

DETERMINING THE LEVEL OF TEACHING COMPETENCIES OF GRADE 2 AND 3 TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN AGUINALDO, IFUGAO

Sunshine Chumawat
Northeastern College, Santiago City

Article History:

Received: May 5, 2026

Revised: June 12, 2026

Accepted: June 14, 2026

Keywords:

Teaching Competencies,
Classroom Challenges,
Professional Development

DOI:

10.65141/sjter.v3i1n6



Copyright © 2026 by the
author(s). This open-
access article is
distributed under the
Creative Commons
Attribution 4.0
International License.

Abstract

Teaching competencies are essential in ensuring effective classroom instruction; however, teachers continue to face various challenges that may affect their performance and professional growth. This study investigated the teaching competencies and challenges encountered by Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in the public elementary schools of Aguinaldo, Ifugao, during the School Year 2025-2026. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving all Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers selected through total enumeration sampling. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). Findings revealed that the respondents were generally experienced and professionally stable teachers who actively participated in professional development activities. The teachers demonstrated high to very high levels of competence in pedagogy, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices. Despite their strong competencies, they encountered moderate challenges related to diverse learner abilities, limited instructional resources, workload demands, and parental support. Furthermore, a very strong and significant relationship was found between teaching competencies and the challenges encountered, indicating that teachers continuously develop and strengthen their competencies in response to classroom demands. The study concludes that while challenges remain prevalent in the teaching profession, Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers possess the necessary competencies to effectively address these concerns. The findings highlight the importance of sustained professional development, adequate instructional support, and collaborative school interventions to further enhance teacher effectiveness and improve educational outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the basis for social, economic, and cognitive growth. It shapes the next generation so that they can be useful members of society. The quality of education is still a significant issue around the world, and teacher competence is a key aspect that affects how well students learn. Niazi (2025) emphasized that education is universally acknowledged as a crucial foundation for personal growth and societal progress. It is a strong tool for personal growth since it helps people learn the skills and information they need to deal with life's problems. Education is also very important for building social cohesion and economic stability; thus, it should be a top priority for politicians and communities all over the world. To be a good teacher, you need to know a lot about the subject, be good at teaching, be able to manage a classroom, and be able to meet the requirements of different students. Studies have continuously demonstrated that teacher abilities are strongly linked to student achievement, engagement, and motivation, underscoring the essential role of educators in educational reform and development.

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has put the K-12 curriculum into place to improve learning at all grade levels. The focus is on learner-centered instruction and mastering important skills. Even with these changes, there are still differences, especially in rural areas where teaching and learning are affected by a lack of resources, geographic isolation, and socioeconomic problems. In these situations, teachers typically have to do many things at once, such as apply the curriculum, motivate students, be a counselor, and lead the community. All of these roles require a lot of skill and strength.

Focusing on Grades 2 and 3, these levels are very important for a student's academic journey since they are when pupils move from basic skills to more difficult ideas in reading, writing, and other general education disciplines. Teachers are very important for helping students master these skills, but they often have problems that make it harder for them to do their jobs well. Teaching quality might suffer when there aren't enough teaching resources, classes are too big, students have different learning styles, or teachers don't have enough chances to improve their skills. This is especially true in public primary schools that are located in remote and poor locations. Kingsford-Smith et al. (2023) highlighted that the conditions under which teachers work affect their health. Nonetheless, the influence of school location on these connections remains inadequately understood. The present study employed a multigroup structural equation model to discern the similarities and differences in the relationships among job demands/resources, self-efficacy, and teacher well-being across rural, regional, and metropolitan contexts.

This study aims to examine the teaching competencies and problems faced by Grade 2 and 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, offering insights into their professional practices, instructional efficacy, and the contextual factors influencing their teaching.

Literature Review

Teacher Competency Frameworks and Professional Standards

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) is a reference framework created during Secretary Leonor M. Briones' leadership of the Department of Education. It originated from Department Order 42, series of 2017. A similar departmental order stated that

the adoption of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) serves as a reference framework to fulfill teachers' obligations, thereby improving the quality of education. Furthermore, it specified the aims of the reference framework as follows: (1) to set clear expectations for educators, (2) to act as the benchmark for teachers' professional progression, and most importantly, (3) to serve as a guide in identifying teachers' needs and interventions (D.O 42 S. 2017, 2017).

The results of the study conducted by Harun (2025) showed that while the participants had a strong understanding of the subject content, they held modest views of their teaching methods and classroom management, and displayed a significant lack of confidence in integrating technology into their lesson plans. These findings underscore the imperative for teacher training programs to effectively balance theoretical knowledge with practical application, particularly regarding digital tool utilization and classroom management. The study indicates that enhancing opportunities for experiential learning and integrating technology-oriented training could significantly elevate prospective educators' pedagogical competence.

