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A Case Study on Errors in Curriculum Unpacking of Teachers in the Philippines

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Abstract

Understanding the errors in the process of curriculum unpacking is important to improve practice in the instructional field. Thus, this study aimed to analyze the errors committed by teachers in unpacking the curriculum into instruction. It followed a case study research design, examining a total of 23 lesson plans from 12 identified teachers at a school in Mindanao, Philippines. Tailored and validated document evaluation and structured interview guides were used as instruments. The gathered data were analyzed employing content analysis and thematic analysis techniques. The results uncovered the following prevailing errors in unpacking: double-barreled objectives with different behaviors; double-barreled objectives with same level, overlapping behaviors; objectives with complex behaviors and multiple topics; objectives with higher order behaviors; and objectives with multiple topics. Qualitative probes further revealed factors explaining such errors in unpacking as follows: training on lesson planning that does not include unpacking; different conceptions of unpacking that adhere to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions; pressure to copy the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) word for word as objectives; and too much reliance on MELCs and textbooks. An important implication for teacher professional preparation and development is the need to include curriculum unpacking as an essential skill to develop.

Keywords: *curriculum, instruction, curriculum unpacking, errors, factors*

Introduction

The purpose of curriculum development is to provide students with educational experiences that are relevant and appropriate. One critical step to achieve this goal is translating the curriculum into instruction, ensuring that what is intended in the curriculum aligns with what is implemented in the instruction. The seminal work Cahapay (2020) in this area of curriculum studies defined unpacking as the process of interpreting the intended curriculum for classroom instruction. The process is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the academic program because it serves as a link between the desired curriculum and classroom instruction.

The goal element of the curriculum in basic education (e.g., Philippine K to 12 basic education curriculum's Most Essential Learning Competencies or MELCs) is usually expressed in terms of competencies. Conceptually, competencies are a complex set of behaviors built on the components of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Carraccio et al., 2002). They are the most specific expressions of the goal element of the curriculum but broad enough to be tackled in just one session or day of instruction at the classroom level. Thus, these competencies from the curriculum need to be carefully translated into instruction through the process of unpacking.

A useful process in curriculum unpacking is the principle of task analysis originated by Gagne (1964). He described it as a process of analyzing a competency and identifying objectives that are prerequisites for that competency. This approach of breaking down the curriculum competency into instructional objectives helps learners build a strong foundation and progress successfully through complex skills by mastering

the finer prerequisite skills. Unpacking also assists educators in ensuring the alignment of materials, activities, and assessments with a clearly defined instructional objective unpacked from the curriculum (Chatterjee & Corral, 2017).

There are various models of curriculum development (e.g., Tyler, 1949; Taba; 1962; Wheeler, 1967) and instructional design (e.g., Smith & Ragan, 1993; Dick & Carey, 1996; Heinich, 1996). However, there is no established stepwise model in unpacking the developed curriculum into designed instruction, linking the process that occurs as the intended curriculum is translated into the implemented one known as instruction. This gap presumably contributes to the errors committed by teachers when translating the curricular elements into instructional plans.

As such, this study is initial research in errors in curriculum unpacking and by extension, the factors underlying these errors. If this research interest is addressed, it will provide knowledge about the errors in unpacking and the factors that cause them. On a more practical aspect, this study will help teachers understand how to improve their instructional planning practices concerning unpacking. Researchers in the field may also use this study as a baseline for further investigation on this area of interest.

Considering the context discussed, this study aimed to analyze the errors committed in unpacking the curriculum into instruction. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What errors are committed in unpacking learning competencies into objectives?
2. What factors can explain the errors committed in unpacking the curriculum into instruction?

Literature Review

Unpacking the curriculum entails translating the learning competencies into objectives, which is a basic requirement for writing daily lesson plans. Unpacking the curriculum into instruction is a crucial process in the teaching- learning process. However, misinterpretation or mistranslation by teachers often occurs in this process leading to errors. Hence, unpacking is a critical process that needs to be understood profoundly, undertaken carefully, and examined thoroughly.

Curriculum and Instruction

In every educational context, the curriculum is essential. The official curriculum, typically bundled in an intimidating array of official documents, may appear dull or dry at first, but it serves as a springboard for dynamic and successful classroom instruction (Dowden, 2013). Rudimentary to understanding the relationship between curriculum and instruction, it is essential to define these two concepts.

