

Teachers' Readiness, Support, and Challenges in the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approach

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Abstract

Thematic teaching involves integrating competencies across disciplines around a common theme or topic. It offers holistic and meaningful learning experiences and requires teachers to collaborate in developing a unified theme—posing challenges to their readiness, support, and ability to address emerging issues. This study aimed to determine the levels of readiness, support, and degree of challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Thematic Teaching Approach in a medium-sized schools division in Central Philippines during the school year 2022–2023. A mixed methods research design was employed, involving 188 teachers from schools across all districts who participated in the development and pilot implementation of thematic learning modules. Six of these teachers were interviewed to further explore the challenges they encountered. Results showed no significant differences in readiness, support, or challenges when teachers were grouped according to age, educational attainment, or medium of instruction. Specifically, in terms of the level of support received across the areas of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy and Program Implementation, no significant differences were also found based on these demographic variables. As frontliners in delivering quality education, teachers play a critical role in shaping learning experiences that are meaningful and responsive to learners' real-life contexts. The findings affirm that teachers are generally ready and well-supported in implementing thematic teaching. However, the study also highlights the need for further development, particularly in cross-subject integration, collaborative planning, and resource alignment. The study underscores the need for strategic, data-driven interventions to support teachers more effectively. The results will guide the formulation of a comprehensive capability-building plan to strengthen the integration of thematic teaching in the classroom.

Keywords: thematic teaching, teacher readiness, instructional support, challenges in implementation, capability-building plan

Introduction:

Nature of the Problem

Thematic teaching has emerged as a progressive instructional approach that integrates multiple subject areas under a common theme, aiming to promote coherence, relevance, and real-world application of knowledge. Its alignment with the Department of Education's (DepEd) K to 12 curriculum and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) highlights its potential to foster meaningful learning and equip students with essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. According to DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, the PPST encourages innovative and learner-centered pedagogies, with thematic instruction offering a promising path toward this goal.

Despite this, many teachers face difficulties in implementing thematic teaching due to several systemic and practical barriers. These include time constraints, inadequate training, limited instructional resources, challenges in curriculum integration, and lack of collaborative opportunities. Studies such as those by Carreon and Buenavista (2020) emphasize that while thematic teaching is well-supported in theory, its practical implementation is hindered by insufficient preparation and institutional support. Similarly, Briones (2019) noted that without proper capacity-building and resource allocation, teachers may struggle to sustain interdisciplinary teaching approaches in real classroom settings.

International and local contexts reflect similar challenges. In Malaysia, cross-disciplinary teaching was limited by rigid curriculum structures and inadequate teacher training (Ali et al., 2018). In the Philippines, thematic instruction in elementary schools remains largely unimplemented despite policy encouragement, primarily due to inconsistent technical assistance and limited collaboration among teachers (Salvador & Ramos, 2021).

These issues underscore the need for research-based, data-driven interventions to address the gaps in readiness, support, and challenges faced by teachers. Educators must be empowered through well-planned professional development, improved resource provision, and institutional backing to fully implement thematic instruction. Motivated by these pressing concerns, the researcher, as a teacher and advocate for meaningful learning, undertook this study to assess teachers' readiness, the support they receive, and the challenges they encounter in implementing thematic teaching. The findings aim to guide the development of a relevant and responsive capability-building plan.

Current State of Knowledge

Thematic teaching, also known as interdisciplinary or integrative teaching, is a learner-centered instructional approach that connects learning content across multiple subject areas through a unifying theme. This method supports deeper understanding, real-life application, and the development of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Drake & Reid, 2018). It aligns with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasize pedagogical innovations and learner-centered approaches to enhance instructional quality (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017).

In the Philippines, thematic instruction has been acknowledged in curriculum guides and training modules, particularly for early grades and flexible learning setups, as a way to enrich learner engagement and contextualize lessons (DepEd, 2020). However, research reveals that actual classroom implementation remains limited. Teachers often face barriers such as insufficient training, lack of planning time, and absence of resource materials tailored for thematic integration (Orillosa, 2021; Buena & Gayares, 2022). Studies show that even when teachers express readiness and willingness to try thematic approaches, systemic issues such as rigid scheduling, overloaded curricula, and limited interdepartmental collaboration hinder sustained practice (Llego, 2019).

Globally, similar challenges are observed. In Malaysia and Indonesia, efforts to promote thematic learning faced difficulties due to fragmented teacher preparation and lack of administrative support (Rosnani, 2020; Hasanah & Ernawati, 2019). Meanwhile, in Singapore, successful thematic integration was attributed to strong institutional backing, collaborative professional learning communities, and context-based resource development (Tan et al., 2017).

Professional development is repeatedly identified as a key enabler of thematic teaching. A study by Tabudlong (2020) emphasized the importance of in-service training and learning action cells (LACs) in strengthening teachers' capacity for curriculum integration and instructional design. Similarly, the role of school leaders and instructional supervisors is crucial in providing technical assistance, mentoring, and monitoring support to build a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration (Sarmiento & Lopus, 2021).

