

Challenges in Teaching Indigenous Learners: Towards a Proposed Development Program

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers in teaching Indigenous learners and propose a development program to enhance the educational experience for these students. The study surveyed 30 non-Indigenous teachers, examining their demographic characteristics, challenges in teaching Indigenous students, and the correlation between their characteristics and the challenges they encountered. The findings revealed that the most significant challenges included parental and community engagement, classroom management, and resource availability. Teachers with more years of experience and those who participated in relevant professional training were better equipped to handle these challenges. However, there was a lack of training in cultural competence and culturally responsive teaching practices. Based on the results, the study recommends the implementation of a professional development program focused on cultural sensitivity, adaptation of curricula to include Indigenous perspectives, enhanced community-school partnerships,

and improved differentiated instruction strategies. The findings and recommendations aim to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and responsive educational environment for Indigenous learners.

Keywords: *Indigenous Learners, Community Engagement, Development Program*

INTRODUCTION

The education of Indigenous learners poses significant challenges, especially when these learners are taught by non-Indigenous teachers. These challenges often stem from cultural differences, diverse educational needs, and historical contexts that impact the learning environment. As awareness grows about these issues, there is increasing recognition of the need for effective strategies to support Indigenous learner (Dewhurst, 2021). Non-Indigenous educators frequently face difficulties navigating unfamiliar cultural landscapes, underscoring the necessity for tailored teaching strategies and professional development to better support Indigenous learners (Smith & Davis, 2022).

Foreign literature underscores the importance of cultural competency in education. Hernandez and Marquez (2020) emphasize that non-Indigenous teachers must acquire a deep understanding of Indigenous cultures to foster inclusive and effective learning environments.

Johnson and Lee (2019) highlight that challenges such as limited cultural knowledge and a lack of culturally responsive teaching strategies can impede the progress of Indigenous learner, advocating for comprehensive training programs. Williams and Thompson (2018) discuss various development program, including integrating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, which have been shown to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous learner.

In the realm of foreign studies, Garcia and Martinez (2021) explored how targeted professional development programs can significantly bolster the cultural competency of non-Indigenous teachers. Their research highlighted that when teachers engage in specialized training designed to enhance their understanding of Indigenous cultures and pedagogical needs, there is a notable improvement in their teaching practices. This enhancement in cultural competency leads to more effective classroom strategies, which in turn increases student engagement and academic achievement among Indigenous learners. The study underscores the critical role of tailored professional development in bridging the cultural gap between teachers and learner

Similarly, Thompson and Adams (2020) focused on the barriers that non-Indigenous teachers encounter in their efforts to educate Indigenous learner. Their research identified several key obstacles, such as inadequate resources, lack of institutional support, and insufficient

training. These barriers can significantly impede teachers' ability to deliver culturally responsive education and effectively address the unique needs of Indigenous learner. The study advocates systemic changes to address these challenges, suggesting that improved support structures and resources are essential for overcoming these obstacles and enhancing educational outcomes.

Roberts and Kline (2019) examined the impact of integrating Indigenous pedagogical practices into mainstream education. Their study demonstrated that incorporating traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching methodologies can profoundly enhance the educational experiences of Indigenous learner. By aligning teaching practices with Indigenous cultural contexts and perspectives, educators can foster a more inclusive learning environment that respects and values Indigenous knowledge, leading to better academic performance and student satisfaction.

On the local front, similar themes emerge in studies conducted within the Philippines. Santos and Cruz (2022) investigated the challenges faced by Filipino teachers in teaching indigenous learner and identified significant issues such as cultural misunderstandings and inadequate training. Their study highlighted that these challenges often stem from a lack of familiarity with Indigenous cultures and insufficient professional development, which can hinder effective teaching and student learning.

This study sought to explore the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers in teaching indigenous learners within the Schools Division of Mabalacat City for the 2024-2025 school year.

METHODS

Research Design

The research design for this study is descriptive in nature, aiming to systematically assess and analyze the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers in teaching indigenous learners within the Schools Division of Mabalacat City for the 2024-2025 school year. This design involved collecting and analyzing data through surveys and interviews with 30 selected non-Indigenous teachers. The study gathered information on teachers' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, years of experience, education level, and relevant training. Additionally, it identified and described the specific challenges these teachers encounter and evaluated the correlation between demographic factors and these challenges. By employing this descriptive approach, the study provided a comprehensive overview of the current educational dynamics and offer insights that can inform the development of targeted teaching strategies and interventions to enhance the educational experience for Indigenous learner.

Participants and Locale

The study utilized multiple sources of data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers in teaching indigenous learners. Primary data were collected through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews with 30 selected non-Indigenous teachers from the Schools Division of Mabalacat City. The surveys gathered quantitative data on teachers' demographic characteristics and perceived challenges, while interviews will provide qualitative insights into their experiences and perspectives. Additionally, secondary data from school records were used to verify demographic information and identify the Indigenous learners involved. This combination of primary and secondary data sources allowed for a thorough analysis of the challenges faced by teachers and the factors influencing their ability to effectively educate Indigenous learner.

