

# The Effectiveness of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) Approach on the Vocabulary Development of the Grade 1 Learners in the Public Elementary Schools in the Division of Camarines Sur

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## ABSTRACT

Developing strong vocabulary skills during the early grades is fundamental to reading proficiency, comprehension, and overall academic success. In response to persistent literacy challenges among Filipino learners, this study examined the effectiveness of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach in enhancing the vocabulary development of Grade 1 learners in public elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Sur during School Year 2024–2025. The study specifically assessed the extent of utilization of ILE in terms of interdisciplinary projects, hands-on learning, collaborative learning, real-world connections, and parental involvement, as well as its effectiveness in improving learners' vocabulary, comprehension skills, engagement and participation, feedback responsiveness, and longitudinal progress. A descriptive–evaluative research design was employed, involving Grade 1 public elementary school teachers from different types of schools across the division. Data were gathered through a validated researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean, ranking, Kendall's coefficient of concordance, and chi-square tests to determine levels of utilization, effectiveness, challenges encountered, and the degree of agreement among respondents. Findings revealed that the ILE approach was highly utilized across all instructional dimensions and was highly effective in improving Grade 1 learners' vocabulary development and related literacy outcomes. Significant improvements were noted in learners' vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and engagement, while parental involvement and real-world learning connections strengthened the relevance and sustainability of learning. Challenges encountered by teachers included time constraints, limited resources, assessment complexities, and varying levels of expertise; however, respondents proposed practical and sustainable solutions such as targeted teacher training, improved instructional planning, and strengthened school–home collaboration. The study concludes that the Integrated Learning Experience approach is an effective and contextually responsive strategy for enhancing early vocabulary development. The results provide empirical support for strengthening integrated and learner-centered approaches in early grade literacy instruction and offer valuable inputs for policy formulation, instructional improvement, and school-based action planning aimed at achieving foundational literacy goals.

## 1. Introduction

Vocabulary development is a fundamental component of early literacy and serves as a critical predictor of learners' reading comprehension, language proficiency, and overall academic success. During the early grades, particularly in Grade 1, learners transition from emergent literacy to more formal reading and language use. At this stage, the breadth and depth of vocabulary that learners acquire significantly influence their ability to understand texts, express ideas, and engage meaningfully in learning activities across subject areas. Consequently, instructional approaches that effectively support vocabulary development in the early years are essential to strengthening foundational literacy.

Traditional approaches to vocabulary instruction in early grades often emphasize isolated word learning and rote memorization, which may limit learners' ability to use language meaningfully and contextually. In response, integrated and learner-centered instructional approaches have gained increasing attention for their potential to promote authentic language use, conceptual understanding, and active engagement. The Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach is grounded in constructivist learning theory and emphasizes interdisciplinary learning, hands-on activities, collaborative experiences, real-world connections, and active learner participation. By integrating vocabulary instruction across subject areas and learning contexts, ILE allows learners to encounter and use new words in meaningful, functional, and engaging ways.

In the Philippine basic education context, strengthening early grade literacy remains a national priority. Persistent challenges in reading proficiency, particularly in vocabulary and comprehension, have prompted education authorities to emphasize learner-

centered pedagogies and contextualized instruction. The Department of Education’s curriculum reforms highlight the importance of foundational skills, integration across learning areas, and the active involvement of learners, teachers, and families in the learning process. Within this framework, approaches such as ILE align with national goals of improving early literacy outcomes through holistic and developmentally appropriate instruction.

Despite strong policy support for integrated learning approaches, their classroom implementation varies widely due to differences in teacher preparedness, availability of instructional resources, time constraints, and assessment practices. In early grade classrooms, where teachers must address diverse learner needs and developmental levels, implementing integrated approaches requires careful planning and sustained support. Empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the ILE approach in enhancing vocabulary development, particularly in public elementary schools, remains limited and context-specific, underscoring the need for systematic investigation.