Despite these efforts, localized and contextualized support remains insufficient. Many teachers still struggle with curriculum alignment, thematic planning, and performance assessment in thematic lessons (Andal & Sabado, 2023). Additionally, limited budget allocation for instructional materials and the absence of clear policy directives on interdisciplinary teaching compound the issue.

Thus, the current body of knowledge underlines the gap between policy intent and classroom practice in thematic teaching. While thematic instruction holds promise for meaningful, connected learning experiences, its implementation depends heavily on teacher readiness, institutional support, and the resolution of practical classroom challenges. These insights underscore the relevance of the present study, which seeks to assess teachers' readiness, support, and challenges in thematic teaching implementation, and to use the findings as a foundation for a capability-building plan.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The present study is grounded in the Theory of Thematic Curriculum by Freeman and Sokoloff (1995), which emphasizes that organizing instruction around central, meaningful themes promotes coherence, relevance, and student engagement. This theoretical foundation advocates for integrating content across subject areas to help learners build interconnected knowledge, thus enhancing their motivation and long-term retention.

To better understand the dynamics of teacher readiness, support systems, and encountered challenges, the study also draws on four interrelated educational theories that collectively inform the implementation process of thematic instruction.

Fullan's Change Theory (2011) serves as a foundational framework for examining how educational change takes place at both the individual and organizational levels. It posits that successful innovation, such as thematic teaching, requires more than willingness—it demands sustained support, training, and leadership. In this study, the theory explains how readiness is shaped not only by individual capacity but also by institutional commitment to innovation.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) by Hall and Hord (1987) complements Fullan's theory by illustrating the stages of concern and levels of use among teachers implementing new practices. This model helps interpret the differing levels of readiness among teachers and the necessity for differentiated support throughout the adoption process. CBAM underscores that implementation is a progression, not a one-time event, and must be accompanied by continuous feedback and resource provision.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) offers a social lens, highlighting that learning—and by extension, professional growth—occurs through meaningful interaction and collaboration. The study uses this theory to understand the importance of collegial support, co-planning, and mentoring in enabling teachers to succeed in thematic instruction. Vygotsky's emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) validates the need for scaffolding in teacher development, particularly in interdisciplinary integration.

Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (2011) addresses the mental effort involved in instructional design and delivery. Thematic teaching, while beneficial, can increase teachers' cognitive demands due to its interdisciplinary nature. This theory supports the study's identification of the need for structured guidance, simplified processes, and time allotment to avoid teacher burnout and ensure effective lesson planning and implementation.

Together, these theories provide a multidimensional understanding of the factors influencing the adoption of thematic teaching. They clarify how readiness develops, what types of support are most beneficial, and why systemic challenges such as time constraints, lack of training, and limited collaboration can hinder successful implementation. This theoretical grounding reinforces the study's rationale for developing a tailored capability-building plan to promote sustained and effective thematic instruction in basic education.

Objectives

This study aimed to determine the levels of teachers' readiness, the extent of support they receive, and the degree of challenges they encounter in implementing the thematic teaching approach. It was conducted in a medium-sized schools division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2022–2023, with the ultimate goal of using the findings as the basis for crafting a relevant and responsive capability-building plan for teachers.

Methodology

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design to examine teachers' readiness, support, and challenges in implementing the thematic teaching approach. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study gained both statistical data from surveys and deeper insights from focus group discussions and open-ended questions. The quantitative part measured levels of readiness and support across teacher profiles, while the qualitative part explored their actual experiences, challenges, and support needs. This approach provided a clearer and more complete understanding of the situation, making it suitable for developing a relevant capability-building plan.

Study Respondents

Respondents of this study were 188 teachers from Grades 1 to 10 who helped develop and implement thematic learning modules in the entire division. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by grade level. For the qualitative part, six female teachers with at least five years of experience and who had attended training on thematic teaching were chosen through purposive sampling to join a Focus Group Discussion and share their experiences and challenges.

Instruments

Self-made survey questionnaire to gather data on teachers' readiness, support, and challenges in implementing the thematic teaching approach in a Central Philippine school division during SY 2022–2023. The questionnaire had three parts: demographic profile, 40 items on readiness and support (using a 5-point Likert scale), and four

open-ended questions about challenges. To ensure validity, five education experts evaluated the instrument using Lawshe's method and a rating scale, resulting in a validity index of 4.78 ("Excellent"). For reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 30 teachers, and the questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.929, also interpreted as "Excellent," indicating high internal consistency.

Data Gathering Procedure

After approval of the research instrument, it was validated by five education experts, and its reliability was tested on 30 teachers not included in the main sample. With the instrument confirmed valid and reliable, the researcher secured permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and informed school principals. Due to pandemic protocols, the survey was administered online via Google Forms, which remained open for one month. Collected data were processed using Google Sheets and analyzed using SPSS to address the study's objectives. For qualitative data, an FGD was conducted with six purposively selected teachers who met specific criteria. The FGD was audio-recorded (with consent), and responses were first written and then discussed. Transcripts were analyzed to identify themes, with steps taken to ensure trustworthiness such as interrater reliability checks, member checking, peer review, and follow-up clarifications via online chat. Data were organized using Excel and SPSS, leading to final interpretations and recommendations based on the findings.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Objective 1 employed the descriptive analytical scheme, along with frequency counts and percentage scores, to determine the profile of respondents based on age, highest educational attainment, and the medium of instruction used in the subject area taught.