There are various definitions of curriculum and instruction. The definition of curriculum and instruction may take on different meanings based on their purpose or the context in which they are understood whether political, social, or educational (Flake, 2017). Generally, curriculum is understood as what is to be taught while instruction refers to how the curriculum is delivered, and learning pertains to what knowledge or skill has been acquired (Wiles et al., 2002). Thus, curriculum can be considered as the basis of instruction and instruction is based on the curriculum.

The relationship between curriculum is another important point that needs to be elucidated. Conceptually, it is important to differentiate curriculum and instruction. Distinguishing curriculum from instruction, Macdonald (1965) viewed curriculum as a plan for further action and instruction as the implementation of that plan. Thus, based on this distinction, it appears that curriculum as a plan precedes instruction which is the delivery of that plan.

Oliva (2001) depicted the relationship between curriculum and instruction as dualistic, interlocking, concentric, and cyclical. Though none of these models fully capture the prevailing relationship between curriculum and instruction, he concluded that most curriculum theorists agree that curriculum and instruction are different yet related; they are interdependent and maybe analyzed as separate entities but cannot function in mutual isolation. This study adopts this dual stance on curriculum and instruction, stressing the interdependence between the two concepts.

Errors and Factors in Unpacking Curriculum to Instruction

The process of interpreting the intended curriculum into classroom instruction, known as curriculum unpacking, is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the academic program. However, there is a dearth of study on this crucial process that serves as a link between the intended curricu- lum and classroom instruction (Cahapay, 2020).

Many teachers do not devote enough effort to precisely defining what their pupils should know, comprehend, and be able to do. They design learning tasks without being aware of the big ideas (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005 cited by McFarlane, 2007) and the essential skills needed for the activities. It is more logical for teachers to take their time unpacking the specific learner outcomes and identifying learning outcomes from the list.

There are essential principles used in

curriculum unpacking; one of which is the task analysis (Gagne et al., 1964). The goal of task analysis is to identify and classify the performances that are results of learning as well as subordinate performances that are necessary for such learning. Task analysis is a method that works backward from the expected performance to the stimulus condition (Gagne et al., 1964). It is a useful principle as it underscores the concept of performance (competency) and subordinate performances (objectives) which align with the concept of unpacking as a process of translating curriculum (competency) into instruction (objective).

Another principle is the hierarchical model used in education to categorize learning outcomes and educational goals known as Bloom's Taxonomy. It was created by Bloom (1956) and modified by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The taxonomy has six levels, each of which represents a distinct cognitive domain and shows the level of complexity of thought needed to accomplish the learning objectives. Such levels complement task analysis in classifying performance (competency) so that subordinate performances (objective) can be identified. They make the unpacking of curriculum (competency) into instruction (objective) more systematic, organized, and orderly. These levels are used in this study and are discussed as follows:

The first level is 'Remember' which involves the ability to recall facts and information. The second level, 'Understand', pertains to grasping the meaning of information and concepts. Moreover, 'Apply', is the third level which covers the use of concepts in real-life or new situations or contexts. The fourth level is 'Analyze' which includes breaking down information into components. The fifth level is 'Evaluate' which involves making judgments based on criteria and standards. Lastly, the highest level is 'Create'. This level includes combining parts to form a new whole and generating innovative ideas (Bloom, 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

While such principles useful for unpacking curriculum into instruction have been around for quite some time, errors are inevitable. Yet, there is a paucity of research on unpacking curriculum into instruction. Cahapay (2020) conducted a case study of curriculum unpacking practices. His study shed light on how curriculum unpacking happens on the ground, occurring in a linear process that tightly adheres to the prescribed curriculum in designing instruction. However, there is a need to expand this area of interest by specifically identifying errors in unpacking as well as the factors that can explain these errors. Hence, anchored on this need, this study would contribute to further understanding of this area of interest and eventually improve the instructional practices of teachers in the field.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. It consists of three major parts described as follows:

Curriculum is a roadmap in an educational system that guides educators in delivering knowledge, skills, and values to students. It is unpacked into instruction as indicated by a single- headed arrow. On the other hand, instruction is the process of facilitating learning through planned and purposeful interaction between educators and learners. During the crucial phase of unpacking curriculum into instruction, possible errors may occur. These errors in unpacking refer to mistakes made during the process of interpreting the intended curriculum for classroom instruction. By extension, these errors are caused by certain explanatory factors.

