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Competency-Based Training for Non-Early Childhood Education Teachers

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Abstract. This study assessed the level of competency of the non-ECE graduates handling K to 3 levels based on the domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) using the Research and Development (R&D) methodology. It reviewed the profile of the respondents' competency level as perceived by themselves and the school heads, the development of the PPST-based teachers' training and its level of validity. The study was conducted at the Schools Division of Abra, Philippines and involved 199 K to 3 teachers. The main tool used in gathering data was the Teachers' Competency Scale (TCS) based on the PPST domains. The data were statistically analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Findings revealed that teachers were competent in five domains but only slightly competent in Domain 1 Content Knowledge and Pedagogy ($M = 3.24$), and Domain 3 Diversity of Learners ($M = 3.25$). The school heads also perceived them as competent in all domains except for Domain 3 Diversity of Learners ($M = 3.23$). Results were used to develop training to address the competency gaps of the K to 3 teachers. The PPST-based training was developed and validated by five experts in the field ($M = 3.92$) and, along with the objectives, content, staff, duration, and assessment technique was found to be highly valid and theoretically grounded in Adult Learning and Social Cognitive theories.

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1. Introduction

Grounded on the Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura, self-efficacy is described as the belief of individuals in their abilities to produce desired behaviors to accomplish tasks. Calaguas & Consunji (2022) state that self-efficacy is the groundwork of motivation, performance, and emotional well-being. Furthermore, Adult Learning Theory emphasizes that adults learn best through self-directed and experience-based approaches that have significant impacts on their lives (Knowles, 1978).

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The concept of self-efficacy in teachers has gained significance in the field of educational research, and researchers in the field of education continue to conduct studies to better understand how self-efficacy progresses during the formative years in the teaching profession. These scholars have tried to determine factors that could influence the self-efficacy that is necessary for the effective delivery of instruction, instructional tools, and classroom management of would-be and practicing teachers (Hayat et al., 2022). Self-efficacy in teaching includes several indicators, such as high competence in pedagogy and content, the classroom environment, diverse needs of learners, curriculum, assessment, linkages, and professional development. In the Philippines, basic education teachers are required to undergo different training sessions and attend conferences to attune themselves to the standards set by the Department of Education (DepEd) as stipulated in the DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, or the national adaptation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).

The PPST contains a set of standards that presents teacher quality in systemic domains, strands, and indicators of self-efficacy; standards which are based on the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) as defined by Valle et al., (2020). Teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy have a greater sense of competence in performing their varied roles in the teaching profession (Lipscomb et al., 2021). In the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Abra, the administrators firmly implement the new educational reform to embrace the changes in the Philippine educational setting. However, most of the K to 3 teachers in this division are non-early childhood education graduates. Owing to the mismatch of their baccalaureate degrees, they experience challenges in pedagogy, assessment/evaluation techniques, classroom management, production of instructional materials, and other aspects of teaching. They may also fail to assist children in their physical and emotional needs because they lack the competence and skills to do so.

Gaps and limitations of studies in relation to teachers' competence aligned with the PPST domains were evident (Bustos-Orosa, 2021; Barrot, 2020; Almerino et al., 2020). These gaps include challenges in providing quality education for all children, appropriate learning equipment, activities that promote diversity of learners, workshops on curriculum planning and learning assessment, and sufficient teacher training programs to enhance professional growth (Karacan et al., 2022). These need to be addressed with appropriate approaches, strategies, or even programs to provide more meaningful teaching experiences for the basic education teachers, particularly in the K to 3 levels, and build a higher sense of competence and skills within themselves (Almasa, 2020). Teacher training and relevant development programs need to be established and implemented to enhance teachers' competence along the different domains (Adegbola, 2022).

The main objective of this study was to determine the level of competencies of these educators based on the domains of the PPST. This study will provide a structured benchmark to evaluate teacher preparedness and effectiveness. By determining their competencies against the PPST domains, those specific pedagogical gaps that may hinder teaching quality will be identified. The results

guided the researcher to develop and design competency-based training to address the evident gaps and to capacitate the teaching competencies of the respondents.

2. Literature Review

The conceptual framework below presents the review of literature and studies undertaken in order to determine existing trends and issues within the main problem of the research.

