

Teachers' Competence in Managing Learners' Performance Tasks

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' competence plays a crucial role in learners' performance tasks across various educational settings. In this context, this paper aimed to determine the level of teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks of the public elementary schools in an island district in a large-sized division in central Philippines during the school year 2022-2023. Data for this descriptive study was collected from 104 respondents using a self-made survey questionnaire that has passed the rigorous tests of validity and reliability. The ensuing analysis showed a high level of teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks during the school year 2022-2023. Further analysis showed a significant relationship between teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks. The same data showed a high level of teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks. This aims to unveil valuable insights and draw meaningful conclusions that contribute to the overall objectives of the research study, particularly in mentoring and designing lessons in their discipline that use the 21st pedagogy, assessment style, and technology. Regarding teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks, the areas of the learning process, integration to real-life situations, and diverse learners were rated with very high-level equivalents. However, the area of knowledge and skill was rated as high level.

KEYWORDS

Education, Large size, Learners' performance tasks, Public schools, Teachers' competence



INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the requirement for performance-based assessments as an integral part of evaluating students' holistic progress is emphasized in DepEd Order No. 8 series of 2015 as the Department of Education's commitment to comprehensive education. According to Erickson (2015), performance tasks engage students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding. Furthermore, Vardi and Kornhaber (2016) asserted that performance tasks foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration in real-world contexts. The learning process involves acquiring, integrating, and applying knowledge through varied experiences influenced by motivation, metacognition, and social interactions (Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie, 2016). Connecting learning to real-life situations promotes relevance, engagement, and transferability (Herrington & Herrington, 2017). Comprehensive education develops deep understanding, critical thinking, and application in diverse contexts (Wagner, 2015), while accommodating diverse learners necessitates differentiated instruction, personalized approaches, and universal learning design (Tomlinson et al., 2018).

Existing online literature provides valuable insights into the implementation of performance tasks during lesson activities. However, no specific studies have been conducted within the DepEd that specifically investigate the areas of the learning process, integration to real-life situations, knowledge and skills, and diverse learners. The researchers' observations reveal a prevalent lack of competence among teachers regarding the utilization of performance tasks, as many still rely on traditional paper and pencil assessments. Limited training opportunities in performance task implementation exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for teachers to fully comply with the mandate. The researcher finds it disheartening that student learning is often measured through a single aspect or modality, disregarding individual strengths and weaknesses. Incorporating performance tasks into assessments provides teachers with a more comprehensive understanding of student learning and guides them in tailoring future learning activities. By identifying gaps and areas for improvement, the study aims to contribute to enhancing the implementation of performance-based assessments in the education system. Motivated by these concerns, the researcher embarked on this study to examine teacher competence in performance tasks.

The concept of teacher competence in implementing performance tasks is a critical area of study in education. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2013), teacher competence is a multifaceted construct that includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective teaching. They argue that teachers' understanding of subject matter, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of learners are critical components of teacher competence. As defined by Wiggins (2017), performance tasks are complex, authentic assessments that require students to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world scenarios. Wiggins emphasizes that successfully implementing performance tasks requires a high level of teacher competence, particularly in task design, instruction, and assessment. In his seminal work, Shulman (2016) introduced the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which refers to the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners. This concept is particularly relevant to implementing performance tasks, as teachers must deeply understand the content and pedagogical strategies that will best facilitate student learning. Moreover, Danielson (2017) further expanded on the concept of teacher competence by introducing a framework for teaching that includes four domains: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. According to Danielson, effective implementation of performance tasks requires competence in all four domains, as teachers must plan and prepare meaningful tasks, create an environment conducive to learning, deliver effective instruction, and reflect on their practice. In a more recent study, Hattie (2019) synthesized over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement and identified teacher competence as a critical factor influencing student outcomes. Hattie's work underscores the importance of teacher competence in

implementing performance tasks, as it directly impacts student learning. In conclusion, the literature suggests that teacher competence in implementing performance tasks is a complex construct encompassing a range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Further research is needed to develop reliable and valid measures of teacher competence and explore the relationship between teacher competence and student outcomes in the context of performance tasks.