The Division of Camarines Sur provides a relevant context for examining the effectiveness of integrated instructional approaches in early literacy. As one of the largest school divisions in the region, it encompasses diverse school settings with varying levels of resources and learner backgrounds. Understanding how the ILE approach is utilized by Grade 1 teachers and how it influences learners’ vocabulary development can inform instructional practices, teacher professional development, and policy implementation at both the school and division levels.

This study therefore investigates the effectiveness of the Integrated Learning Experience approach in improving the vocabulary development of Grade 1 learners in public elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Sur. By examining both the extent of utilization of ILE and its perceived impact on learners’ vocabulary and related literacy outcomes, the study aims to contribute empirical evidence to the discourse on early grade literacy instruction and to support the development of integrated, learner-centered strategies that strengthen foundational language skills.

**2. Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive–evaluative research design to determine the effectiveness of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach in improving the vocabulary development of Grade 1 learners in public elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Sur during School Year 2024–2025. The design was appropriate for describing the extent to which ILE strategies were utilized by teachers, evaluating their perceived effectiveness on learners’ vocabulary and related literacy outcomes, and examining the level of agreement among respondents regarding instructional practices and results. The study focused on evaluative assessment rather than causal inference, consistent with its aim of documenting current practices and outcomes in authentic classroom settings.

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools across the Division of Camarines Sur, which includes schools classified as small, medium, and large based on enrollment size. This diverse educational context allowed for a comprehensive examination of ILE implementation across varying school conditions. The respondents consisted of Grade 1 public elementary school teachers who were directly involved in early grade instruction and the implementation of integrated learning strategies. Teachers were considered the most appropriate respondents due to their direct observation of learners’ vocabulary development and instructional engagement.

Data were gathered using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire anchored on constructivist learning theory, integrated curriculum frameworks, and early literacy research. The instrument measured the extent of utilization of the ILE approach in terms of interdisciplinary projects, hands-on learning activities, collaborative learning, real-world connections, and parental involvement. It also assessed the effectiveness of ILE in improving learners’ vocabulary development, comprehension skills, engagement and participation, feedback responsiveness, and longitudinal progress. Responses were recorded using a Likert-type scale to facilitate quantitative analysis. Prior to administration, the instrument underwent expert validation to ensure content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the objectives of the study, and reliability testing was conducted to establish internal consistency.

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate education authorities. The questionnaires were personally distributed and retrieved to ensure a high response rate and data completeness. Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the research process, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of responses. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

Data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Weighted means and rankings were used to determine the extent of ILE utilization and its effectiveness across different instructional and outcome dimensions. To assess the degree of agreement among respondents in ranking the utilization and effectiveness indicators, Kendall’s coefficient of concordance (*W*) was applied, with the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test used to determine statistical significance at the 0.05 level. These analytical procedures enabled a systematic and robust evaluation of the implementation and perceived impact of the Integrated Learning Experience approach on early vocabulary development.

**3. Results and Discussions**

*3.1 Extent of Utilization of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) Approach*

Table 1 presents the extent to which Grade 1 teachers utilized the Integrated Learning Experience approach in their instructional practices.

Table 1. Extent of Utilization of the ILE Approach

ILE Dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Hands-on Learning Activities	4.57	Highly Utilized
Interdisciplinary Projects	4.54	Highly Utilized

Collaborative Learning	4.52	Highly Utilized
Real-World Learning Connections	4.48	Highly Utilized
Parental Involvement	4.45	Highly Utilized

The results indicate that the ILE approach is highly utilized across all instructional dimensions. The highest rating for hands-on learning activities suggests that teachers frequently engage learners in experiential tasks such as games, storytelling, manipulatives, and contextualized activities that support active vocabulary acquisition. This reflects strong adherence to developmentally appropriate practices, particularly important for Grade 1 learners who learn language most effectively through interaction and concrete experiences.