Similarly, Szabó-Thalmeiner (2022) emphasized that competency-based teacher training and development have been a global practice for 60 years. The technique was adopted into Romanian teacher training in the twenty-first century, and a set of competencies for kindergarten teachers and teacher training was officially included in the national register of qualifications in tertiary education (RNCIS1) in 2012. This study analyzes the abilities relevant to kindergarten educators and their training, emphasizing the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be cultivated. Structuring training around competencies can promote the intentional design of the training process, improve the educator's efficacy, and assist students in recognizing their professional self-development. Moreover, the competencies listed in the national registration of credentials in tertiary education (RNCIS) are comprehensive, following a plan-implement-assess framework.

In parallel, Bai and Ai (2022) stated that professional vital talents include the fundamental personality traits and practical abilities that meet job requirements. They function as an essential reference for the selection and training of kindergarten educators. A tentative three-tier professional competency model for kindergarten educators has been established. The innermost layer of the model embodies the core professional ideals of kindergarten teachers, the middle layer encompasses the four key personality traits of these educators, and the outer layer comprises the nine vital action competencies required of kindergarten instructors.

As stated by Banjarnahor et al. (2023), the teacher's inadequate comprehension of 21st-century learning competencies obstructs classroom implementation. Technological improvements in education should have positively impacted the learning process and improved teacher competencies. Suboptimal conditions exist in schools when educators' proficiency is insufficient. Instruction continues to be conventional and educator-centric. The solution to this problem is to engage in training provided by the foundation. The results of this study cannot be disclosed as the research remains unfinished.

Dimensions and Structure of Teaching Competence

Nagy, J. (2000) examines the structure of competence. He asserts that competence is a facet of personality, incorporating cognitive elements (knowledge, skills, and abilities) as well as motivational and regulatory dimensions (habits, patterns, and motifs) of individual traits. Competence simultaneously serves as a basic element of personality. Nagy asserts that personality consists of four key talents: personal (centered on individual survival), social (centered on societal survival), cognitive (centered on information processing), and specialized competencies, crucial for effective professional performance. The four categories of competence are interrelated, with identifiable overlaps; for example, the extent of cognitive competence may influence the development of personal, social, and specialized competencies.

Hermoso and Brobo (2023) assert that teaching competencies comprise the skills and knowledge necessary for a teacher to attain professional efficacy. The results demonstrated that the teachers displayed remarkably elevated levels of motivational and cognitive skills about personal performance. Despite differences in their average evaluations, motivational competence ranks highest, followed by cognitive competence, both of which maintain a highly elevated status. The educators demonstrated an extraordinary degree of professional proficiency. Communication abilities earned the highest mean rating, and teaching competency garnered a lower mean score. Both transpire at an elevated level.

Further reinforcing the multidimensional perspective, Nikola (2021) emphasized that the educational process is inherently cyclical, requiring instructors to have a thorough set of competencies. The analytical results revealed that teachers, based on their self-assessments, assign considerable importance to all diverse ability areas, fully supporting the main concept. The findings revealed statistically significant variations in the expression of views towards competency groups for independent research factors. The initial idea was dismissed, the second was largely validated, whilst the third and fourth hypotheses were entirely corroborated.

According to Odescalchi et al. (2024), the significance of instructors' interpersonal skills in employing measures to enhance social participation among these pupils. Teachers who rated their interpersonal skills more highly employed a greater number of direct and indirect social involvement tactics.

Utami et al. (2021) confirmed that the consensus levels among raters were primarily classified as no agreement, highlighting disparities in perceptions between instructors and principals. The utilization of a multi-rater methodology in this study is a rare undertaking, especially in the realm of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Indonesia. Research on pedagogical skills and efficacy generally entails a sole assessor, either educators or administrators, evaluating their own capabilities and performance, leading to subjective results.

Teaching Competencies in Early Childhood and Elementary Education

The study of Caingcoy, M. (2022), it was established that kindergarten educators have advanced competencies in subject knowledge and pedagogy, learning settings and learner diversity, curriculum development and planning, as well as evaluation and reporting. These indicate that they demonstrate virtually all the competencies of proficient educators. The

results revealed a substantial level of professional requirements in subject knowledge, pedagogy, the learning environment, and learner diversity, alongside a pronounced level of professional needs in the remaining areas. Considering their focus on topic knowledge, pedagogy, the learning environment, and learner diversity, these areas will be the principal factors in formulating a professional development plan.