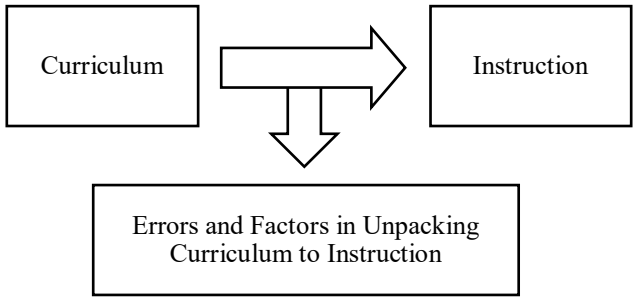
Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employed a case study as the appropriate research design for two grounds. Firstly, the context of this study is a closed system, specifically a selected school as a unit. Employing

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



a case study that focuses on a person or a group of people as a special unit to define and understand a case (Heale & Twycross, 2018), thus aligns with the nature of the specific context of this study. Secondly, the problem of this study is a complex phenomenon that requires a thorough investigation to reveal unpacking errors and the factors underlying them. Addressing this need by choosing a case study as a design, researchers gather detailed and comprehensive data about the chosen subject through various data collection techniques that the design flexibly offers (Heale & Twycross, 2018).

Case Unit

The case considered in this study is a school which is one of the public institutions in Mindanao, Philippines. As an integrated school, it offers Grades 1-10 levels of basic education. This case does not represent all the cases but is considered adequate for this study. As a qualitative research, one case is practicable because the goal of this study is not to generalize the results to all the contexts but to provide focused attention on errors in curriculum unpacking in a particular selected context. Considering the difficulty of accessing other contexts, this study does not intend to compare errors in the curriculum across different settings. Thus, a single case unit was deemed enough.

Data Sources

The sources of data were documents in the form of lesson plans of teachers. Two main criteria were used to screen eligible lesson plans. The first criterion for selecting the lesson plans was their completeness in terms of elements (e.g., presence of objective, topic, activities, and assessment) to ensure they would serve as useful units. The second criterion for selecting the lesson plans was they must have been used by teachers in regular supervisory classroom observations conducted by their principal and master teachers. This means that such lesson plans have been critiqued and refined as much as possible making them a rich source of data. Based on these two criteria, a total of 24 eligible lesson plans served as initial data source for identifying the possible errors in curriculum unpacking.

Another source of data was the teachers who wrote the lesson plans that were initially collected and analyzed. They were primarily selected using deviant case sampling, a type of purposive sampling that focuses on special or unusual cases, typically highlighting notable outcomes (Patton, 1990). Based on this sampling strategy and considering the problem addressed in this study, six teachers identified to have the most errors in unpacking as uncovered in the initial analysis were selected to provide significant insights on the factors that may explain the errors committed in curriculum unpacking. They were selected regardless of their age, gender, marital status, grade level assigned, teaching rank or position, and years in teaching service.

Research Instrument

The researchers utilized a document review guide as an instrument to gather the necessary data. It was intended to scrutinize whether errors in unpacking the curriculum were evident in the observed classroom lesson plans. This guide was developed by the researchers. Based on the review of extant concepts, possible errors in unpacking were identified which served as the items.

This study also used an interview guide as an instrument. Its purpose was to reveal factors that could explain the errors in unpacking as identified in the lesson plans of the teachers. This guide was also developed by the researchers. Also, based on the problem, items in the form of questions were carefully framed to elicit data on possible factors that could explain the errors in curriculum unpacking.

As tailored qualitative instruments, dependability and credibility measures were undertaken in developing the said instruments. Initially, a review of the items of both instruments by a content expert was sought to assess the conceptual reliability of the items. Then, a collaborative tryout by all the researchers was conducted to test the items allowing for iterative revision until they were finalized.

Data Collection

The first stage of data collection of this study commenced with securing permission from the principal of the target school. Only upon approval was the gathering of the lesson plans at the said school initiated. Two teams collaboratively gathered and evaluated the lesson plans: one for elementary and another for high school. These lesson plans were distributed to the assigned research teams for analysis. Within each team, four members independently analyzed the lesson plans using the document analysis guide. After the analysis, the data were collated to generate the themes.

The second stage of data collection began with sending letters to the participants requesting for their consent to participate in the research. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and confidential. Upon agreement and as scheduled, the teachers were interviewed using the interview guide. A brief group orientation introducing the research purpose and the interview process was given to the participants. Then, the

assigned researcher interviewed the participants individually where questions were asked one at a time. After the interview process, the data were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

This study initially employed a content analysis technique for data analysis. It is a research method used to identify patterns in recorded communication and to quantify the frequency of specific words, phrases, topics, or concepts (Luo, 2023); in this case, it focused on the types of errors in unpacking. Moreover, since errors were already determined based on the related theory and practice, a deductive manner was applied to identify objectives that corresponds with the pre -determined types of errors.

