Teacher Perceptions on Progressive Education in Modern Classrooms

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A B S T R A C T

This research investigates the perspectives of teachers at Malintuboan National High, a public secondary school located in the Philippines, regarding the implementation of progressive education in modern classrooms. A progressive education emphasizes student-centered learning, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving that is relevant to the real world. This approach to education has its origins in the philosophies of John Dewey and other educational reformers. The purpose of this qualitative and phenomenological research is to investigate how educators at this institution define, comprehend, and implement progressive education, as well as the challenges that they face. Educators generally view progressive education as a transformative approach that fosters deeper student engagement, autonomy, and holistic development, according to the findings of semi-structured interviews conducted with seven teachers from a variety of departments. However, complications such as time constraints, the need to strike a balance between student-driven learning and structured content, and the management of varying learning paces were also identified as challenges. Specifically, the findings highlight the need for targeted professional development and support to overcome these challenges. They also highlight the importance of teacher perceptions in the successful implementation of progressive education. In the end, the purpose of this research is to provide insights that can be used to guide the effective adoption of progressive educational practices, with the goal of improving the educational experiences and outcomes for students attending Malintuboan National High School.

1. Introduction

Progressive education has garnered substantial global focus in recent years as a novel and effective alternative to conventional teaching methods. Progressive education provides a transformative learning experience, in contrast to the traditional education system, which has been characterized by teacher-centered instruction, rote memorization, and standardized testing for an extended period. It is deeply rooted in the philosophies of educational reformers such as John Dewey, who argued for an education that is responsive to the requirements of both students and society. Progressive education prioritizes the development of real-world problem-solving skills, critical thinking, collaboration, and student-centered learning methodologies. The objective of these principles is to provide students with the capacity to apply their academic knowledge in practical, meaningful ways, in addition to their academic knowledge.

The acquisition of empirical knowledge is frequently prioritized over the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in the traditional education system, which is characterized by a focus on memorization and repetition. In contrast, progressive education promotes active participation in the learning process, which in turn fosters a deeper comprehension of the material, curiosity, and creativity among students. This method transforms the teacher's role from that of a knowledge dispenser to that of a facilitator of learning, assisting students in the exploration and construction of their understanding of the world.

Malintuboan National High School, like numerous other educational institutions, is currently in the process of transitioning to these progressive educational practices. Education reforms in the Philippines have been the driving force behind this change, as they aim to modernize the country's education system and better equip students to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Innovative teaching strategies, the integration of contemporary technology, and the adoption of a more comprehensive approach to student development are all promoted by these reforms. The objective is to establish a learning environment that stimulates students' overall development and well-being, in addition to imparting knowledge.

Nevertheless, the efficacy of these reforms at Malintuboan National High School, and indeed in any institution, is contingent upon the perceptions, comprehension, and readiness of educators to adopt progressive education. The primary agents of educational transformation are teachers, who play a crucial role. The implementation and effectiveness of these practices in the classroom can be significantly influenced by their attitudes toward progressive education. Progressive

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education is more likely to be adopted and applied with enthusiasm and dedication by teachers when they perceive it positively. This can result in improved learning outcomes for students and more effective instruction.

Conversely, teachers may resist progressive education's implementation, whether intentionally or unintentionally, if they hold negative attitudes toward it. This resistance can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including the failure to fully engage students in active learning, the adherence to traditional teaching methods, or the neglect of new technologies. This resistance can contribute to the inadequate implementation of progressive practices, which may subsequently have a negligible effect on student learning outcomes. In certain instances, it may even undermine the prospective advantages of progressive education.

Given the critical role that teacher perceptions play in the success of educational reforms, it is imperative to comprehend the perspective of teachers at Malintuboan National High School regarding progressive education. The objective of this investigation is to further investigate these perceptions by investigating the factors that influence teachers' attitudes toward progressive educational practices. The research endeavours to identify potential obstacles to the successful implementation of progressive education at the school by acquiring an understanding of their perspectives.

Additionally, this investigation will offer valuable suggestions for overcoming these obstacles. School administrators and policymakers can create an environment that promotes the successful adoption of progressive educational practices, offers greater support, and designs more effective professional development programs by comprehending the specific concerns and needs of teachers. In the end, the objective is to guarantee that the transition to progressive education at Malintuboan National High School is seamless and efficient, resulting in improved educational experiences and outcomes for all students.