High utilization of interdisciplinary projects demonstrates teachers' capacity to integrate vocabulary instruction across subject areas, enabling learners to encounter and use new words in varied and meaningful contexts. This approach supports deeper word understanding and transfer of learning, as vocabulary is not confined to isolated language lessons. Similarly, the strong rating for collaborative learning highlights the role of peer interaction in reinforcing vocabulary development through dialogue, shared tasks, and social negotiation of meaning.

Although still rated highly, parental involvement and real-world connections obtained slightly lower weighted means. This suggests that while teachers recognize the importance of extending learning beyond the classroom, implementation may be influenced by external factors such as parents' availability, home resources, and contextual constraints. Nonetheless, the overall findings confirm that ILE is consistently embedded in early grade instructional practice.

3.2 Agreement on the Rank Order of ILE Utilization Dimensions

To determine the consistency of teachers' perceptions, Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) and the chi-square test were applied.

Table 2. Test of Agreement on ILE Utilization

Kendall's W	$\chi^2$	p-value	Interpretation
0.72	18.95	< 0.05	Significant

The statistically significant agreement indicates that teachers share a common understanding of the relative importance of ILE components. This consensus suggests instructional coherence across schools and strengthens the reliability of the reported utilization levels.

3.3 Effectiveness of the ILE Approach on Vocabulary Development

Table 3 presents the extent of effectiveness of the ILE approach in improving learners' vocabulary and related literacy outcomes.

Table 3. Effectiveness of the ILE Approach on Learners' Outcomes

Outcome Dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Vocabulary Development	4.59	Highly Effective
Learner Engagement and Participation	4.56	Highly Effective
Comprehension Skills	4.54	Highly Effective
Feedback Responsiveness	4.50	Highly Effective
Longitudinal Learning Progress	4.46	Highly Effective

The findings reveal that the ILE approach is highly effective in enhancing learners' vocabulary development, which emerged as the most strongly affected outcome. This result indicates that integrated, contextualized, and experiential learning opportunities significantly improve learners' ability to acquire, retain, and use new words. Exposure to vocabulary across multiple learning contexts allows learners to develop deeper semantic understanding rather than surface-level word recognition.

High ratings in learner engagement and participation further demonstrate that ILE fosters motivation and active involvement, both of which are essential for early language learning. When learners are engaged in interactive and meaningful tasks, they are more likely to experiment with language and apply new vocabulary in authentic situations. The strong impact on comprehension skills suggests that vocabulary gains translate into improved understanding of spoken and written texts, reinforcing the interdependence of vocabulary and comprehension in early literacy development.

Although still highly effective, longitudinal learning progress obtained the lowest weighted mean among the outcomes. This finding implies that while immediate vocabulary gains are evident, sustained monitoring and reinforcement are necessary to ensure long-term retention and progression. This underscores the importance of continuity and consistency in implementing integrated learning approaches beyond a single grade level.

3.4 Agreement on the Rank Order of Effectiveness Dimensions

Table 4. Test of Agreement on Effectiveness of the ILE Approach

Kendall's W	$\chi^2$	p-value	Interpretation
0.69	17.42	< 0.05	Significant

The significant agreement among respondents indicates shared recognition of the outcomes most influenced by the ILE approach. This consistency strengthens the credibility of the findings and suggests that the observed effects are broadly experienced across different school contexts.

3.5 Challenges Encountered in Implementing the ILE Approach

Teachers identified several challenges affecting the implementation of the ILE approach.

Table 5. Challenges Encountered in ILE Implementation

Challenge	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Time Constraints in Lesson Planning	4.44	Serious Challenge
Limited Instructional Resources	4.41	Serious Challenge
Assessment Complexity	4.35	Serious Challenge
Varying Teacher Expertise	4.30	Serious Challenge
Large Class Size	4.22	Challenge

Time constraints and limited resources emerged as the most serious challenges, reflecting the demands of designing integrated lessons and preparing varied instructional materials. The complexity of assessing learning in integrated contexts further highlights the need for appropriate assessment tools that capture holistic learning outcomes rather than isolated skills.