Moreover, thematic analysis was also employed. It is a data analysis technique that involves reading through a data set and identifying patterns in meaning across the data to derive themes (Damyanov, 2023). Using the interview guide, the researchers gathered the data from the participants. In preparation for coding, the researchers familiarized themselves with the data. These included reviewing the transcript, noting potential codes, and looking for any meanings or patterns within the data set. To reflect the patterns and meanings in the data, the researchers developed a set of preliminary codes. After compiling codes with supporting information or clustering original codes, they were arranged into themes. The topics were then revised by combining related topics and eliminating those that lacked sufficient evidence to justify them. The last step was to describe the data set from which the study's report was derived.

Lastly, the presentation of analyzed data followed the framework suggested by Creswell (2013) for a case study. Based on this framework, a case study should first report the description of the case and then develop the theme of the case. This framework provides a practical and cogent approach to data presentation; hence, it was observed in this study.

Results and Discussion

Case Description

The Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, made the Philippine K to 12 Curriculum into a reality as it mandated the Department of Education (DepEd) to design and detail the enhanced basic education curriculum in the country. The said curriculum was envisioned to be learner-centered, inclusive, research-based, culture-sensitive, and contextualized to both local and global contexts. One of the salient features of the Philippine K to 12 Curriculum is to make the curriculum relevant to the learners, stressing the need for teachers to contextualize it. This contextualization is not only limited to considering the culture of the community (Official Gazette, n.d.), but also translating it into small chunks that can be appropriately learned by the learners in the instructional process.

Designed as competencies-based, the Philippine K to 12 Curriculum associates competencies that must be carefully unpacked into instructional objectives. It ensures that the curriculum is not just a static set of content, but also a dynamic roadmap for learning. By breaking down competencies into clear instructional objectives, educators can better guide their teaching strategies and assess their student's progress effectively.

Brought by the transition to Philippine K to 12 Curriculum, the education sector of the Philippines expects that the intended curriculum will be thoroughly and carefully unpacked by the teachers for instruction. However, the execution of this is compounded by various challenges. Aside from the lack of teaching materials, professional development programs for teachers in designing instruction, as intended by the new curriculum, were a concern (Abarcas & Bagonon, 2022). The concern is common in many public schools across the country, including the school under this study.

The case under study is a public integrated school in Mindanao, Philippines. To ensure fidelity of instruction to the prescribed curriculum, regular supervisory classroom observations are conducted by the principal and master teachers at the school to monitor the implementation of the curriculum. It includes comprehensive evaluation on the lesson plan utilized by educators which investigates the alignment of competencies from the curriculum with the formulated objective for instruction and its delivery as a whole.

Teachers in the school mainly deliver instruction through face-to-face modality, typically in a physical classroom setting on regular school days. With this, instruction predominantly occurs through in-person interaction rather than through remote or online methods. In addition, teachers are prescribed to use daily lesson logs as a guide in delivering instruction. A daily lesson log is a tabular form accomplished by the teacher based on the competencies in the curriculum and it usually consists of a set of concise lesson plans for a week.

Case Themes

The following themes on the types of errors committed in unpacking curriculum into instruction, as well as the factors that caused such errors, emerged.

Table 1

Type of Errors in Unpacking Learning Competencies to Objectives

Sample Segment	Theme
Collect or gather statistical data and organize the data in a frequency table according to some systematic considerations	Double-barrelled objective with different behaviors
Nasasabi at natutukoy ang mga bahagi ng katawan [Tell and identify the parts of the body]	Double-barrelled objective with same level, overlapping behaviors
Explain the basic concepts, uses, and importance of statistics	Objective with complex behavior and multiple contents
Assess the effectiveness of the ideas presented in the material viewed considering its purpose	Objective with higher-order behavior
Describe the different uses of light, sound, heat and electricity in everyday life	Objective with multiple contents

Theme 1: Double-barreled Objectives with Different Behaviors

An error was determined based on the available documents in which a double-barreled objective with different behaviors was observed. The participant had written in the objective of the day *"collect or gather statistical data and organize the data in a frequency table according to some systematic considerations"*. Looking into the objective, it can be noted that there are two distinct behaviors e.g., one "collect…" and another "organize…" which would require different instructions. Chatterjee and Corral (2017) cautioned to avoid using two behaviors and that they must be separated. Two reasons for this rule are to help shape the method that would develop such behavior and focus the skill to be measured in the assessment (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).

