree), learner participation (Agree) and sufficient instructional time (Agree) received the lowest ratings (Agree).

3. In terms of the Primary Implementation Challenges:

Lack of Aligned Instructional Materials/Textbooks: Identified as the top obstacle, affecting 75.7% ($f = 103$) of respondents (Rank 1). Insufficient Time for Preparation and Unpacking: Ranked 2nd, selected by 54.4% ($f = 74$) of teachers. Mixed-Ability Classroom Relations: Ranked 3rd, reported by 43.4% ($f = 59$) of respondents. Difficulty Unpacking Complex/Abstract Competencies: Ranked 4th, noted by 38.2% ($f = 52$) of teachers. Inadequate Training or Orientation: Ranked 5th (lowest reported issue), noted by 30.9% ($f = 42$) of teachers.

4. Preferred Technical Assistance:

Teachers prioritized practical tools and time support over administrative coaching. Guidance on lesson planning efficiency resulting from unpacked competencies ranked 1st (68.1%). Strategies for improving pupil engagement ranked 2nd (59.3%). Provision of sufficient instructional time ranked 3rd (57%). Master Teacher/Department Head mentoring ranked 4th (40%).

5. Relationship Between Experience and Unpacking Proficiency:

A Spearman rank correlation showed a statistically significant inverse relationship between years of service and unpacking proficiency ($r_s = -0.212$, $p = 0.013$), rejecting H_0 at the alpha level. More experienced teachers reported lower self-perceived proficiency in unpacking competencies under the newly amended framework compared to less experienced or novice peers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Teachers in the division express general confidence and preparedness to implement the Revised K to 10 Curriculum, showing a strong grasp of decongested competencies and contextualized instruction.
2. Implementation issues derive primarily from structural and resource deficits—specifically, the shortage of aligned textbooks/learning materials and insufficient lesson preparation time—rather than from a lack of familiarity with the general curriculum or teacher interest.
3. Having more teaching experience does not always mean higher confidence with new curriculum reforms. Experienced teachers who worked mostly under older frameworks have a harder time adjusting to new taxonomies and unpacking methods than recent graduates do.
4. Teachers prefer practical help, like daily planning templates, time-management strategies, and student-engagement tools, rather than general supervision or administrative coaching.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the following are recommendations:

1. Implement Differentiated Learning Action Cell (LAC) Interventions, with structured School LAC sessions into tiered tracks based on teaching tenure; Provide targeted bridging workshops for experienced teachers to match their prior pedagogical training with current unpacking mechanics and cognitive taxonomies; and pair proficient educators with novice teachers to combine subject-matter expertise with modern curriculum unpacking techniques.
2. Develop and Contextualize Aligned Learning Resources that give priority to the creation, contextualization, and distribution of standardized Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) and teaching materials customized to unpacked competencies to reduce the top-ranked resource shortage.
3. Optimize Time and Workload Management to simplify administrative tasks and establish ready-to-use, unpacked competency guides to minimize daily lesson planning time for teachers.
4. Focus Professional Development on Classroom Involvement and Inclusion by designing in-service training (INSET) sessions focused on managing mixed-ability classrooms and applying interactive teaching techniques that keep students engaged within limited instructional timeframes.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.