3.5 Discussion and Analytical Interpretation

The findings clearly demonstrate that the Integrated Learning Experience approach is both highly utilized and highly effective in improving the vocabulary development of Grade 1 learners. The consistent integration of hands-on, collaborative, and interdisciplinary activities reflects teachers’ commitment to learner-centered instruction aligned with early childhood learning principles.

The strong impact on vocabulary and comprehension confirms theoretical assertions that young learners acquire language most effectively through meaningful use and repeated exposure across contexts. The significant agreement among teachers across utilization and effectiveness dimensions indicates institutional readiness and shared pedagogical understanding, which are essential for sustaining instructional innovations.

However, the challenges identified suggest that effective implementation of ILE requires systemic support. Time, resources, and assessment capacity remain critical factors that influence instructional quality. Addressing these challenges through targeted professional development, provision of instructional materials, and development of appropriate assessment frameworks can further enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of integrated learning approaches.

Overall, the results affirm that the Integrated Learning Experience approach provides a powerful and contextually responsive strategy for strengthening early vocabulary development. When supported by appropriate resources and institutional commitment, ILE has the potential to significantly contribute to improved foundational literacy and long-term academic success among early grade learners.

4. Conclusions and Implications

4.1 Conclusions

This study examined the effectiveness of the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) approach in improving the vocabulary development of Grade 1 learners in public elementary schools in the Division of Camarines Sur. The findings provide strong empirical evidence that the ILE approach is consistently and extensively utilized by teachers across key instructional dimensions, including hands-on learning, interdisciplinary integration, collaborative activities, real-world connections, and parental involvement. These practices reflect a learner-centered and developmentally appropriate approach to early literacy instruction.

The results further demonstrate that the ILE approach is highly effective in enhancing learners’ vocabulary development, learner engagement, and comprehension skills. The integration of vocabulary instruction across subject areas and learning experiences allows learners to acquire and apply new words in meaningful contexts, leading to deeper understanding and improved language use. The positive impact on engagement and participation suggests that ILE fosters motivation and active involvement, which are critical for sustained language learning in the early grades. While gains in longitudinal learning progress were evident, the findings indicate that continued and consistent implementation is necessary to ensure long-term retention and cumulative vocabulary growth.

Overall, the study concludes that the Integrated Learning Experience approach is a viable and effective instructional strategy for strengthening early vocabulary development. Its effectiveness underscores the importance of integrated, experiential, and collaborative learning in building strong foundations for literacy and academic success.

4.2 Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

From a policy perspective, the findings support the institutionalization of integrated learning approaches within early grade literacy programs. Education authorities may consider strengthening curriculum guidelines and instructional standards that explicitly promote integrated and experiential learning for vocabulary development. Allocating adequate resources, time, and instructional support for early grade teachers can further enhance the sustainability of ILE implementation.

In terms of educational practice, the results highlight the importance of equipping teachers with the skills and tools necessary to design and implement integrated learning experiences effectively. Continuous professional development focusing on interdisciplinary planning, developmentally appropriate strategies, and assessment of integrated learning outcomes can help address identified challenges related to time constraints and assessment complexity. Strengthening parental involvement through structured home–school collaboration can also extend vocabulary learning beyond the classroom.

For school leadership and governance, the study emphasizes the role of administrators in creating enabling conditions for integrated instruction. Supportive leadership practices—such as collaborative planning time, access to instructional materials, and

recognition of innovative teaching strategies—can foster consistent and high-quality implementation of the ILE approach across classrooms and schools.

With regard to future research, further studies may employ longitudinal and experimental designs to examine the long-term effects of the ILE approach on vocabulary retention, reading comprehension, and overall literacy achievement. Investigating learners' perspectives and classroom observations can also provide deeper insights into the processes through which integrated learning experiences influence language development.

In conclusion, strengthening the use of the Integrated Learning Experience approach offers a promising pathway for improving early vocabulary development and foundational literacy. When supported by coherent policies, effective teaching practices, and strong school leadership, ILE can contribute significantly to the development of confident, engaged, and literate learners in the early grades.

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