This study is anchored on the theory of competence. According to this theory, competence refers to an individual's underlying characteristics, knowledge, and skills that enable effective performance in a specific domain (McClelland, 1973). The theory of competence posits that teachers' effectiveness in implementing performance tasks may be influenced by their knowledge, skills, and overall competence in instructional practices. By drawing on the theory of competence, the study can investigate the relationship between teachers' knowledge, skills, and instructional practices. Additionally, this theory draws on concepts like the Yerkes-Dodson law, which suggests an optimal level of arousal for best performance in learning tasks. Finally, by utilizing this theory, the study can effectively evaluate how well teachers can maintain an optimal level of challenge in their teaching practices, ultimately shedding light on their competence in implementing performance tasks. This framework provides a structured and theoretically grounded approach to analyzing and interpreting the data collected.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the level of teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks of the public elementary schools in the island district of Central Philippines during the School Year 2022-2023. Specifically, it sought to determine:

1. The level of teachers' competence in overseeing learners' performance tasks in terms of learning process, integration into real-life situations, knowledge and skills, and diverse learners.
2. The level of teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks when grouped according to the same four constructs above.

METHODS

This study utilized the descriptive research design to determine the teachers' level of competence in learners' performance tasks. McCombes (2022) claims that a descriptive research method aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. It can answer what, where, when, and how questions, but not why questions. It can also study one or more variables using a wide range of research techniques. When the goal of the research is to discover traits, frequencies, trends, and classifications, descriptive research is the best option. When little is known about the subject or issue, it is helpful. Meanwhile, to guarantee that the findings are accurate and trustworthy, the research design should be properly created because it determines differences between variables considered in the study. Thus, the researcher believes the descriptive study strategy would be the most appropriate given the assumption.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were 104 sample public elementary school teachers from a total population of 141 in an island district of a large-sized Division in Central Philippines for the School Year 2022-2023 who were invited to participate in this study. It used proportional stratified random sampling using Fishbowl to identify the sample respondent population. Proportional stratified random sampling involves taking random samples from stratified groups in proportion to the population. The purpose is to increase credibility and not representativeness.



Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to gather the data, mainly from the teacher-respondents, to determine the level of teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks. The questionnaire focuses on the level of teachers' competence in the four identified areas of the learners' performance tasks about the learning process, integration to real-life situations, knowledge and skills, and diverse learners with 7-item survey questions per significant area. The questionnaire was first subjected to a validity test of 30 teachers outside the sampling frame.

Data Collection

After establishing the research instruments' validity and reliability, the researcher requested and was granted permission by the public schools' district supervisor to administer the research instruments to respondents. Right after retrieving the filled-out questionnaire, the responses were tallied and subjected to data analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The statistical tables were likewise constructed per consideration of the objectives indicated in this study. The results were presented according to the sequence of the objectives.

Data Analysis

Objectives 1 and 2 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean as statistical tools to determine the level of teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks in terms of learning process, integration to real-life situations, knowledge and skills, and diverse learners and to determine the level of teachers' competence in the performance tasks when grouped according to the aforementioned variables. The following indicators were used to interpret the mean score for teachers' competence in managing students' performance tasks: 4.21-5.00 indicates very high level; 3.41-4.20 indicates high level; 2.61-3.40 indicates moderate level; 1.81-2.60 indicates low level; and, lastly, 1.00-1.80 indicates very low level.

Ethical Consideration

Several considerations were upheld to ensure ethical conduct throughout the research. Anonymity was maintained by assigning unique identifiers to participants and securely storing personal information. Confidentiality measures were implemented, and aggregated data were used for reporting. Potential risks were assessed and minimized, with participants given the right to withdraw without consequences. Informed consent was obtained, and clear explanations and instructions for addressing participant concerns were provided. The research obtained necessary approvals, adhered to ethical guidelines, and prioritized participant well-being and confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents an in-depth analysis of teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks. By examining various factors and indicators of competence, including instructional strategies, assessment methods, and pedagogical knowledge, the section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' proficiency in facilitating performance based assessments. The findings from this analysis will contribute to identifying areas of strength and areas that require improvement, ultimately informing strategies and interventions to enhance teachers' competence in learners' performance tasks.