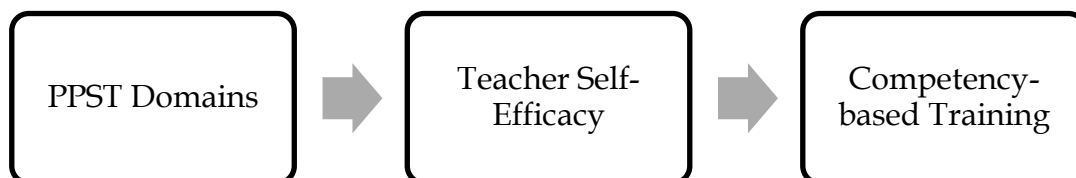


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Literature Review

2.1 Early Childhood Education in the K to 12 Curriculum

The implementation of the K to 12 programs in the Philippines was the start of the growth of basic education, particularly at the early and primary levels. This was evident in the study by Calbi et al. (2019), and is considered a necessary improvement to enhance the quality of education and the nation's success amid the many challenges of its implementation. The implementation of early childhood in the Philippines is handled by two agencies – the Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCDC) for infants, toddlers and pre-kindergarten programs, which cater 0-4-year-old children, and the Department of Education (DepEd) for kindergarten to 3 programs (Bustos-Orosa, 2021).

Llenares et al. (2015) maintain that the implementation of RA 10157, or the Universal Kindergarten Education Act and RA 10533, or Enhanced Basic Education Program is the major step of the Philippine government to attain the goals of Education for All (EFA). This law strengthens the Philippine curriculum by increasing the duration of basic education. As the first stage of compulsory education, the implementation of kindergarten education gradually prepares young children to adjust to formal education (Jalongo, 2021).

The Kindergarten Curriculum Framework is based on the principles and goals of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum and aligned with the National Early Learning Framework (NELF) (Corpuz et al., 2016). It outlines the developmental benchmarks for Filipino children, envisioned to become functionally literate and holistically developed. The curriculum emphasizes the significant role of ECE in the child's brain development to expand and improve childcare and education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (Corpuz et al., 2016). This shift in the Philippine educational landscape offered greater solutions to the country's problems, and required teachers to be proficient in pedagogy, research, assessment, evaluation, and classroom management, as reiterated by Abragan et

al. (2022). Thus, national growth and development can be achieved by investing more time and resources in education.

Challenges such as inadequate preparation and professional development, too great an academic burden on students, and the use of lessons in real-life contexts were noted. Teachers must engage in various training programs and pursue higher education to adapt to changes and ensure their growth aligns with current societal needs. The academic content and pedagogical methods of teachers promote meaningful learning, which produces high performance in the young learners (Justice et al., 2022). In the K to 12 curricula, teachers with different baccalaureate degrees might have experienced difficulty in teaching and delivering instruction to young learners (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015), and they may be ineffective because they do not possess the necessary degree and relevant educational skills to manage young learners.

In summary, ECE in the K to 12 curricula plays a significant role in the holistic development of young learners as it lays the foundation for lifelong learning. Children who start schooling at an early age are given meaningful opportunities to adjust gradually to formal education, and they become better prepared and more competent to learn the varied concepts needed at the primary and intermediate grade levels.

2.2 Teachers in Early Childhood Education

Filipino early childhood educators aimed to address the call for inclusive and quality education for young children (Bustos-Orosa, 2021). However, barriers such as access to quality governance and appropriate learning equipment affect their teaching efficiency and productivity. Early childhood teachers play an important role in children's learning and development. In their findings, Lipscomb et al. (2021) suggested that these educators need support to do their jobs effectively and make meaningful differences in children's lives. Such support may help them engage with their work with young learners with compassion, dedication, and energy.

Kindergarten teachers in the Philippines are mandated to use the National Kindergarten Curriculum Guide for Teachers (NKCGT), which includes specific, clear instructional goals and objectives, along with content coverage, classroom activities, and corresponding learning materials (Omaga & Alieto, 2019). All domains of learning stipulated in the guide should be developed to prepare young learners for the demands of formal education in schools. However, teachers unqualified at the early childhood level offer less to the educational process in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies (Naidoo, 2019) which may result in the continuous decline of young learners' performance and low educational competencies in the K to 3 levels.

Teachers in early childhood education have a significant impact on the lives of their learners when they are equipped with personal and professional skills that make teaching and learning in the early years meaningful and worthwhile and

use differentiated instruction to accommodate the diverse educational needs of the learners under their care.