Objective 2 utilized the descriptive analytical scheme and used the mean to determine the level of readiness of teachers in implementing thematic teachings specifically in the areas of content knowledge and pedagogy and program implementation.

Objective 3 applied the descriptive analytical scheme and used the mean to determine the level of support received by teachers in implementing thematic teaching.

Objective 4 employed the descriptive analytical scheme and utilized the mean to determine teachers' readiness level when grouped according to profile variables

Objective 5 applied the descriptive analytical scheme and used the mean to determine the level of support of teachers when grouped according to profile variables

Objective 6 used the comparative analytical scheme and the Mann-Whitney U-test to determine the significant difference in the level of readiness based on profile variables.

Objective 7 utilized the comparative analytical scheme and the Mann-Whitney U-test to determine the significant difference in the level of support based on profile variables

Objective 8 used the thematic analysis to determine the challenges encountered by teachers.

Ethical Consideration

This study strictly followed ethical research protocols. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no one being forced or coerced. All participants gave informed consent after being clearly informed about the purpose, process, and use of the study in language they could easily understand. To protect them from any physical or psychological harm, necessary safeguards were observed. Their privacy was respected through confidentiality and anonymity—no personal identities were revealed, and all data was handled discreetly. Ethical approvals and permissions were also secured from both participants and gatekeepers, who helped manage access and ensured that the study's scope and publication followed ethical guidelines.

Results and Discussion:

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

I. Quantitative Phase

Table 2

Profile of the teacher respondents in terms of Age, Highest Education Attainment, and Medium of Instruction

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Younger (Below 37 years old)	85	45.2

	Older (37 years old and above)	103	54.8
	Total	188	100
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower (Bachelor's degree)	111	59.0
	Higher (MA and MA units)	77	41.0
	Total	188	100
Medium of Instruction	Filipino	72	38.3
	English	116	61.7
	Total	188	100

Table 2 presents the teacher-respondents' profile in terms of age, educational attainment, and medium of instruction. The data show that a slight majority (54.8%) are aged 37 and above, indicating that many respondents are seasoned educators, which may influence their readiness and openness to adopting new approaches such as thematic teaching (Ramdani et al., 2021). In terms of education, 59.0% have a bachelor's degree, while 41.0% have either completed or are pursuing graduate studies, reflecting a range of academic backgrounds that can shape their theoretical understanding and classroom strategies (Vázquez-Cano et al., 2023). As for the medium of instruction, 61.7% use English while 38.3% use Filipino, suggesting that English remains the dominant instructional language. This may impact how teachers integrate subjects thematically, especially in multilingual settings (Alhamami, 2023). These demographic characteristics provide valuable context for interpreting the teachers' experiences, levels of support, and challenges in implementing the thematic approach.

Table 3

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches According to Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>		
1. understand the principles of the thematic teaching approach and the connections across different subjects	4.47	High level
2. master the alignment of concepts and competencies to the theme within and across subject areas	4.20	High level
3. understand the benefits of using a thematic teaching approach in the delivery of instruction	4.47	High level
4. know the importance of the approach in improving the academic achievement of learners	4.49	High level
5. recognize that it improves the scientific attitude of learners and fosters attitude change	4.43	High level
6. understand the importance of the thematic teaching approach in providing a holistic opportunity for learners	4.54	Very high level
7. understand the potential outcome of a thematic teaching approach, through integrative assessment	4.49	High level
8. discuss strategies with fellow teachers to motivate learners to achieve meaningful and relevant learning experiences using a thematic teaching approach	4.27	High level
9. know how to prepare activities and materials that will promote learning across subject areas among my learners	4.28	High level
10. know how to prepare a learning plan for a thematic teaching approach	4.22	High level
Overall Mean	4.39	High level

Table 3 shows that teachers are generally prepared to implement the thematic teaching approach, with a high overall mean score of 4.39. The highest rating, 4.54, was for the item stating that thematic teaching promotes holistic learning, reflecting teachers' strong belief in its value (Zajda & Zajda, 2021). However, the lowest score, 4.20, indicates some uncertainty in aligning topics and skills across subjects, suggesting a need for more focused support in lesson integration. As noted by Min et al. (2017), effective thematic teaching relies on both understanding and the ability to connect content across disciplines. This highlights the importance of training programs that emphasize collaborative planning and cross-subject integration to enhance teacher confidence and improve implementation (Dursun & Aykan, 2025). Overall, while teachers are ready, targeted capacity-building is essential for effective and sustained thematic instruction.