The study by Gallego and Caingcoy (2020) revealed that kindergarten instructors have substantial expertise in subject matter knowledge, pedagogical strategies, learning environments, learner diversity, curriculum development, and assessment practices. These indicate that they demonstrate almost all the competencies of proficient educators. The findings revealed a substantial degree of professional requirements in content knowledge, pedagogy, the learning environment, and learner diversity, while the other domains also demonstrated a considerable level of professional demands.

Taridi and Dono (2019) identified three principal themes: teachers' proficiency in planning educational programs (encompassing teaching activities and care initiatives), teachers' proficiency in managing instructional interactions (employing varied resources and assessing teaching methodologies), and teachers' proficiency in conducting assessments and evaluations (including both test-based and non-test-based assessments). Suggestions for the improvement of Indonesian kindergarten education are provided.

The study by Zoupidis et al. (2022) revealed that kindergarten teachers' intentions to utilize particular content and pedagogical methods depend on their ability to implement them effectively and their assessment of their students' potential to acquire substantial knowledge. The educator's choice of pedagogical method is associated with the assessment of personal benefits or drawbacks, together with the viewpoints of influential third parties. The study revealed two distinct categories of kindergarten teachers: those whose teaching methods are based on the principles of science education and those whose approaches are informed by the history of early childhood education.

The findings of Tero and Revalde (2024) indicated that respondents held a predominantly positive perception of their teaching methodologies for managing teacher-student interactions; opinions regarding classroom conduct and demeanor varied; there was a favorable inclination towards fostering logical development; and a general alignment with constructivist teaching methods was noted, albeit with an emphasis on areas for enhancement. The respondents' perspective of the problems faced in executing their roles within an inclusive education framework underscored the necessity for further teacher training, curriculum modification, and collaborative inclusive education. A notable correlation existed between classroom behavior and manner, the application of a constructivist teaching methodology, and the difficulties encountered by educators.

Challenges in Teaching, Learner Diversity, and Inclusive Education

Gepila (2020) reported that educators serve as catalysts for national development. With their support, the nation can foster and nurture learners who will lead the country towards progress and advancement. Prioritizing the enhancement of teacher quality and the maintenance of excellent teaching standards is essential for sustainable nation-building. In the Philippines, the assessment of teachers' proficiency is carried out utilizing the Philippine

Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), a framework that has supplanted the former National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) according to DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017. The investigation revealed that most participants assessed themselves as highly skilled in managing the learning environment and merely competent in handling learner diversity.

Hamzah et al. (2025) highlighted that teacher readiness levels were indicated to be low to moderate, significantly affected by workload, policy clarity, and the quality of professional development. Continuous and cooperative professional growth proved to be a reliable facilitator, whereas digital assessment tools demonstrated potential but were limited by infrastructural deficiencies and limitations in digital literacy.

Solihati and Hermanto (2025) indicate that inclusive early childhood education has significant challenges in effectively managing classrooms with children possessing diverse skills and developmental needs. Traditional teacher training methodologies are predominantly theoretical, leading to considerable gaps between legislative mandates and practical implementation. Educators demonstrated enhanced skills in project planning, promoting collaborative learning, adapting resources for children with special needs, and implementing inclusive assessment methods. Qualitative feedback suggested improved confidence and teaching effectiveness.

Research by Abry et al. (2015) highlighted that preschool and kindergarten educators evaluated the importance of 12 skills categorized into academic, self-regulatory, and interpersonal domains. In the autumn of kindergarten, children underwent direct assessments of their reading and mathematical skills, while instructors evaluated their learning strategies, disruptive behavior, and social interactions. The results revealed that (a) the most substantial misalignment was found in educators' perceptions of the importance of academic competence, (b) heightened misalignment in beliefs across all three competence domains predicted poorer assessments of learning strategies, social abilities, and reduced mathematical performance, and (c) children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds were more susceptible to the negative impacts of misalignment on adjustment outcomes compared to their more privileged counterparts.

Tabura's (2025) study highlighted significant budgetary constraints, the digital gap, and socio-emotional challenges encountered in delivering good education during exceptional disruptions. The proposed action plan recommended increased funding, enhanced professional development, smaller class sizes, and streamlined administrative tasks to enhance teaching efficacy and promote a more inclusive educational atmosphere. This study provided valuable insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders, emphasizing the need to address these challenges to support teachers in delivering quality education to young learners.

Professional Development, Leadership, and Institutional Support

Ajani (2019, 2020) underscored the necessity of professional development activities for improving teachers' instructional practices and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Moreover, while the study did not cite the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), it emphasized aspects such as instructional planning, instructional delivery, subject

knowledge, student rapport, and classroom management, which are included within the same framework across multiple domains.