2.3 Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST)

Professional standards for teachers were crafted to ensure teachers are well-equipped with the skills to manage classroom learning effectively, as emphasized by Espiritu (2021). He further added that standards were raised to adapt to changes driven by national and global frameworks, such as the K to 12 curricula, ASEAN integration, globalization, and the learning attitudes of 21st-century learners. Teachers' competence is similarly highly regarded as the core of the educational endeavor in the Philippines (Malunes & Dioso, 2020). Educators are challenged to develop more complex teaching competencies to meet the demand for skilled graduates in the global workplace.

The PPST is a quality assurance tool in the implementation of the K to 12 curricula, and its domains comprise the strands and indicators that guarantee the manifestation of best teaching practices (Gepila, 2019). The PPST was developed based on the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS), which balances reform initiatives in teacher quality from pre-service to in-service training (Almasa, 2020). It establishes teacher quality in the K to 12 programs through its distinct domains, strands, and indicators that provide standards of competent practice, effective management, and professional learning.

Within a theoretical view, the PPST is anchored in constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning which underline the role that teachers must play in providing active and meaningful learning experiences. In addition, the PPST is aligned with global frameworks such as UNESCO, OECD, and NAEYC standards. The Teacher Policy Development Guide of UNESCO highlights that teacher quality is the foundation of equitable and inclusive education, which aligns with the domains of the PPST, particularly pedagogy, learner diversity, and community linkages. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey emphasizes the significant effects of continuous professional development and teacher collaboration, which resonate across career stages. The global standards for early childhood set by NAEYC emphasize the diversity of learners and developmentally appropriate practices.

2.4 Competency-based Training

Competence is rapidly evolving in the 21st century revealing many challenges which call for innovation and transformation of policies and practices (Winterton, 2017). The different approaches in competence-based education are presented and institutionalized in various ways. The major theories and specific components of educational systems must be acknowledged to synthesize different perspectives to continue improving the teaching profession. Voorhees (2001) explains that competencies are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form learning bundles in relation to the task for which they are assembled.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) methodology using descriptive quantitative analysis for data collection. This approach involved three stages in the R&D process: planning, development and validation, and the final stage. The schematic diagram showing the systemic steps in the development and validation of the competency-based training for non-ECE teachers is illustrated in Figure 2.