Table 1. Teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks in the learning process

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
1. involve students in the learning process individually or in collaboration with groupmates	4.89	Very High Level
2. impose positive discipline to maintain a smooth and enjoyable teaching-learning process	4.79	Very High Level
3. maximize student learning in a wide-ranging array of competencies as stipulated in the most essential learning competencies (DepEd-MELCs)	4.60	Very High Level
4. use a variety of teaching strategies and pedagogies to facilitate learning	4.65	Very High Level
5. promote growth mindset views such as intelligence, abilities, and talents during interactive discussion	4.44	Very High Level
6. respond to the purpose and policy of education that is set up in the assessment in implementing the performance task	4.19	High Level
7. apply higher-order thinking skills in designing performance task	4.56	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.59	Very High Level

Table 1 analyzes teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks, specifically in the learning process, with an overall mean of 4.59, interpreted to mean a very high level. When examined more thoroughly, item 1, which states, "involves students in the learning process individually or in collaboration with groupmates," garnered the highest mean score of 4.89 or an equivalent of a very high level. On the other hand, item number 6, which focuses on responding to the purpose and policy of education that is set up in the assessment in implementing the performance task, got the lowest mean score of 4.19, still indicating a high level of competence. This suggests that educators may benefit from additional training or guidance in this regard, ensuring that assessments effectively measure desired learning outcomes and support the overarching goals of the educational institution. Addressing these aspects could lead to an even more enriching and effective learning experience for students. A study that supports this finding is "The Role of Assessment in Education System Reform: An International Perspective" by Kellaghan, Greaney, and Murray (2019). This study emphasized the importance of aligning assessments with educational policies and objectives. The authors argue that assessments should not only measure student learning but also reflect the broader goals of the education system. They highlight the need for professional development opportunities for teachers to understand and implement assessments in line with these goals. Furthermore, they advocate for a culture of collaboration among educators and continuous evaluation of assessment practices. This study aligns with the findings by underscoring the importance of aligning assessments with educational policies, providing professional development for teachers, fostering collaboration among educators, and establishing ongoing evaluation and improvement mechanisms.

Table 2. *Teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks in the integration to real-life situations*

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
1. give learners opportunities to demonstrate and integrate their knowledge and skills into real-life situations by performing or producing evidence of their learning	4.63	Very High Level
2. identify a rich and authentic phenomenon that fits the performance expectation that the teacher is trying to assess	4.19	High Level
3. encourage learners to innovate products or do performance-based tasks that are observable and applicable in real-life situations	4.43	Very High Level
4. allow learners to use a newly acquired skill in a realistic setting	4.61	Very High Level
5. maximize student learning and encourage them to apply it in real-life situations	4.87	Very High Level
6. give tasks that are useful to life, like experiential learning	4.62	Very High Level
7. give tasks that demonstrate problem-solving skills with meaning so that these can be applied in real-life situations	4.55	Very High Level
Overall Mean	4.56	Very High Level

Table 2 shows the analysis of teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks, specifically in integration to real-life situations, with an overall mean of 4.56, interpreted to mean a very high level. When examined more thoroughly, item 5, which states, "maximize student learning and encourage them to apply in real-life situations," garnered the highest mean score of 4.87 or an equivalent of a very high level. Contrastingly, item 2, which focuses on identifying a rich and authentic phenomenon fitting the performance expectation that the teacher is trying to assess, got the lowest mean score of 4.19, still indicating a high level of teachers' competence. This suggests that while teachers generally demonstrate strong competence in integrating performance tasks, there may be room for improvement in identifying authentic phenomena for assessment. The slightly lower mean score of item 2 highlights the importance of teachers' ability to identify and select rich and authentic phenomena that align with the performance expectations they aim to assess. Authentic phenomena provide real-life contexts, allowing students to effectively demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Enhancing competence in this area may involve providing teachers with training and resources on identifying and incorporating relevant and authentic phenomena that make performance tasks more meaningful and applicable to real-life situations. Causes for the lower mean score in item 2 could include factors such as limited exposure to or awareness of authentic phenomena or the need for further professional development in selecting and integrating them into performance tasks. It is crucial to support teachers in developing their skills in identifying real-life connections and creating performance tasks that authentically engage students in applying their knowledge and skills. A related study by Johnson and Taylor (2019) supports the findings and implications discussed earlier. Their research emphasizes integrating real-life contexts and phenomena into performance-based assessments to enhance student learning and engagement. It highlights the role of teachers in designing authentic tasks that promote deeper understanding and application of knowledge in real-world scenarios. This study aligns with the recommendations to

further enhance teachers' competence in selecting and incorporating authentic phenomena into performance tasks.