The findings of Adao et al. (2023) indicated that content teachers faced greater challenges in delivering their lectures because of their students' reading issues. This study reveals that language teachers demonstrate superior proficiency in teaching reading, hence attaining goal competencies more effectively than those with insufficient reading instruction skills.

Sardimi and Lisda (2023) claim that the principal, as the leader, is accountable for all facets of the school, including the teaching staff. Therefore, the administrator must adeptly tackle matters concerning teachers, especially in improving their proficiency. The research findings reveal that school principals have not specifically implemented programs to promote teacher competency; rather, activities for promoting teacher competency are incorporated into the principal's annual work program. Supervision transpires annually, whereas motivation occurs during monthly meetings between the principal and educators.

Additionally, according to Ardiente, T., and Jacela, Z. A. (2025), it was revealed that teachers showed a high level of total competence, with personal competence being the most prominent and professionalism receiving the lowest mean score, highlighting the necessity for institutional support. The study indicated that despite early childhood educators demonstrating ability, motivation, and dedication, inadequate graduate education and diminished professionalism ratings underscore the need for structured support. Recommendations include offering accessible training on professionalism, collaborating with higher education institutions to provide affordable graduate programs, encouraging reflective practice and mentorship, recognizing consistent professional performance, and ensuring equitable access to training, particularly for disadvantaged educators.

Despite numerous studies on teacher competencies, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the relationship between teaching competencies and classroom challenges among Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in geographically isolated areas such as Aguinaldo, Ifugao. This study attempts to address this gap.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, appropriate for examining both the level of teaching competencies and the challenges encountered by Grade 2 and 3 educators, as well as the relationship between the variables.

Respondents and Locale of the Study

The respondents were all Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers currently employed in the public elementary schools of Aguinaldo, Ifugao, during the School Year 2025-2026, selected through total enumeration sampling.

Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a researcher-made instrument which was pilot-tested among 10 public school teachers in different municipality of Ifugao. The instrument consisted of three parts: (1) the respondents' profile, (2) teachers' competencies in pedagogy, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment, and (3) the challenges encountered in classroom instruction. Prior to its administration, the instrument underwent pilot testing to assess its internal reliability and obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89.

Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher formally sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent through the respective school heads to ensure proper authorization and compliance with institutional protocols. Upon approval, the finalized research instrument was prepared and distributed to the identified respondents. Ethical considerations were strictly observed by informing the participants of the purpose of the study and assuring them of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. The questionnaires were administered and retrieved on scheduled dates agreed upon with the respondents to ensure completeness and accuracy of the data collected.

The gathered data were systematically organized, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were employed to describe the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, position, educational attainment, years in service, and level of training attended. Frequency and percentage were utilized to describe the profile of the Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers. The weighted mean was used to determine the level of teaching competencies and challenges encountered by the respondents. To examine the relationship between teacher competencies and challenges encountered, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied. These statistical treatments enabled the researcher to derive meaningful interpretations and establish empirical evidence regarding the relationship between the variables under study.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards in research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and respective school heads, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents, ensuring that participation was voluntary. Participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study and were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. No personal identifiers were collected, and all data were used solely for academic purposes. The study complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), ensuring secure handling and storage of data. Moreover, the researcher maintained honesty, accuracy, and integrity in data collection, analysis, and reporting, avoiding any form of fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency (n=66)	Percent
Age		
25-30	12	18.2
31-35	10	15.2
36-40	15	22.7
41-45	12	18.2
46-50	8	12.1
51 and above	9	13.6
Sex		
Male	10	15.2
Female	56	84.8
Civil Status		
Single	12	18.2
Married	54	81.8
Position		
Teacher 1	22	33.3
Teacher 2	11	16.7
Teacher 3	31	47.0
Master Teacher 2	2	3.0
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	49	74.2
Master's Degree	17	25.8

Table 1 presents the profile of the Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in the public elementary schools of Aguinaldo, Ifugao. The age distribution of the respondents indicates that the largest group belongs to the 36-40 age bracket, comprising 22.7% of the population. This is followed by teachers aged 25-30 and 41-45, each accounting for 18.2%, while those aged 31-35 represent 15.2%. Teachers aged 51 and above comprise 13.6%, and those aged 46-50 account for 12.1%. These findings suggest that the teaching workforce is composed predominantly of middle-aged educators who possess substantial teaching experience while remaining actively engaged in their profession.

In terms of sex, the majority of the respondents are female, accounting for 84.8% of the total population, while males comprise only 15.2%. This reflects the continuing dominance of women in the elementary teaching profession, a trend commonly observed in both local and international educational settings.