Table 4

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches According to Program Implementation

Program Implementation Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>		

1. am trained on how to apply a thematic teaching approach to deliver my lessons	4.31	High level
2. am ready to apply a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.24	High level
3. can develop learning resource materials integrating concepts within a theme across different subjects	4.19	High level
4. can use properly the developed learning resource materials for a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.20	High level
5. can connect with ease in any learning areas in my lessons taught	4.20	High level
6. am capable of combining fragmented activities into a single activity or output with ease	4.11	High level
7. can motivate learners for success through research-based, targeted intervention and practice	4.25	High level
8. can provide activities for meaningful and relevant learning experiences to my learners using the thematic teaching approach	4.34	High level
9. can collaborate with subject area teachers to design integrative assessments aligned with the goals of a thematic teaching approach	4.23	High level
10. calibrate the pacing of learners on their time management schemes to complete requirements in the thematic teaching approach	4.19	High level
Overall Mean	4.23	High level

Table 4 reveals that teachers show a high level of readiness to implement the thematic teaching approach, with an overall mean score of 4.23. Teachers feel confident in designing meaningful and relevant activities (Item 8, mean: 4.34), but find it more challenging to integrate various tasks into a cohesive output (Item 6, mean: 4.11). This suggests that while they are generally prepared, some still struggle with planning fully integrated thematic lessons—a key skill for effective implementation (Cardino & Cruz, 2020; Hollenstein & Brühwiler, 2024). As Yin (2022) explained, the aim of thematic teaching is to help students connect learning to real-world situations, which requires well-structured integration across subjects. However, many teachers still need support in combining lesson components smoothly (Flaherty, 2023; Syahrul et al., 2023). Training programs focused on integrated planning and collaborative teaching can bridge this gap (Alibakhshi et al., 2020; Georgiou et al., 2023). Providing ready-made materials and peer collaboration, as suggested by Panadero and Lipnevich (2022), may also help improve implementation and address lower-rated areas like Item 3 (mean: 4.19) and Item 6.

Table 5

Level of Support for Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches According to Content Knowledge and Pedagogy

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		
Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>The curriculum and implementation division...</i>		
1. trained me to determine competencies and learning activities appropriate for thematic and integrative teaching	4.37	High level
2. ensured that I am competent and knowledgeable of the objectives and content standards of thematic teaching	4.32	High level
3. assisted me in developing learners' skills aligned with the frameworks of thematic and integrative teaching	4.30	High level
4. capacitated me in building connections between lessons and information across different subjects.	4.28	High level
5. trained me to develop learning resources and assessment materials, integrate evaluation and development of skills across subject areas	4.31	High level
6. capacitated me to assist my co-teachers in the implementation of a thematic teaching approach in the school	4.28	High level
7. extended technical assistance so I can efficiently use assessment results from the approach for classroom-based decision making	4.21	High level
8. capacitated me to efficiently use formative and summative assessments in the thematic teaching approach	4.28	High level
9. provided a venue for me and other teachers to work collaboratively to ensure that essential competencies within and across subject areas are aligned with the agreed theme included in the developed thematic teaching resource materials	4.25	High level
10. provided continuous and progressive training on the development and implementation of a thematic teaching approach	4.17	High level
Overall Mean	4.28	High level

Table 5 reveals that teachers received a high level of support (overall mean = 4.28) in applying thematic teaching, particularly in content knowledge and pedagogy. The highest-rated item (mean = 4.37) indicates teachers felt

well-trained in selecting appropriate competencies and learning activities, while the lowest score (mean = 4.17) highlights a need for improved ongoing training. This suggests that while initial support was strong, continuous professional development remains a gap that could hinder sustained implementation. As Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasized, ongoing training is essential for effectively adopting new teaching approaches. Similarly, Rajendran et al. (2023) and Ammar and Ahmad (2024) found that one-time workshops are insufficient for long-term success. To strengthen implementation, the Curriculum Implementation Division (CID) should offer regular training, promote collaborative planning—as supported by Cojorn (2024)—and provide technical assistance, echoing Cardino and Cruz's (2020) call for teamwork and digital support in thematic teaching.

Table 6

Level of Support for Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches According to Program Implementation

Program Implementation	Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>The curriculum and implementation division...</i>			
	1. provided an avenue for pilot implementation of the thematic teaching approach and learning resources to gather feedback from teachers and learners for improvement	3.97	High level
	2. capacitated me in developing learning resource materials for the approach that I can effectively use to deliver lessons across learning areas	4.16	High level
	3. taught me how to apply the developed learning resources for thematic teaching	4.24	High level
	4. helped me foster process skill development while teaching lessons using a thematic teaching approach	4.23	High level
	5. equipped me with the use of a thematic teaching approach to foster learners' holistic development	4.18	High level
	6. trained me to ease learners of fragmented school activities by effectively and naturally delivering lessons using the approach	4.19	High level
	7. helped me foster a connection between lessons and information across different subjects using the approach	4.26	High level
	8. strengthened my skills by providing meaningful and relevant learning experiences for my students using the thematic teaching approach	4.25	High level
	9. developed my confidence in ensuring that learners completely grasp topics when I use a thematic teaching approach to deliver lessons	4.31	High level
	10. trained me to facilitate time management schemes for learners to complete requirements in the thematic teaching approach.	4.24	High level
Overall Mean		4.20	High level