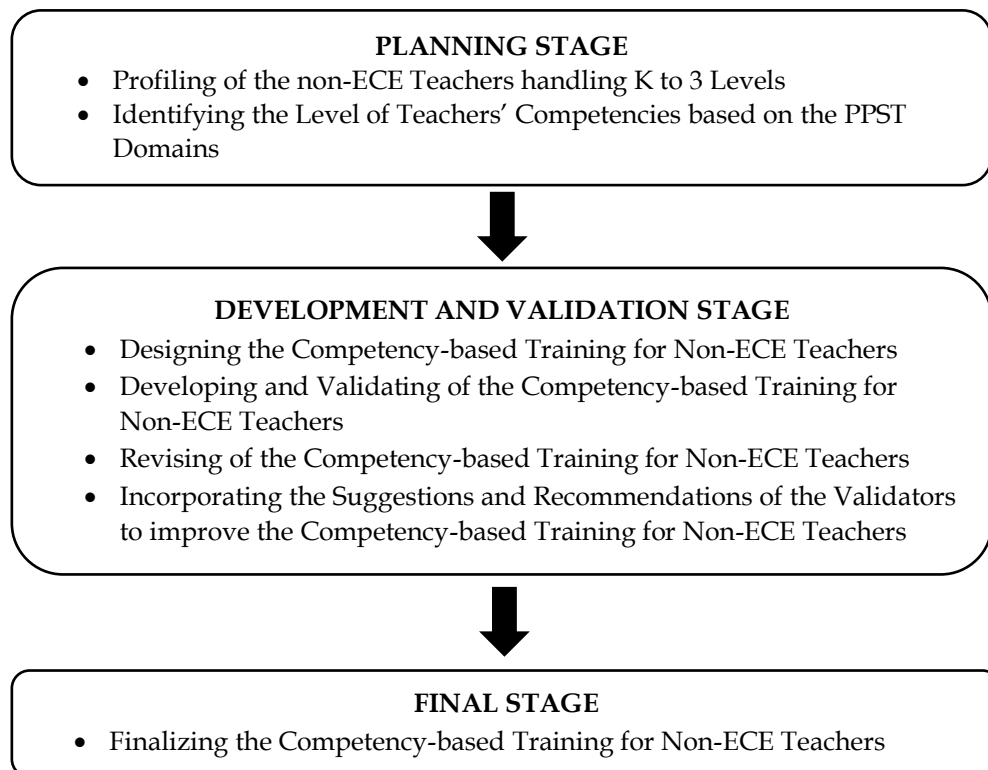


Figure 2: Schematic Diagram of the R&D Stages for the Competency-based Training for Non-ECE Teachers

3.2 Participants of the Study

The proportionate stratified sampling method, using the G*Power statistical software, was employed to determine the required sample size and to obtain more reliable and valid data necessary for the completion of this study. Using G*Power, the researcher set the input parameters as follows: a test family of two-tailed t-tests, an effect size of 0.2, an error probability of 0.05, and a power of 0.80. There are 973 non-ECE teachers handling K to 3 levels in SDO-Abra, and the output parameters resulted in a total sample size of 199. The population of non-ECE teachers in each cluster district was determined, and its corresponding percentage was computed. Further, the proportional sample size distribution for each grade level was calculated by multiplying the total sample size in each cluster by the subtotal percentage for that grade level.

3.3 Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used in this study, namely: 1) Teacher's Competency Scale (TCS) and 2) Competency-based Training Validation Tool. The initial part of the research instrument gathered the personal profile of each of the respondents along with educational background, level handled/taught, and training/conferences/seminars attended, while the indicators of the second part of the TCS were directly lifted from the PPST. An adapted Competency-based Training Validation Tool from the research study of P Zales & Talledo (2022) was employed to assess the effectiveness of the developed competency-based training. The five indicators of the tool are: the objectives of the training, content, persons involved, duration, and assessment techniques.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher requested permission, in writing, from the Schools Division Superintendent to secure documents for the study. On confirmation, the researcher personally handed a letter to the Public School District Supervisors (PSDS) of each cluster district. A separate letter was given to the school heads and K to 3 teachers who were the respondents of this study. The non-ECE teachers handling K to 3 levels and the school heads' list were provided by the Personnel Section of the Schools Division Office (SDO) – Abra. The researcher established a schedule for the respondents in the distribution of the Teacher's Competency Scale (TCS).

Using the established schedule, the researcher distributed the research tool to the K to 3 teachers and retrieved them afterwards. The researcher also asked consent from the school heads to respond to a similar checklist, based on the competence of the teacher respondents involved in this study. The checklist was distributed to them and they were given 20-30 minutes to complete it. After retrieving all the questionnaires from the K to 3 teachers and school heads, all the data gathered from the teachers' competency scale (TCS) were categorized, tallied and tabulated. The descriptive quantitative analysis was utilized in interpreting and analyzing the data.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Profile of the K to 3 teachers

Educational Background		<i>f</i>	%					
Bachelor's degree		107	53.80					
Bachelor's degree with units in ECE		24	12.00					
Bachelor's degree with Master's units not related to ECE		64	32.20					
Bachelor's degree with Master's units related to ECE		0	0.00					
Bachelor's degree with Master's not related to ECE		0	0.00					
Bachelor's degree with Master's related to ECE		4	2.00					
Total		199	100.00					
Level Handled/Taught		<i>f</i>	%					
Kindergarten		49	24.60					
Grade 1		46	22.20					
Grade 2		47	23.60					
Grade 3		57	29.60					
Total		199	100.00					
No. of Training sessions	Local/Division		Regional		National		International	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
0-2	55	27.60	169	84.90	192	96.50	196	98.50
3-5	50	25.20	23	11.60	7	3.50	3	1.50
6-8	18	9.00	5	2.50	0	0.00	0	0.00
9-11	11	5.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
12 or more	65	32.70	2	1.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	199	100.00	199	100.00	199	100.00	199	100.00
No. of Seminars	Local/Division		Regional		National		International	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
0-2	59	29.60	185	93.00	192	96.50	197	99.00
3-5	48	24.10	13	6.50	7	3.50	2	1.00
6-8	27	13.60	1	0.50	0	0.00	0	0.00
9-11	3	1.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
12 or more	62	31.20	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	199	100.00	199	100.00	199	100.00	199	100.00
No. of Conferences	Local/Division		Regional		National		International	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
0-2	146	73.40	199	100.00	199	100.00	198	99.50
3-5	25	12.60	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.50
6-8	5	2.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
9-11	11	5.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
12 or more	12	6.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	199	100.50	199	100.00	199	100.00	199	100.00

Table 1 clarifies the respondents in terms of educational background and who are not qualified in their teaching positions. This means that the respondents are not vertically aligned with the required educational background and qualifications of teachers handling K to 3 levels since they are non-early childhood education degree program graduates and non-Master's degree program holders related to ECE.