Regarding civil status, most respondents are married, representing 81.8% of the population, whereas only 18.2% are single. This indicates that a large proportion of teachers balance professional responsibilities with family obligations.

With respect to position, Teacher III holds the highest proportion at 47.0%, followed by Teacher I and Teacher II at 16.7% and 33.3%, respectively. Only 3.0% of the respondents occupy the position of Master Teacher II.

In terms of highest educational attainment, the majority of respondents possess a Bachelor's Degree, accounting for 74.2% of the population, while 25.8% have completed a Master's Degree. The findings indicate that although a considerable number of teachers have pursued graduate studies, most remain at the undergraduate level.

Table 2. Level of Teaching Competencies of Grade 2 and 3 Educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao in terms of Pedagogical Knowledge

Items	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. Demonstrates mastery of Grade 2 and 3 subject content.	3.92	High Competence
2. Applies appropriate learning theories in lesson planning.	4.20	High Competence
3. Aligns lesson objectives with curriculum standards.	4.50	Very High Competence
4. Integrates learners' prior knowledge into instruction.	4.50	Very High Competence
5. Adapts teaching to diverse learning needs of pupils.	4.55	Very High Competence
Weighted Mean	4.33	Very High Competence

Table 2 shows the level of teaching competencies of Grade 2 and Grade 3 educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, in terms of pedagogical knowledge. The table reveals that the teachers are very highly competent in terms of lesson objectives alignment with curriculum standards, integration of learners' prior knowledge into instruction, and in using teaching strategies that suit the diverse learning needs of the students. These results indicate that teachers are highly capable of adjusting instruction based on learners' needs and ensuring that lessons are aligned with curriculum requirements and prior knowledge, which are essential components of effective teaching. Meanwhile, the respondents show a high level of competency in terms of demonstrating mastery of their lesson contents and in terms of applying different learning theories in crafting their lesson plans.

Overall, the weighted mean of 4.33 indicates a Very High Competence in pedagogical knowledge, implying that Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, are highly competent in planning, delivering, and adapting instruction to meet learners' needs. Similarly, Gallego and Caingcoy (2020) reported that kindergarten teachers identified professional development opportunities as one of their most important needs for improving instructional competence.

Table 3. Level of Teaching Competencies of Grade 2 and 3 Educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao in terms of Instructional Strategies

Items	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. Uses varied teaching strategies to enhance learner engagement.	4.21	High Competence
2. Integrates instructional materials and learning resources effectively.	4.05	High Competence
3. Encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	4.00	High Competence
4. Utilizes learner-centered teaching approaches.	4.23	High Competence
5. Incorporates technology to support teaching and learning.	4.06	High Competence
Weighted Mean	4.11	High Competence

Table 3 shows the level of teaching competencies of Grade 2 and 3 educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, in terms of instructional strategies. The table reveals that the respondents are highly competent in terms of applying a variety of instructional strategies, effectively using learning materials and resources, encouraging critical and problem-solving thinking, implementing learner-centered approaches, and integrating technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Overall, the weighted mean of 4.11 indicates a High Competence level in instructional strategies. This implies that Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, demonstrate effective use of various teaching approaches, particularly learner-centered strategies, but may still benefit from continuous professional development to further enhance the use of technology and the promotion of critical thinking skills in the classroom. This finding is supported by OECD (2019), which reported that while teachers commonly use learner-centered approaches, many still require continuous professional development to enhance ICT integration and the development of higher-order thinking skills among learners.

Table 4. Level of Teaching Competencies of Grade 2 and 3 Educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao in terms of Classroom Management

Items	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. Maintains an orderly and positive classroom environment.	4.59	Very High Competence
2. Implements clear classroom rules and routines.	4.48	Very High Competence
3. Manages learner behavior effectively.	4.00	High Competence
4. Promotes mutual respect among learners.	4.65	Very High Competence
5. Maximizes instructional time efficiently.	4.05	High Competence
Weighted Mean	4.35	Very High Competence

Table 4 provides the level of teaching competencies of Grade 2 and Grade 3 educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao in terms of classroom management. The table reveals that the respondents exhibit very high competence in creating a positive learning environment, establishing and enforcing classroom rules and routines, and promoting respectful relationships among students. Meanwhile, they demonstrate high competence in managing student behavior and optimizing instructional time.

Overall, the weighted mean of 4.35 indicates a Very High Competence level in classroom management. This implies that Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, are highly capable of maintaining a positive, orderly, and respectful classroom environment, which significantly supports effective teaching and learning. In accordance, Pianta, Hamre, & Allen (2012) found that teachers who promote mutual respect and positive relationships created stronger classroom engagement and better social behavior among learners. Likewise, Acoba (2025) found that a positive classroom learning environment correlates positively with academic performance.