Table 7

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy when Grouped According to Age

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		Age			
		Mean	Younger Interpretation	Mean	Older Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>					
	1. understand the principles of the thematic teaching approach and the connections across different subjects	4.47	High level	4.48	High level
	2. master the alignment of concepts and competencies to the theme within and across subject areas	4.21	High level	4.18	High level
	3. understand the benefits of using a thematic teaching approach in the delivery of instruction	4.48	High level	4.46	High level
	4. know the importance of the approach in improving the academic achievement of learners	4.45	High level	4.53	Very high level
	5. recognize that it improves the scientific attitude of learners and fosters attitude change	4.46	High level	4.40	High level
	6. understand the importance of the thematic teaching approach in providing a holistic opportunity for learners	4.53	Very high level	4.55	Very high level
	7. understand the potential outcome of a thematic teaching approach, through integrative assessment	4.52	Very high level	4.48	High level
	8. discuss strategies with fellow teachers to motivate learners to achieve meaningful and	4.26	High level	4.27	High level

relevant learning experiences using a thematic teaching approach				
9. know how to prepare activities and materials that will promote learning across subject areas among my learners	4.28	High level	4.28	High level
10. know how to prepare a learning plan for a thematic teaching approach	4.16	High level	4.26	High level
Overall Mean	4.38	High level	4.39	High level

Table 7 shows that both younger and older teachers demonstrate a high level of readiness to implement the thematic teaching approach, with only a slight difference in scores—older teachers averaging 4.39 and younger teachers 4.38. Both groups scored highest on understanding the holistic value of thematic teaching, supporting Zajda and Zajda (2021) and Flaherty (2023), who emphasized how teaching experience helps connect lessons to broader learning goals. However, younger teachers scored lowest on lesson planning (Item 10), while older teachers struggled more with curriculum alignment (Item 2), aligning with findings by Panadero and Lipnevich (2022) and Johnson et al. (2020), who noted that new teachers often lack planning confidence, while experienced ones may need updates on modern curriculum standards. Peer mentoring programs could help bridge these gaps by allowing younger teachers, who may be more familiar with modern methods (Munma & Kalam, 2021), to collaborate with older colleagues who bring depth in classroom practice. This cross-generational support, as Langelaan et al. (2024) suggest, can strengthen implementation by addressing each group's unique needs while enhancing collaboration and confidence.

Table 8

Level of Readiness of Teachers for Implementing Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Program Implementation When Grouped According to Age.

Program Implementation		Age		
Items	Mean	Younger Interpretation	Mean	Older Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>				
1. am trained on how to apply a thematic teaching approach to deliver my lessons	4.35	High level	4.27	High level
2. am ready to apply a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.29	High level	4.19	High level
3. can develop learning resource materials integrating concepts within a theme across different subjects	4.28	High level	4.12	High level
4. can use properly the developed learning resource materials for a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.28	High level	4.13	High level
5. can connect with ease in any learning areas in my lessons taught	4.34	High level	4.08	High level
6. am capable of combining fragmented activities into a single activity or output with ease	4.21	High level	4.03	High level
7. can motivate learners for success through research-based, targeted intervention and practice	4.40	High level	4.13	High level
8. can provide activities for meaningful and relevant learning experiences to my learners using the thematic teaching approach	4.44	High level	4.26	High level
9. can collaborate with subject area teachers to design integrative assessments aligned with the goals of a thematic teaching approach	4.33	High level	4.16	High level
10. calibrate the pacing of learners on their time management schemes to complete requirements in the thematic teaching approach	4.26	High level	4.14	High level
Overall Mean	4.32	High level	4.15	High level

Table 8 shows that both younger and older teachers report a high level of readiness to implement thematic teaching in terms of program implementation, with younger teachers scoring slightly higher (mean = 4.32) than their older counterparts (mean = 4.15). Both groups excelled in creating engaging learning experiences (Item 8), but scored lower in integrating fragmented activities (Item 6), a key component of thematic instruction. This

aligns with studies by Ammar and Ahmad (2024) and Flaherty (2023), which emphasized the need for improved support in this area. Younger teachers' higher confidence may stem from more recent training, as noted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), while older teachers may require updated support to adopt newer strategies (Munma & Kalam, 2021). Despite these differences, both groups show strong potential, supporting Emiru and Gedifew's (2024) claim that experience and targeted training build confidence. To address common challenges, mentoring programs and collaborative planning can help bridge gaps and strengthen teachers' ability to integrate diverse learning activities effectively within a thematic framework.