Sampling and Data Collection

The research design for this study is descriptive in nature, aiming to systematically assess and analyze the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers in teaching indigenous learners within the Schools Division of Mabalacat City for the 2024-2025 school year. This design involved collecting and analyzing data through surveys and interviews with 30 selected non-Indigenous teachers. The study gathered information on teachers'

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Data Analysis

The following tools were utilized to treat the data statistically.

Ethical Considerations

The research design for this study is descriptive in nature, aiming to systematically assess and analyze the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers in teaching indigenous learners within the Schools Division of Mabalacat City for the 2024-2025 school year. This design involved collecting and analyzing data through surveys and interviews with 30 selected non-Indigenous teachers. The study gathered information on teachers' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, years of experience, education level, and relevant training. Additionally, it identified and described the specific

challenges these teachers encounter and evaluated the correlation between demographic factors and these challenges. By employing this descriptive approach, the study provided a comprehensive overview of the current educational dynamics and offer insights that can inform the development of targeted teaching strategies and interventions to enhance the educational experience for Indigenous learner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The study surveyed 30 non-Indigenous teachers, examining their demographic characteristics, challenges in teaching Indigenous students, and the correlation between their characteristics and the challenges they encountered.
2. The findings revealed that the most significant challenges included parental and community engagement, classroom management, and resource availability.
3. Based on the results, the study recommends the implementation of a professional development program focused on cultural sensitivity, adaptation of curricula to include Indigenous perspectives, enhanced community-school partnerships, and improved differentiated instruction strategies.

4. The findings and recommendations aim to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and responsive educational environment for Indigenous learners.
5. Additionally, it identified and described the specific challenges these teachers encounter and evaluated the correlation between demographic factors and these challenges.
6. Mabalacat City is characterized by its mix of urban and rural areas, and it serves a varied student population, including a significant number of Indigenous learners.
7. In describing the demographic characteristics of the elementary teachers participating in the study, specifically regarding age, gender, years of experience, education level, and relevant training attended, frequency and percentage were used.
8. Frequency referred to the number of cases while percentage is computed using the formula, $\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$ (1) where %Percentage fFrequency NTotal Number of Cases To determine the challenges that non-Indigenous teachers encounter when teaching indigenous learners, the study was employing the weighted mean.
9. The weighted means provides a more nuanced understanding of the challenges by reflecting the relative importance of each issue based on its frequency or severity as reported by the respondents.

10. Weighted mean is computed using the formula, $X = \frac{\sum WX_n}{n}$ (2) where X=Weighted Mean W=Weight X=Raw Scores n=Number of Cases The data will be interpreted as. | 4.50-5.00 | Very High | | 3.50-4.49 | High | | 2.50-3.49 | Moderately High | | 1.50-2.49 | Moderately Low | | 1.00-1.49 | Very Low | n testing the correlation between teachers' demographic characteristics and the challenges faced by non-Indigenous teachers, Pearson r was used.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study concluded that non-Indigenous teachers encounter substantial challenges in teaching Indigenous learners. These challenges include difficulties in engaging with Indigenous families and communities, managing culturally diverse classrooms, and accessing culturally appropriate resources and curricula.

It was found that non-Indigenous teachers with more years of experience and those who had participated in relevant professional training were better equipped to address the challenges they faced. However, there remains a need for more focused professional development on culturally responsive teaching practices.

The lack of culturally relevant materials and resources was identified as a major barrier to effective teaching. There is a clear need for curricula that

incorporate Indigenous perspectives, histories, and values to ensure that the education system is more inclusive and reflective of Indigenous learners' experiences.

The study concluded that stronger engagement between schools and Indigenous communities is critical. Parental involvement and community support play a significant role in the educational success of Indigenous learners. Effective communication and collaboration with families can help bridge gaps in learning support. Teachers need to be equipped with skills in differentiated instruction to meet the varied learning needs of Indigenous students. Additionally, specialized support services addressing students' social and emotional needs, including trauma-informed practices, are necessary to support Indigenous learners effectively.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that a structured, ongoing professional development program be implemented, focusing on cultural competence, Indigenous histories, and culturally responsive teaching strategies. This should include workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning opportunities with Indigenous community leaders.
2. The curriculum should be reviewed and adapted to ensure it is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives. Teachers should be provided with culturally relevant

teaching materials and resources that reflect Indigenous cultures, values, and histories.

3. Schools should work closely with Indigenous communities to promote parental involvement and collaboration in the educational process. Regular meetings, cultural events, and open lines of communication should be established to strengthen the partnership between schools and Indigenous families.
4. Teachers should be trained in differentiated instruction techniques to meet the diverse learning needs of Indigenous learners. Specialized support programs, such as language assistance and emotional support for students experiencing historical trauma, should be integrated into the school's support systems.
5. A monitoring and evaluation system should be implemented to regularly assess the effectiveness of the professional development programs and the integration of culturally responsive practices. Feedback from Indigenous learners, their families, and teachers should be used to refine and improve the educational strategies.

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