Table 5. Level of Teaching Competencies of Grade 2 and 3 Educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao in terms of Assessment Practices

Items	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. Uses formative and summative assessments appropriately.	4.86	Very High Competence
2. Designs assessment tools aligned with learning objectives.	4.32	High Competence
3. Provides timely and constructive feedback to learners.	4.56	Very High Competence
4. Uses assessment results to improve instruction.	4.50	Very High Competence
5. Applies assessment strategies that address learner diversity.	4.42	Very High Competence
Weighted Mean	4.53	Very High Competence

Table 5 shows the level of teaching competencies of Grade 2 and Grade 3 educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, in terms of assessment practices. The table shows that the respondents exhibit a very high level of competence in assessment practices, particularly in administering formative and summative evaluations with timely and constructive feedback, utilizing assessment results to enhance instruction, and designing varied assessment tasks for diverse learners. Meanwhile, they show a high level of competence in terms of designing assessment tools that are aligned with the objectives of the lessons.

Overall, the weighted mean of 4.53 indicates a Very High Competence level in assessment practices. This implies that Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, are highly effective in evaluating learner performance, providing feedback, and using assessment results to improve instruction, thereby supporting better teaching and learning outcomes. Kapur (2022) highlighted in his study the importance of various assessment strategies in promoting student learning by providing continuous feedback that guides both teaching and learning processes. He emphasized that assessment is not merely a tool for evaluating students' achievement but a fundamental component of instruction that helps teachers identify learning gaps and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly.

Table 6. Common Challenges Encountered by Grade 2 and 3 Educators in Aguinaldo, Ifugao

Items	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. Insufficient teaching and learning materials.	3.42	Often
2. Large class size that limits individualized instruction.	2.56	Sometimes
3. Learners with varying academic abilities in one classroom.	4.05	Often

4. Inadequate training on innovative teaching strategies.	2.97	Sometimes
5. Difficulty in managing learner behavior.	3.15	Sometimes
6. Time constraints due to administrative workload.	3.61	Often
7. Limited parental support in learners' academic activities.	3.55	Often
8. Insufficient training in inclusive education.	3.21	Sometimes
9. Difficulty in addressing learners with reading difficulties.	3.11	Sometimes
10. Limited access to technology and digital resources.	4.00	Often
Weighted Mean	3.29	Sometimes

Table 6 shows the common challenges encountered by the respondents. The results reveal that Grade 2 and 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, experience a range of instructional and contextual challenges that affect classroom teaching and learning. Among the most often encountered issues are insufficient teaching and learning materials, learners with various learning needs, administrative workloads, limited parental support, and limited access to technology and digital resources. In 2024, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT, 2024) identified Aguinaldo, Ifugao, as one of the recipients of small aperture terminal internet service, being one of the Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA). These findings suggest that resource constraints and excessive administrative workloads, among others, are barriers to effective instruction, particularly in early grade levels where foundational skills are developed.

Additionally, teachers sometimes encounter issues such as large class sizes, limited access to professional development, challenges in managing student behavior, inadequate training in inclusive education, and difficulties in addressing learners' reading problems.

Overall, the findings indicate that Grade 2 and 3 teachers face multifaceted challenges related to instructional resources, learner diversity, professional preparation, and contextual constraints. Addressing these concerns may require systemic interventions such as improved resource allocation, enhanced teacher training, reduced administrative workload, and strengthened community and parental involvement. Accordingly, Tomlinson (2014), classrooms naturally include learners with different ability levels, varied learning speeds, and diverse academic needs make teachers struggle to differentiate instruction effectively.

Table 7. Correlational Analysis between Teaching Competencies and the Challenges faced by the Educators

Teaching Competencies	Challenges	
	r-value	p-value
Pedagogical knowledge	.957*	<.001
Instructional strategies	.915*	<.001
Classroom management	.947*	<.001
Assessment practices	.898*	<.001

Table 7 presents the correlational analysis between teaching competencies and the challenges faced by the educators. The results show a very strong positive relationship between all domains of teaching competencies and the challenges encountered, as indicated by their high r-values and significant p-values.

The results imply that there is a strong association between teachers' competencies and the challenges they experience in their teaching practice. This suggests that as challenges increase or become more complex, teachers tend to further develop or demonstrate higher levels of teaching competencies in order to cope with classroom demands.