As per DepEd Order No. 7, s. 2015, the old hiring guidelines for a Teacher I position require an additional qualification for kindergarten applicants who required a relative degree program in early childhood education and at least 18 units in the aforementioned field. Teachers who have different programs might have experienced difficulty in teaching and delivering instruction to young learners. This idea is supported by the study of Mupa and Chinooneka (2015) that teaching and learning in the primary years can be ineffective if teachers do not possess the appropriate degree and relevant educational skills in handling young learners. Unqualified teachers have less to offer in the educational process in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies (Naidoo, 2019).

In terms of the respondents' population, the results show that there are sufficient K to 3 teachers in SDO-Abra and they are well-distributed among the ECE levels. Hence, since it became universal to strengthen ECE through the implementation of RA 10533 or Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Jalongo, 2021), kindergarten is gradually preparing young children to adjust to formal education. Along with the number of training sessions, the respondents have greater opportunities to attend and participate in local/division-initiated training rather than in the regional, national and international levels. This may be due to the fact that these training opportunities are more cost-efficient, more contextualized to the needs of the teachers, and more accessible due to the proximity of the training venue (Garzon-Artacho et al., 2021).

This implies that the respondents may be affected by several reasons such as lack of time, being loaded with school-related tasks and responsibilities, insufficient funds or other personal matters (Castejon et al., 2020). Teachers in the ECE levels who actively participate in training activities are open to opportunities of continuous professional development which make them competent in their teaching methods and skills (Correos & Huelma, 2022). Along with the seminars attended by the respondents, most of the respondents have engaged in local-based seminars as a professional development activity. Active participation in seminars prepares ECE teachers with substantial knowledge and skills to enhance the quality of early childhood education (Padillo et al., 2021). Teachers receive excellent guidance in instructional delivery and planning, knowledge on subject matter, and classroom management when they are engaged in meaningful seminars.

The majority of the respondents had attended or participated in a minimal number of conferences across all levels because of their long duration and high cost. This suggests that if ECE teachers have limited exposure to conferences, they may lack the competence and ability to demonstrate the extent of their professionalism, understand the ongoing need for professional learning, or display broader teacher roles (Reyes, 2020). Likewise, if they have limited opportunities to attend conferences, the ECE teachers are unable to support and meet the educational needs of their learners because of their incompetence and lack of skill to do so effectively (Correos & Huelma, 2022).

4.2 Competency Domains perceived by non-ECE Graduates

Table 2: Level of Competency on the PPST Domains as Perceived by the non-ECE Teachers

Domains and Indicators	Mean	DI
Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		
1. Content knowledge and its application within and across curriculum areas	3.25	SC
2. Research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning	3.12	SC
3. Positive use of ICT	3.16	SC
4. Strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy	3.14	SC
5. Strategies for developing critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills	3.27	C
6. Mother Tongue, Filipino and English in teaching and learning	3.35	C
7. Classroom communication strategies	3.42	C
Composite Mean	3.24	SC
Domain 2: Learning Environment		
1. Learner safety and security	3.59	C
2. Fair learning environment	3.55	C
3. Management of classroom structure and activities	3.46	C
4. Support for learner participation	3.52	C
5. Promotion of purposive learning	3.42	C
6. Management of learner behavior	3.43	C
Composite Mean	3.50	C
Domain 3: Diversity of Learners		
1. Learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests and experiences	3.41	C
2. Learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and religious backgrounds	3.32	C
3. Learners with disabilities, giftedness and talents	3.09	SC
4. Learners in difficult circumstances	3.22	SC
5. Learners from indigenous groups	3.22	SC
Composite Mean	3.25	SC
Domain 4: Curriculum and Planning		
1. Planning and management of teaching and learning process	3.45	C
2. Learning outcomes aligned with learning competencies	3.50	C
3. Relevance and responsiveness of learning programs	3.38	C
4. Professional collaboration to enrich teaching practice	3.45	C
5. Teaching and learning resources including ICT	3.25	SC
Composite Mean	3.41	C
Domains and Indicators	Mean	DI
Domain 5: Assessment and Reporting		
1. Design, selection, organization and utilization of assessment strategies	3.33	C
2. Monitoring and evaluation of learners' progress and achievement	3.46	C
3. Feedback to improve learning	3.45	C
4. Communication of learners' needs, progress and achievement to key stakeholders	3.46	C
5. Use of assessment data to enhance teaching and learning practices and programs	3.41	C
Composite Mean	3.42	C