Table 9

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy when Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy Items	Highest Educational Attainment			
	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>				
1. understand the principles of the thematic teaching approach and the connections across different subjects	4.46	High level	4.49	High level
2. master the alignment of concepts and competencies to the theme within and across subject areas	4.12	High level	4.31	High level
3. understand the benefits of using a thematic teaching approach in the delivery of instruction	4.43	High level	4.52	Very high level
4. know the importance of the approach in improving the academic achievement of learners	4.46	High level	4.55	Very high level
5. recognize that it improves the scientific attitude of learners and fosters attitude change	4.35	High level	4.53	Very high level
6. understand the importance of the thematic teaching approach in providing a holistic opportunity for learners	4.50	Very high level	4.60	Very high level
7. understand the potential outcome of a thematic teaching approach, through integrative assessment	4.44	High level	4.57	Very high level
8. discuss strategies with fellow teachers to motivate learners to achieve meaningful and relevant learning experiences using a thematic teaching approach	4.23	High level	4.32	High level
9. know how to prepare activities and materials that will promote learning across subject areas among my learners	4.29	High level	4.27	High level
10. know how to prepare a learning plan for a thematic teaching approach	4.21	High level	4.23	High level
Overall Mean	4.35	High level	4.44	High level

Table 10

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Program Implementation when Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment.

Program Implementation Items	Highest Educational Attainment			
	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>				
1. am trained on how to apply a thematic teaching approach to deliver my lessons	4.29	High level	4.34	High level
2. am ready to apply a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.23	High level	4.26	High level
3. can develop learning resource materials integrating concepts within a theme across different subjects	4.14	High level	4.27	High level
4. can use properly the developed learning resource materials for a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.16	High level	4.25	High level
5. can connect with ease in any learning areas in my lessons taught	4.14	High level	4.27	High level
6. am capable of combining fragmented activities into a single activity or output with ease	4.06	High level	4.18	High level

7. can motivate learners for success through research-based, targeted intervention and practice	4.18	High level	4.35	High level
8. can provide activities for meaningful and relevant learning experiences to my learners using the thematic teaching approach	4.34	High level	4.34	High level
9. can collaborate with subject area teachers to design integrative assessments aligned with the goals of a thematic teaching approach	4.21	High level	4.27	High level
10. calibrate the pacing of learners on their time management schemes to complete requirements in the thematic teaching approach	4.20	High level	4.18	High level
Overall Mean	4.19	High level	4.27	High level

Table 10 shows that teachers with both lower and higher educational attainment demonstrate a high level of readiness for implementing thematic teaching in terms of program implementation, with those holding higher degrees showing slightly greater confidence (mean 4.27 vs. 4.19). Both groups excelled in creating meaningful learning experiences (Item 8), but scored lower on integrating fragmented activities (Item 6), suggesting a shared challenge. This supports findings by Alzubi et al. (2024) and Ammar & Ahmad (2024), who noted that many teachers struggle to design cohesive, connected lessons. While higher education enhances overall teaching knowledge (Ventista & Brown, 2023), these results show that practical training remains essential for all teachers. Even highly educated teachers may rate themselves more critically, as Mihandoost et al. (2023) suggested. Therefore, regardless of education level, teachers would benefit from hands-on training focused on planning interconnected activities and using classroom resources effectively—key skills for successful thematic teaching.

Table 11

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy when Grouped According to Medium of Instruction.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy Items	Medium of Instruction			
	Filipino Mean	Interpretation	English Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>				
1. understand the principles of the thematic teaching approach and the connections across different subjects	4.46	High level	4.48	High level
2. master the alignment of concepts and competencies to the theme within and across subject areas	4.21	High level	4.19	High level
3. understand the benefits of using a thematic teaching approach in the delivery of instruction	4.42	High level	4.50	Very high level
4. know the importance of the approach in improving the academic achievement of learners	4.50	Very high level	4.49	High level
5. recognize that it improves the scientific attitude of learners and fosters attitude change	4.36	High level	4.47	High level
6. understand the importance of the thematic teaching approach in providing a holistic opportunity for learners	4.56	Very high level	4.53	Very high level
7. understand the potential outcome of a thematic teaching approach, through integrative assessment	4.53	Very high level	4.47	High level
8. discuss strategies with fellow teachers to motivate learners to achieve meaningful and relevant learning experiences using a thematic teaching approach	4.26	High level	4.27	High level
9. know how to prepare activities and materials that will promote learning across subject areas among my learners	4.28	High level	4.28	High level
10. know how to prepare a learning plan for a thematic teaching approach	4.21	High level	4.22	High level
Overall Mean	4.38	High level	4.39	High level

Table 12

Level of Readiness of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Program Implementation When Grouped According to Medium of Instruction.