Overall, the findings suggest that teaching competencies and challenges are closely interconnected rather than isolated factors. The significant and strong correlations imply that challenges in the teaching environment may serve as a driving force for teachers to strengthen and improve their competencies in pedagogy, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices. In the same manner, Hattie (2009) identified that classroom management, instructional strategies, and teacher clarity are among the strongest predictors of student outcomes and are closely tied to classroom challenges.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

The study demonstrates that Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in Aguinaldo, Ifugao, possess high levels of teaching competence in pedagogy, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment practices. Their professional stability, teaching experience, and active participation in professional development activities contribute to their effectiveness in classroom instruction. Although teachers encounter challenges related to diverse learner needs, limited instructional resources, workload demands, and parental involvement, these difficulties do not significantly diminish their overall teaching performance. The very strong and significant relationship between teaching competencies and challenges encountered suggests that teachers continuously develop and strengthen their competencies as they respond to the demands and realities of the teaching profession.

For future work, it is recommended that school administrators and educational leaders provide adequate instructional resources and strengthen support systems that address the challenges faced by teachers. Continuous professional development programs focusing on innovative instructional strategies, technology integration, differentiated instruction, and inclusive education should be sustained and enhanced. Schools may also encourage mentoring programs and collaborative learning communities to further improve teachers' professional competencies. Strengthening partnerships between schools and parents may help address issues related to learner support and engagement. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies in other districts or regions and include additional variables such as student achievement, teacher motivation, and school leadership practices to broaden the understanding of teaching competencies and classroom challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to Almighty God for His guidance, wisdom, and strength throughout the completion of this study. Sincere appreciation is extended to the research adviser and professors for their invaluable guidance, expertise, and constructive feedback that greatly contributed to the development of this research.

The authors also acknowledge the support of the school administrators and Grade 2 and Grade 3 teachers in the public elementary schools of Aguinaldo, Ifugao, for their cooperation and active participation, which contributed significantly to the successful completion of this study. Special appreciation is extended to the research adviser, colleagues, and peers for their valuable guidance, encouragement, and assistance throughout the conduct of the research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. This research was conducted objectively, and no financial or personal relationships have influenced the results and interpretations presented in this paper.

DECLARATION OF AI USE

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and Quillbot were used solely to assist in language refinement, grammar correction, and formatting of the manuscript. All intellectual content, data analysis, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this study are the original work of the authors. The use of AI did not influence the research design, data collection, analysis, or the integrity of the findings.

REFERENCE

- Abry, T., Latham, S., Bassok, D., & LoCasale-Crouch, J. (2015). Preschool and kindergarten teachers' beliefs about early school competencies: Misalignment matters for kindergarten adjustment. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 31, 78-88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2015.01.001>
- Acoba, R. P., & Ariola, M. F. Q. (2024). Predictive role of classroom learning environment on the academic performance of students in mathematics in the modern world in Isabela State University-Echague. *Isabela State University Linker: Journal of Education, Social Sciences, and Allied Health*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.65141/jessah.v2i1.n5>
- Adao, L., Relve, C. C., Salazar, J., Macawile, K. F., & Chavez, M. (2023). Teachers' challenges, capabilities, and needs in teaching learners with reading difficulties. *Journal of Science and Education (JSE)*, 3(3), 221-231. <https://doi.org/10.56003/jse.v3i3.173>
- Ajani, O. A. (2019). Understanding teachers as adult learners in professional development activities for enhanced classroom practices. *AFFRIKA Journal of Politics, Economics and Society*, 9(2), 195-208. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2075-6534/2019/9n2a10>
- Ajani, O. A. (2020). Teachers' professional development in South African high schools: How well does it suit their professional needs? *African Journal of Development Studies*, 10(3), 59. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2634-3649/2020/10n3a4>
- Ardiente, T., & Jacela, Z. A. (2025). Competence in teaching early childhood education. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability, and Excellence (IMJRISE)*, 2(9), 27-38.
- Bai, B., & Ai, J. (2022). A study on the professional key competences of kindergarten teachers. *Scholars Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 10(3), 86-98. <https://doi.org/10.36347/sjahss.2022.v10i03.003>
- Banjarnahor, S., Mujisusatyo, Y., Pangaribuan, W., & Pane, I. I. I. (2023). Development of teacher competence in improving 21st century learning in Santa Lusia Kindergarten. *JHSS (Journal of Humanities and Social Studies)*, 7(1), 036-039.
- Caingcoy, M. (2022). Competencies and professional development needs of kindergarten teachers. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4063366>
- Department of Education. (2017). National adoption of the Philippine professional standards for teachers. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp->