Domain 6: Community Linkages and Professional Engagement		
1. Establishment of learning environments that are responsive to community contexts	3.44	C
2. Engagement of parents and the wider school community in the educative process	3.41	C
3. Professional ethics	3.48	C
4. School policies and procedures	3.46	C
Composite Mean	3.45	C
Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development		
1. Philosophy of teaching	3.40	C
2. Dignity of teaching as a profession	3.60	C
3. Professional links with colleagues	3.48	C
4. Professional reflection and learning to improve practice	3.43	C
5. Professional development goals	3.46	C
Composite Mean	3.47	C
Overall Mean	3.39	C
Legend:	Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretations (DI)
	3.26 - 4.00	Competent (C)
	2.51 - 3.25	Slightly Competent (SC)
	1.76 - 2.50	Needs Improvement (NI)
	1.00 - 1.75	Not Competent (NC)

Overall, the responses showed that the respondents are competent in five PPST domains. Of the seven domains, they are most competent in Domain 2 with a composite mean of 3.58, followed by Domain 7, Domain 6, Domain 5, and Domain 4 with composite means of 3.47, 3.45, 3.42, and 3.41, respectively. These results indicate that the ECE teachers are competent in providing safe, secure, fair and supportive learning environments that promote children's responsibility and achievement.

Similarly, they value their personal growth and professional development as they uphold the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession. They are also competent in applying varied assessment tools and strategies to monitor, evaluate, record, and report the development, progress, and achievement of learners (Ismail et al., 2023). However, the slightly competent scores of 3.24 and 3.25, in Domain 1 and Domain 3, respectively revealed that the majority of the K to 3 teachers are less competent in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy because their educational background is not completely in step with ECE. Only a few of them meet the minimum qualifications of teachers handling the ECE levels.

Moreover, they perceived themselves as only slightly competent in terms of content knowledge and pedagogy because of their minimal attendance at and limited opportunities to wider scope training sessions, seminars and conferences since the majority of them are exposed only to locally initiated professional development activities. In the field of the diversity of learners, K to 3 teachers rate as slightly competent in managing the differences of their learners in terms of disabilities, giftedness, difficult circumstances and indigenous groups because most of their educational background is not related to ECE. Thus, they have limited knowledge and competence in managing the diversity of their learners during teaching and learning processes. Their exposure to limited professional

development activities in the regional, national and international levels affects their skills in promoting diverse learning environment.

These results are supported by the ideas of Bual & Jorilla (2021) that content knowledge, pedagogy, and diversity of learners need the greatest improvement of the competencies of the K to 3 teachers. The results of this research could possibly be influenced by the inconsistent integration of diversified programs in the current curriculum and the implementation of teachers' practices in their teaching processes (Gurobat & Lumbu-an, 2022). Likewise, Gepila (2019) emphasized that teachers' reactions to the diversity of learners and pedagogy in ECE pose challenging roles to teachers at present. This serves as a reminder to teachers to update their abilities in coping with the challenges of a diversified community of learners.