Table 3. *Teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks in knowledge and skills*

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. encourage learners' inquiry by integrating knowledge and skills in various contexts	4.29	Very High Level
2. focus on building the skills that the learners need to become learners into adulthood	4.15	High Level
3. revise the performance task to identify necessary concepts, knowledge, and skills needed by learners	4.15	High Level
4. engage learners with performance tasks that fit their knowledge and skills on a specific topic	4.17	High Level
5. gauge student understanding and proficiency with complex processes, not just measure discrete knowledge.	4.13	High Level
6. integrate content knowledge and skills within and across learning areas	4.23	Very High Level
7. link content knowledge with 21 st -century skills so that learners are well-equipped with the target skills that they will encounter in the "real world."	4.19	High Level
Overall Mean	4.17	High Level

Table 3 shows the analysis of teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks, specifically in knowledge and skills, with an overall mean of 4.17, interpreted to mean high level. When examined more thoroughly, item number 1, which states, "encourage learners' inquiry by integrating knowledge and skills in various contexts, garnered the highest mean score of 4.29 or an equivalent of very high level. On the contrary, item 5, which focuses on gauging student understanding and proficiency with complex processes, not just measuring discrete knowledge, got the lowest mean score of 4.13, still indicating a high level of teachers' competence. This suggests the need for teachers to focus on designing performance tasks that assess students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in complex and authentic situations, moving beyond simple recall or factual-based assessments. This could be attributed to factors such as limited exposure to alternative assessment methods or a need for additional training and support in designing performance tasks that effectively gauge students' understanding of complex processes. Enhancing competence in this area may involve providing teachers with professional development opportunities that equip them with strategies and resources for designing performance tasks that accurately assess higher order thinking skills and applying knowledge in real-world contexts. A related study conducted by Borabo and Sese (2020) titled "Assessing 21st Century Skills: The Case of Philippine Basic Education." This study focused on the assessment of 21st century skills among Filipino students and the challenges faced by teachers in designing performance tasks that measure these skills. The study revealed that teachers in the Philippines often struggle with designing performance tasks that effectively assess students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in complex and real-life situations. It highlighted the need for teachers to move beyond traditional assessments that primarily measure discrete knowledge and instead focus on tasks that require higher-order thinking and the application of complex processes.

Table 4. *Teachers' Competence in Managing Learners' Performance Tasks in Diverse Learners*

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
1. to demonstrate his learning while considering his unique interests, learning styles, and needs	4.54	Very High Level
2. apply a differentiated learning activity that fits to the learning needs	4.58	Very High Level
3. use multiple intelligences in dealing with diverse learners	4.83	Very High Level
4. have a profiling of learners and vary teaching strategies to accommodate learners' ability	4.53	Very High Level
5. create a safe space where problematic learners will accept the challenge and stretch themselves to learn	4.56	Very High Level
6. ask high-level questions for fast learners to develop their critical thinking skills	4.65	Very High Level
7. challenge the creative learners to make innovations and apply them in diverse ways	4.17	High Level
Overall Mean	4.55	Very High Level

Intelligences in dealing with diverse learners," garnered the highest mean score of 4.83 or an equivalent of a very high level. Contrastingly, item number 7, which focuses on challenging creative learners to make innovations and apply them in diverse ways, got the lowest mean score of 4.17, indicating a high level of teachers' competence. This suggests the potential for teachers to further enhance their competence in designing tasks that encourage creative thinking and innovation among learners. The causes for the slightly lower mean score in item 7 could be attributed to various factors, such as limited exposure to instructional strategies that foster creativity, a lack of resources or time constraints that inhibit teachers' ability to design open-ended tasks, or a need for professional development opportunities focused on promoting creativity and innovation in performance task implementation. Addressing these causes and further developing teachers' competence in fostering creativity can lead to more enriched learning experiences and outcomes for diverse learners. A related study by Johnson, Smith, Brown, et al. (2019) supports the importance of using multiple intelligences and fostering creativity in the context of diverse learners. The research highlights the positive impact of incorporating varied instructional approaches and tapping into learners' strengths and interests. It emphasizes the role of teachers in designing tasks that allow for individual expression, creative problem-solving, and personalization of learning experiences.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Generally, a high level of teachers' competence in managing learners' performance tasks indicates a commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, promising to improve student outcomes and a positive educational experience for elementary school students in the island district of Central Philippines. The findings call for comprehensive training on educational technology, instructional materials, and innovative teaching methods to empower teachers to effectively design and implement performance tasks. Teachers' competence, including their ability to manage learning materials and

innovative teaching methods, can deliver effective instruction and directly impact student achievement.

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