- Department of Information and Communications Technology. (n.d.). BID-DOCS VSAT GIDA Phase 2. https://cms-cdn.e.gov.ph/DICT/pdf/BID-DOCS_VSAT-GIDA-Phase-2.pdf.pdf
- Gallego, P. L., & Caingcoy, M. E. (2020). Competencies and professional development needs of kindergarten teachers. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 3(7), 69–81. <https://doi.org/10.31149/ijie.v3i7.491>
- Gepila, E. C., Jr. (2020). Assessing teachers using Philippine standards for teachers. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(3), 739–746. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080302>
- González-Fernández, R., Ruiz-Cabezas, A., Domínguez, M. C. M., Subía-Álava, A. B., & Salazar, J. L. D. (2023). Teachers' teaching and professional competences assessment. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 103, 102396. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2023.102396>
- Hamzah, N. H., Samsudin, S., & Hidayat, R. (2025). Teacher competence and readiness for classroom-based assessment in physical and health education: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 3206–3226.
- Harun, A. (2025). Assessing pedagogical competence among prospective primary school teachers: A case study. *Journal of Education Review Provision*, 5(1), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.55885/jerp.v5i1.577>
- Hermoso, J. R., & Brobo, M. A. (2023). Influence of teaching competencies to performance: Basis for professional development. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, 44(4), 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2023/v44i4969>
- Hattie, J. (2009). Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203887332>
- Kapur, R. (2022). Assessment strategies fundamental in promoting student learning. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360928359_Assessment_Strategies_Fundamental_in_Promoting_Student_Learning
- Kingsford-Smith, A. A., Collie, R. J., Loughland, T., & Nguyen, H. T. M. (2023). Teacher wellbeing in rural, regional, and metropolitan schools: Examining resources and demands across locations. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 132, 104229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104229>
- Minicozzi, L. L. (2016). The garden is thorny: Teaching kindergarten in the age of accountability. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 6(3), 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610616664817>
- Nagy, J. (2000). XXI. század és nevelés / XXI century and education. Osiris Kiadó.
- Niazi, A. (2025). Education is the foundation of individual growth and social progress. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 5(4), 80–83. <https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.5.4.11>
- Nikola, S. (2021). Teachers' key competencies for innovative teaching. *International Journal*

- of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education, 9(3), 331-345.
- OECD. (2019). TALIS 2018 results (Volume I): Teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. <https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/talis-2018-results-volume-i-1d0bc92a-en.htm>
- Odescalchi, C., Paleczek, L., & Gasteiger-Klicpera, B. (2024). Primary school teachers' social-emotional competencies and strategies in fostering the social participation of students with SEBD. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 40(2), 393-407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2024.2370149>
- Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Allen, J. P. (2012). Teacher-student relationships and engagement. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100449>
- Pupíková, E., Gonda, D., Páleníková, K., Medová, J., Kolárová, D., & Tirpáková, A. (2021). How kindergarten teachers assess their own professional competencies. *Education Sciences*, 11(12), 769. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11120769>
- Sardimi, S., & Lisda, N. (2023). Principal leadership: Efforts to increase teacher competency in Darussalam Kindergarten Palangka Raya. *Jurnal Obsesi Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(5), 6185-6194. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i5.5371>
- Solihati, I., & Hermanto, H. (2025). Enhancing teacher competence in inclusive early childhood education. *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, 4(3), 1848-1860. <https://doi.org/10.56916/jirpe.v4i3.1931>
- Szabó-Thalmeiner, N. (2022). Beginnings of competence-based training in kindergarten teacher and teacher training in Romania. *PedActa*, 12(2), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.24193/pedacta.12.2.1>
- Tabura, R. C. (2025). Struggles experienced by kindergarten teachers in implementing quality education. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v8-i01-43>
- Taridi, M., & Dono, A. (2019). The kindergarten teachers' pedagogical competences: A case study. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education (IRJE)*, 107-119. <https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v3i1.6737>
- Tero, D. C., & Revalde, H. O. (2024). Assessing the approaches and challenges encountered by primary school teachers in managing inclusive classrooms. *American Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovation*, 3(2), 36-44. <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajiri.v3i2.2745>
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). ASCD. <https://www.ascd.org/books/the-differentiated-classroom-2nd-edition>
- Utami, D. R. F., Pranoto, Y. K. S., Latiana, L., & Sunawan, S. (2021). Agreement levels of kindergarten principals and teachers to determine teaching competencies and performance. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 10(2), 537-551. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.2.537>
- Vallente, G. C. (2025). Far-flung teachers assigned at Sitio Taga-Ibo, Marilog District: A study on their experiences and resilience. *EPRA International Journal of Environmental Economics Commerce and Educational Management*, 349-355. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra21867>

Zoupidis, A., Tselfes, V., Papadopoulou, P., & Kariotoglou, P. (2022). Study of kindergarten teachers' intentions to choose content and teaching method for teaching science. *Education Sciences*, 12(3), 198. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12030198>