4.3 Competency Domains perceived by School Heads

Table 3: Level of Competency on the PPST Domains as Perceived by the School Heads

Domains and Indicators	Mean	DI
Domain 1: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		
1. Content knowledge and its application within and across curriculum areas	3.46	C
2. Research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning	3.15	SC
3. Positive use of ICT	3.07	SC
4. Strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy	3.16	SC
5. Strategies for developing critical and creative thinking, as well as other higher-order thinking skills	3.40	C
6. Mother Tongue, Filipino and English in teaching and learning	3.62	C
7. Classroom communication strategies	3.56	C
Composite Mean	3.35	C
Domain 2: Learning Environment		
1. Learner safety and security	3.64	C
2. Fair learning environment	3.60	C
3. Management of classroom structure and activities	3.51	C
4. Support for learner participation	3.58	C
5. Promotion of purposive learning	3.59	C
6. Management of learner behavior	3.54	C
Composite Mean	3.58	C
Domain 3: Diversity of Learners		
1. Learners' gender, needs, strengths, interests and experiences	3.41	C
2. Learners' linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and religious backgrounds	3.43	C
3. Learners with disabilities, giftedness and talents	3.03	SC
4. Learners in difficult circumstances	3.05	SC
5. Learners from indigenous groups	3.24	SC
Composite Mean	3.23	SC

Domain 4: Curriculum and Planning		
1. Planning and management of teaching and learning process	3.50	C
2. Learning outcomes aligned with learning competencies	3.55	C
3. Relevance and responsiveness of learning programs	3.56	C
4. Professional collaboration to enrich teaching practice	3.55	C
5. Teaching and learning resources including ICT	3.16	SC
Composite Mean	3.46	C
Domains and Indicators		
	Mean	DI
Domain 5: Assessment and Reporting		
1. Design, selection, organization and utilization of assessment strategies	3.40	C
2. Monitoring and evaluation of learners' progress and achievement	3.48	C
3. Feedback to improve learning	3.55	C
4. Communication of learners' needs, progress and achievement to key stakeholders	3.55	C
5. Use of assessment data to enhance teaching and learning practices and programs	3.49	C
Composite Mean	3.49	C
Domain 6: Community Linkages and Professional Engagement		
1. Establishment of learning environments that are responsive to community contexts	3.50	C
2. Engagement of parents and the wider school community in the educative process	3.58	C
3. Professional ethics	3.54	C
4. School policies and procedures	3.54	C
Composite Mean	3.54	C
Domain 7: Personal Growth and Professional Development		
1. Philosophy of teaching	3.49	C
2. Dignity of teaching as a profession	3.56	C
3. Professional links with colleagues	3.56	C
4. Professional reflection and learning to improve practice	3.43	C
5. Professional development goals	3.48	C
Composite Mean	3.50	C
Overall Mean	3.46	C
Legend:	Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretations (DI)
	3.26 - 4.00	Competent (C)
	2.51 - 3.25	Slightly Competent (SC)
	1.76 - 2.50	Needs Improvement (NI)
	1.00 - 1.75	Not Competent (NC)

On the whole, the school heads perceived the K to 3 teachers in their respective schools as competent in the different topics they are teaching, as ensuring a conducive learning environment, strengthening partnerships in the community and professional development, promoting professional growth and professional development, assessing learning and planning the curriculum. However, the K to 3 teachers need more guidance in Domain 3. With a mean of 3.23, teachers were regarded as slightly competent in this area, particularly in respect of learners with disabilities, giftedness and talents, learners in difficult circumstances, and learners from indigenous groups. Also, within Domain 1, three indicators registered as

slightly competent: research-based knowledge and principles of teaching and learning, positive use of ICT, and strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy.

The findings show that the school heads perceive the K to 3 teachers as slightly competent in promoting a diversified learning environment that caters to the individual differences of learners and in applying research-based knowledge of teaching and learning, in positive use of ICT and strategies that promote literacy and numeracy. Notably, the significant roles of school heads are to direct, oversee and participate in the enhancement of teachers' skills and competencies through participating in varied professional development activities (Ismail et al., 2023). A further role of school heads is to provide constructive feedback to inform their teachers on the domains that need improvement (Gepila, 2019).

4.4 Summary of the Competency Gaps

Table 4: Summary of the Competency Gaps across the PPST Domains

PPST Domains	Non-ECE Graduates		School Heads	
	Mean	DI	Mean	DI
Domain 1	3.24	Slightly Competent	3.35	Competent
Domain 2	3.50	Competent	3.58	Competent
Domain 3	3.25	Slightly Competent	3.23	Slightly Competent
Domain 4	3.41	Competent	3.46	Competent
Domain 5	3.42	Competent	3.49	Competent
Domain 6	3.45	Competent	3.54	Competent
Domain 7	3.47	Competent	3.50	Competent
Overall	3.39	Competent	3.46	Competent

Table 4 presents the summary of the competency gaps across the PPST domains as perceived by the non-ECE graduates and school heads. The non-ECE graduates and school heads rated the teachers as competent across the domains of the PPST. On the competency gaps in Domain 1, the non-ECE graduates perceived themselves as slightly competent while the school heads assessed them as competent. Both groups were perceived as slightly competent in Domain 3, indicating a shared perception in addressing diversity among learners.