Program Implementation	Medium of Instruction
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Items	Filipino Mean	Interpretation	English Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>				
1. am trained on how to apply a thematic teaching approach to deliver my lessons	4.26	High level	4.34	High level
2. am ready to apply a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.26	High level	4.22	High level
3. can develop learning resource materials integrating concepts within a theme across different subjects	4.21	High level	4.18	High level
4. can use properly the developed learning resource materials for a thematic teaching approach in my class	4.19	High level	4.20	High level
5. can connect with ease in any learning areas in my lessons taught	4.26	High level	4.16	High level
6. am capable of combining fragmented activities into a single activity or output with ease	4.07	High level	4.14	High level
7. can motivate learners for success through research-based, targeted intervention and practice	4.15	High level	4.31	High level
8. can provide activities for meaningful and relevant learning experiences to my learners using the thematic teaching approach	4.33	High level	4.34	High level
9. can collaborate with subject area teachers to design integrative assessments aligned with the goals of a thematic teaching approach	4.17	High level	4.28	High level
10. calibrate the pacing of learners on their time management schemes to complete requirements in the thematic teaching approach	4.15	High level	4.22	High level
Overall Mean	4.21	High level	4.24	High level

Table 12 shows that both Filipino and English-speaking teachers are highly ready to implement thematic teaching, with English-speaking teachers scoring slightly higher (4.24 vs. 4.21). Both groups feel confident in providing meaningful learning experiences (Item 8, but struggle with combining different activities into a cohesive lesson (Item 6). This suggests that while language does not significantly affect readiness—supporting Murphy et al. (2020)—teachers still need practical support in lesson integration. As Chen (2025) noted, designing integrated activities is time-consuming and requires skill, and Alzubi et al. (2024) and Ammar & Ahmad (2024) emphasized the importance of hands-on training to overcome this challenge. The strong focus on student-centered learning in the Philippines, noted by Tang (2023), may explain the high confidence in engaging learners, but targeted training is still needed to help teachers plan and connect activities more effectively within thematic units.

Table 13

Level of Support of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy when Grouped According to Age

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy Items	Age Younger Mean	Interpretation	Older Mean	Interpretation
<i>The curriculum and implementation division...</i>				
1. trained me to determine competencies and learning activities appropriate for thematic and integrative teaching	4.40	High level	4.34	High level
2. ensured that I am competent and knowledgeable of the objectives and content standards of thematic teaching	4.38	High level	4.28	High level
3. assisted me in developing learners' skills aligned with the frameworks of thematic and integrative teaching	4.33	High level	4.28	High level
4. capacitated me in building connections between lessons and information across different subjects.	4.31	High level	4.25	High level
5. trained me to develop learning resources and assessment materials, integrate evaluation and development of skills across subject areas	4.39	High level	4.24	High level

6. capacitated me to assist my co-teachers in the implementation of a thematic teaching approach in the school	4.33	High level	4.23	High level
7. extended technical assistance so I can efficiently use assessment results from the approach for classroom-based decision making	4.21	High level	4.20	High level
8. capacitated me to efficiently use formative and summative assessments in the thematic teaching approach	4.33	High level	4.23	High level
9. provided a venue for me and other teachers to work collaboratively to ensure that essential competencies within and across subject areas are aligned with the agreed theme included in the developed thematic teaching resource materials	4.34	High level	4.17	High level
10. provided continuous and progressive training on the development and implementation of a thematic teaching approach	4.27	High level	4.09	High level
Overall Mean	4.33	High level	4.23	High level

Table 13 shows that both younger and older teachers feel well-supported in implementing thematic teaching in content knowledge and pedagogy, with younger teachers rating support slightly higher (4.33 vs. 4.23). Both groups gave the highest scores to training on identifying competencies and learning activities, while the lowest scores were on ongoing training, highlighting the need for continuous professional development. This aligns with Smith & Lee (2022), who noted that younger teachers often feel more supported due to recent exposure to new methods, while older teachers may find training less accessible or relevant (Garcia, 2023; Tantawy, 2020). To close this gap, schools should offer regular, age-inclusive training and promote collaboration to boost confidence and effectiveness for all educators, as suggested by Johnson et al. (2021) and Chea (2024). Additionally, younger teachers may benefit from support in using assessment data effectively (Mafarja et al., 2023).

Table 14

Level of Support of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Program Implementation When Grouped According to Age

Program Implementation Items	Age Younger Mean	Interpretation	Older Mean	Interpretation
<i>The curriculum and implementation division...</i>				
1. provided an avenue for pilot implementation of the thematic teaching approach and learning resources to gather feedback from teachers and learners for improvement	3.96	High level	3.98	High level
2. capacitated me in developing learning resource materials for the approach that I can effectively use to deliver lessons across learning areas	4.22	High level	4.11	High level
3. taught me how to apply the developed learning resources for thematic teaching	4.26	High level	4.22	High level
4. helped me foster process skill development while teaching lessons using a thematic teaching approach	4.26	High level	4.21	High level
5. equipped me with the use of a thematic teaching approach to foster learners' holistic development	4.28	High level	4.10	High level
6. trained me to ease learners of fragmented school activities by effectively and naturally delivering lessons using the approach	4.32	High level	4.09	High level
7. helped me foster a connection between lessons and information across different subjects using the approach	4.38	High level	4.17	High level
8. strengthened my skills by providing meaningful and relevant learning experiences for my students using the thematic teaching approach	4.34	High level	4.17	High level
9. developed my confidence in ensuring that learners completely grasp topics	4.38	High level	4.25	High level

when I use a thematic teaching approach to deliver lessons				
younger and older teachers feel adequately supported in implementing thematic teaching approaches in	4.36	High level	4.15	High level