Objectives

Progressive education in modern classrooms encourages critical thinking, cooperation, and real-world application. The perceptions and attitudes of teachers who administer this instructional style often affect its success. Understanding how teachers view progressive education and how it affects their teaching and student results is critical for assessing the success and problems at Malintuboan National High School. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. To explore how teachers at Malintuboan National High School define and understand progressive education in modern classrooms.

2. To identify the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing progressive education as reported by teachers at Malintuboan National High School.

3. To examine how teachers' perceptions of progressive education affect their teaching practices and student interactions in the classroom.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative, phenomenologically based research design. To thoroughly investigate and comprehend the lived experiences and opinions of educators concerning the application of progressive education in contemporary classrooms at Malintuboan National High School, the phenomenological technique was selected. This study attempts to capture the essence of the participants' attitudes, beliefs, and difficulties related to progressive educational practices by concentrating on their subjective experiences.

Research Locale

The study was carried out at a public secondary school in the Division of Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines called Malintuboan National High School. As a component of larger educational changes, this school has been progressively incorporating progressive education approaches. The school's continuous attempts to embrace and apply these cutting-edge teaching techniques give it a pertinent environment for researching teachers' opinions about progressive education.

Population Design

The study's population consists of eight teachers from Malintuboan National High School, selected for their active roles in the school's implementation of advanced teaching methodologies. These educators were chosen due to their diverse backgrounds and experiences, which provide a comprehensive understanding of the range of perspectives on progressive education within the institution. According to Creswell (2013), a smaller, focused sample size is appropriate for phenomenological research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences. This approach ensures that the nuances of each educator's perspective on innovative educational practices are thoroughly examined, aligning with the principles of qualitative research that emphasize depth over breadth (Moustakas, 1994).

Sampling Design

This study used a purposive sampling design. The reason this non-probability sampling technique was used is because it enables the deliberate selection of participants who possess the greatest knowledge and expertise regarding the issue under investigation, which in this case is progressive education implementation. The chosen educators are the most

appropriate subjects for this study since they have actively used progressive teaching methods in their classrooms.
Procedures

The school administration's approval and the participants' informed consent were obtained before the research could begin. Subsequently, the eight teachers who were chosen participated in comprehensive, semi-structured interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to get in-depth information about their attitudes, experiences, and perspectives about progressive education. For a comprehensive study, the interviews were both recorded and transcribed.

Thematic analysis, a technique ideally suited to phenomenological research, was used to analyse the data. Coding the data to find important themes and patterns that surfaced from the teachers' narratives was known as thematic analysis. Understanding the similarities and differences in their opinions about progressive education was made easier by this procedure. After that, the results were analysed to provide judgments regarding the elements that contributed to Malintuboan National High School's progressive education implementation success as well as suggestions for improving these methods.

Ethical guidelines were closely followed over the entire study, guaranteeing participant respect and confidentiality. Future instructional strategies and ongoing efforts to incorporate progressive education at Malintuboan National High School are to be supported by the knowledge gathered from this study.

3. Results and Discussions

This study involved eight participants who are teachers from Malintuboan National High School. All these participants were selected to share their stories regarding their perceptions of progressive education in modern classrooms. Each participant would be introduced with pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Below is a table summarizing the results and findings of the study. The table is organized using thematic analysis based on the answers of the eight teachers from different subject areas: Math, Science, MAPEH, TLE, English, Research, Araling Panlipunan, and Values Education.

Table 1. Teacher Perceptions of Progressive Education

Themes	Summary of Findings
Definition and Understanding of Progressive Education	Teachers generally define progressive education as a student-centered approach that emphasizes active learning, critical thinking, real-world applications, and holistic development (emotional, social, and moral).
Student Agency and Autonomy	Teachers perceive student agency and autonomy as crucial in progressive education, allowing students to take ownership of their learning, explore their interests, and make decisions.
Key Elements of Progressive Education	Key elements identified include hands-on learning, collaborative projects, real-world applications, reflective learning, and experiential activities.
Benefits of Progressive Education	Teachers have observed increased student engagement, deeper understanding of subject matter, improved problem-solving skills, and enhanced collaboration among students when implementing progressive education methods.
Challenges of Implementing Progressive Education	Common challenges include time constraints, balancing structured content with flexible, student-driven learning, managing diverse learning paces, and addressing sensitive or complex topics inclusively.
Impact on Teaching Practices	Progressive education has influenced teachers to adopt more interactive, student-centered, and inquiry-based approaches, incorporating activities that promote critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving.