4.5 Validation of Competency-based Training

Table 5: Validation Results of the Competency-based training for non-ECE Teachers

	Indicators	Mean	DI
Objectives			
1.	The objectives of the training are specific, measurable, attainable, time-bound, and realistic.	4.00	V
2.	The objectives of the training address the low-level competencies of the K to 3 teachers who are non-ECE graduates.	4.00	V
3.	The objectives of the training are appropriate to the standards of the PPST for K to 3 teachers.	3.80	V
Composite Mean		3.93	V
Content			
1.	The topics of the training are relevant and appropriate.	4.00	V
2.	The topics of the training are sequenced logically.	3.60	V
3.	The topics of the training provide meaningful learning experiences.	4.00	V
Composite Mean		3.87	V
Staff/Persons Involved			
1.	The staff of the teachers' training is knowledgeable about the training topics.	4.00	V
2.	The staff of the teachers' training are well-prepared.	4.00	V
3.	The staff of the teachers' training command respect and attention.	4.00	V
Composite Mean		4.00	V
Duration			
1.	The time allotted for the teachers' training is sufficient.	4.00	V
2.	Ample time is given to the speakers to present and discuss their assigned topics.	4.00	V
3.	The participants are given enough time to ask and process their queries.	4.00	V
Composite Mean		4.00	V
Assessment/Evaluative Techniques			
1.	The training activities engage the participants to utilize their full potentials.	4.00	V
2.	The designed evaluative techniques measure the teaching competence of the participants.	4.00	V
3.	There is an appropriate set of rubrics for workshop/output critiquing.	3.40	V
Composite Mean		3.80	V
OVERALL MEAN		3.92	V
Legend:	Range of Means	Descriptive Interpretations (DI)	
	3.26 - 4.00	Valid (V)	
	2.51 - 3.25	Slightly Valid (SV)	
	1.76 - 2.50	Needs Improvement (NI)	
	1.00 - 1.75	Not Valid (NV)	

On the whole, the training obtained was valid with an overall weighted mean of 3.92, indicating that the developed training is effective in addressing the low-level competencies of the K to 3 teachers within the domains of PPST. The results indicate that the training objectives garnered a composite mean of 3.93, described

as valid, meaning that the objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound, which are the characteristics of good objectives. Clear and realistic objectives determine what has been set out for the participants to achieve or attain (Espiritu, 2021).

The content of the training was valid, with a mean of 3.87, implying that the content of the training is relevant and appropriate. Thus, appropriate training content can create positive experiences for the participants. Karacan et al. (2022) emphasized that the content must be relevant to the interests and needs of the teachers to make a meaningful impact as they engage with the training's topics. With the staff/persons involved, the validators' responses are notable as shown with the mean of 4.00, also described as valid. This result means that the program resource persons are knowledgeable about their topics and can command respect and attention from the participants.

The duration of the training is rated as valid, with its composite mean of 4.00. This result agrees with the idea of Padillo et al. (2021) that, to sustain participants' attention and focus, the duration of training should not be too long. The participants should be given enough time to raise their questions for further clarification about the topics presented (Almasa, 2020). Lastly, on the assessment and evaluative techniques, the training attained a composite mean of 3.80, rated as valid. This rating implies that the activities of the training will develop the utilization of the participants' potential. In a similar study, developers provide evaluative tools in their training sessions to gather feedback and comments for improvement (Roallos, 2022). Assessment techniques check the overall understanding of the participants on the topics discussed which maximize their full potential and higher order thinking skills (Garzon-Artacho et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence of competency gaps among non-ECE K-3 teachers within the PPST framework. The validated PPST-based training model, grounded in *Adult Learning* and *Social Cognitive* theories, offers a structured approach to improve teachers' pedagogical competencies. The Department of Education may adopt this model for continuous professional development. Future studies should replicate the design across regions to establish national standards.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest encountered in this study.

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