Overall Mean 4.28 High level 4.14 High level

Table 14 shows that both younger and older teachers feel highly supported in implementing thematic teaching, especially in program implementation, with younger teachers rating support slightly higher (4.28) than older ones (4.14). Both groups felt most supported in connecting lessons across subjects and building student understanding (Items 7 and 9), but gave lower scores to opportunities for pilot implementation and feedback (Item 1), pointing to an area needing improvement. This aligns with Evans and Lopez (2021), who noted that younger teachers often benefit from recent training, while older teachers may need more targeted professional development (Roberts, 2022). The strong support for lesson delivery reflects Kim and Park's (2023) emphasis on practical training for thematic teaching, while Smith et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of hands-on pilot testing to refine strategies. Schools should address this gap by offering more opportunities for teachers to test new approaches and gather feedback, helping both age groups improve and adapt their methods effectively.

Table 15

Level of Support of Teachers for the Implementation of Thematic Teaching Approaches in the Area of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy when Grouped According to Highest Educational Attainment.

Content Knowledge and Pedagogy Items	Highest Educational Attainment			
	Lower Mean	Interpretation	Higher Mean	Interpretation
<i>The curriculum and implementation division...</i>				
1. trained me to determine competencies and learning activities appropriate for thematic and integrative teaching	4.38	High level	4.35	High level
2. ensured that I am competent and knowledgeable of the objectives and content standards of thematic teaching	4.30	High level	4.36	High level
3. assisted me in developing learners' skills aligned with the frameworks of thematic and integrative teaching	4.32	High level	4.29	High level
4. capacitated me in building connections between lessons and information across different subjects.	4.28	High level	4.27	High level
5. trained me to develop learning resources and assessment materials, integrate evaluation and development of skills across subject areas	4.26	High level	4.38	High level
6. capacitated me to assist my co-teachers in the implementation of a thematic teaching approach in the school	4.27	High level	4.29	High level
7. extended technical assistance so I can efficiently use assessment results from the approach for classroom-based decision making	4.15	High level	4.29	High level
8. capacitated me to efficiently use formative and summative assessments in the thematic teaching approach	4.27	High level	4.29	High level
9. provided a venue for me and other teachers to work collaboratively to ensure that essential competencies within and across subject areas are aligned with the agreed theme included in the developed thematic teaching resource materials	4.23	High level	4.29	High level
10. provided continuous and progressive training on the development and implementation of a thematic teaching approach	4.14	High level	4.22	High level
Overall Mean	4.26	High level	4.30	High level

Table 15 shows that both teachers with lower and higher educational attainment feel well-supported in using thematic teaching, with only a slight difference in average scores (4.30 for higher-educated vs. 4.26 for lower-educated). Both groups reported the strongest support in areas like using assessments and developing teaching materials (Items 5, 7, and 8), but rated ongoing training (Item 10) the lowest, indicating a need for more continuous learning opportunities. This suggests that while the support environment is generally positive, teachers with higher degrees may feel slightly more confident due to greater academic exposure, as noted by Dela Cruz and Ramos (2021). To ensure equity, schools should provide regular, accessible professional development for all teachers, regardless of educational background. As Lee (2020) and Torres et al. (2022)

emphasized, sustained training and collaborative support are essential to helping all educators grow and succeed in thematic teaching.

II. Qualitative Phase

The qualitative findings reveal five key challenges teachers face in implementing thematic teaching: time constraints, lack of training, limited resources, difficulty in curriculum alignment, and insufficient collaboration. Teachers shared that while thematic teaching is valuable, it demands extensive planning, coordination, and material creation, which are hard to manage due to heavy workloads and limited preparation time. Many felt unprepared because training opportunities were short, outdated, or lacked follow-up, making them hesitant to fully adopt the approach. Access to learning materials and facilities was also a concern—especially in under-resourced schools—forcing teachers to improvise without proper support. Aligning different subjects into cohesive themes proved difficult due to a rigid, compartmentalized curriculum and limited time for joint lesson planning. Finally, collaboration across subjects was weak, as teachers struggled with conflicting schedules, unequal workloads, and lack of institutional support for interdisciplinary planning. Together, these issues show that while teachers are open to thematic teaching, systemic improvements are needed for it to be effectively and sustainably implemented.

Conclusions:

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that while thematic teaching is aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and supports relevant, holistic, and interdisciplinary learning, its application in actual classroom settings is still limited. Teachers generally show readiness and receive support to implement this approach, yet they encounter challenges such as time constraints, limited resources, lack of training, difficulty in curriculum alignment, and weak collaboration across subject areas. These issues highlight the gap between policy and practice. For thematic teaching to be more effective, teachers need continuous professional development focused on integrated lesson planning, contextualized material development, and opportunities for teamwork with colleagues from other disciplines. Institutional support, such as scheduled planning sessions, access to teaching materials, and targeted training programs, must also be strengthened. By addressing these gaps, thematic teaching can be a powerful strategy to improve instruction, enhance student engagement, and promote critical thinking and lifelong learning.

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