In summary:

1. Definition and Understanding of Progressive Education:

Progressive education is defined by educators in every subject area as a student-centered strategy that prioritizes holistic development, real-world applications, critical thinking, and active learning. It emphasizes the development of a well-rounded education that encompasses moral, social, and emotional development.

2. Student Agency and Autonomy:

Autonomy and student agency are seen as essential components of progressive education. Teachers think that by giving kids the freedom to take charge of their education, follow their passions, and make choices, they will be more motivated, engaged, and likely to grow personally.

3. Key Elements of Progressive Education:

Experience-based learning, group projects, real-world applications, reflective learning, and experiential activities have all been found to be common components. To encourage greater comprehension and useful abilities, these components are incorporated into instructional strategies.

4. Benefits of Progressive Education:

Teachers have seen many advantages, such as higher levels of student participation, a deeper comprehension of the material, better problem-solving abilities, and improved teamwork. Innovative teaching strategies encourage critical thinking

and creativity while making learning more meaningful and relevant.

5. Challenges of Implementing Progressive Education:

Teachers have identified several challenges, such as managing varying learning speeds, tackling delicate or complex subjects inclusively, striking a balance between structured curriculum and flexible, student-driven learning, and making sure all requirements are met. It was also emphasized that managing these obstacles required careful preparation and adherence to time limitations.

6. Impact on Teaching Practices:

In their classrooms, teachers are now using more inquiry-based, student-centered, and interactive teaching strategies. Activities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, and practical problem-solving are part of this change. Traditional lectures are being replaced by more dynamic teaching methods that involve students actively in their education.

Overall, the research indicates that teachers perceive progressive education positively, recognizing its potential to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes, despite the challenges involved in its implementation. The findings suggest a shift in teaching practices towards methods that are more aligned with progressive education principles, emphasizing student involvement and real-world relevance

Conclusions

The study reveals a positive perception of progressive education among teachers from various subject areas, who commend its emphasis on real-world applications, critical thinking, and student-centered learning. They believe that progressive education supports a holistic development approach, integrating moral, social, emotional, and academic growth, which aligns with the objectives of contemporary classrooms. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of student agency and autonomy in innovative educational practices. Teachers feel that empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning enhances motivation, engagement, and personal development, leading to improved learning outcomes.

Several benefits of progressive education techniques are noted, including enhanced problem-solving abilities, a deeper understanding of subjects, and increased student engagement. These advantages make learning more meaningful and relevant, which is crucial for preparing students for future success. However, the implementation of progressive education poses several challenges for teachers. These include time constraints, balancing student-driven, flexible learning with structured content, adapting to diverse learning paces, and managing sensitive or complex topics inclusively. Addressing these challenges requires careful planning and deliberate adjustments in teaching methods.

The impact of progressive education on teaching practices is significant, prompting teachers to adopt more interactive, inquiry-based, and student-centered approaches in their classrooms. This shift marks a departure from traditional, lecture-based teaching methods in favor of activities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, curriculum developers should design adaptable curricula that support progressive education principles, allowing for student choice while achieving key learning objectives. These curricula should feature project-based learning, hands-on activities, and opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. Administrators should offer professional development for teachers and consider changes to schedules or resources to support flexible, student-centered learning environments. Second, teachers should continue refining progressive teaching methods that promote student engagement, autonomy, critical thinking, and collaboration. They must also be prepared to adapt their strategies to meet diverse learning needs and ensure inclusivity. And lastly, future researchers should investigate the long-term impacts of progressive education on student outcomes, including career readiness, academic performance, and social and emotional growth. They should also explore challenges such as balancing curriculum demands with flexible teaching and addressing diverse student needs.

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