Theme 2: Double-barreled Objectives with Same Level, Overlapping Behaviors

Another error committed in the documents reviewed is the double-barreled objective with the same level, overlapping behaviors. Example of this objective is, *"Nasasabi at natutukoy ang mga bahagi ng katawan* [Tell and identify the parts of the body]*"*. It can be analyzed from this objective that it has two the same overlapping level behaviors which are "nasasabi [tell]" and "natutukoy [identify]" (Level 1: Remember; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). However, when learners tell the parts of the body, they already identify such parts, hence, the former subsumes the latter and there is no need to state the subsumed one. Aside from such problems, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018), advised the use of only one action verb since objectives with more than one verb imply that more than one activity or behavior is being measured.

Theme 3: Objectives with Complex Behaviors and Multiple Topics

Another error committed by teachers is the objective with complex behavior and multiple topics. In one of the lesson plans that was evaluated, the objective presented was "Explain the basic concepts, uses and importance of statistics". The objective used the behavior "explain" (Level 3, Apply; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) without unpacking it to prerequisite low-level behaviors (e.g., identify, describe, etc.). As further observed, the objective was not unpacked into different topics (e.g., separate objectives) for concepts, uses, etc. Chatterjee and Corral (2017) advised that complex behaviors must be used only when appropriate (e.g., if learners have previously learned the prerequisite behaviors) and topics must not be combined.

Theme 4: Objectives with Higher-order Behaviors

Another type of error was observed on objectives of the documents, for example, "Assess the effectiveness of the ideas presented in the material viewed considering its purpose" (Level 5: Evaluate; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Such an objective can be classified as a single-barreled objective with high- level behavior. A higher-order behavior in a statement of objective is not necessarily an error especially if it is a culminating objective in a unit or quarter. However, as an instructional objective, not unpacking it first into a simpler one would make it difficult for learners to achieve. The taxonomy of behaviors is hierarchical, having competencies built on each other to reach the next level (Bloom et al., 1956).

Table 2

Factors that Explain Errors in Unpacking Curriculum to Instruction

Text Segment	Concept	Theme
Yes, I had my training 5 years ago and it only focused on the 5 parts of lesson planning.	Training focused on parts of the lesson plan only	Training on lesson planning that does not include unpacking
Yes, *pero* 2014 pa last *kag wala ko naka*-experience *mag*-unpack**, S**ir**,** since the introduction of MELCs [I did not experience unpacking since the introduction of MELCs]	Training on lesson planning not including unpacking	
No training *pa kay* newly hired at the same time unit earner *lang sa* education [I don't have training on making lesson plans since I am just a newly hired and I just earned some units in education].	No training on lesson planning and unpacking	
Yes, of the three subjects taught, *may* training *sa* A.P. [*Araling Panlipunan*] and Filipino except *sa* Math. Training was last year [Yes, I have training on making lesson plans, especially on the subjects I taught such as Social Studies and Filipino except in Mathematics.	Updated training on lesson planning but not true to all subjects	
Yes, last year during LAC [Learning Action Cell] session. Tips on the flow and activities of the LP.	Updated training on lesson planning	
Gina-copy *ko ang* competency then *gina*-revise. *Gina*- consider *ko nga may* cognitive, affective *kag* psychomotor [CAP]. [I copy the competency and revise it. I also consider that my objectives adhere to CAP dimension].	Analysis of competency into cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor dimensions	Different conception of unpacking as adhering to CAP dimensions
Consider the knowledge, attitudes, affective, cognitive, and performance. To develop attitude of learners and relate to daily activities of the learners.	Analysis of competency into knowledge, attitudes, and performance	
One time *may nag*-observe, *maayo na lang nagtabo ang* competency of the day [I was lucky when there was an observation that the objective is the same as the competency of the day].	Reliance and strict compliance with the MELC based on the budgeted competency	Pressure to copy MELCs word for word as objectives
Hanapin kung ang lesson is based *sa* competency for that week, so I just copy the competency [Observers will look for the competency for that week, so I just copy the competency].	Reliance on the MELC	
Based *sa* MELCs [Most Essential Learning Competencies]; *didto gina*-copy *kag ginasunod lang namon* [Based on MELCs; that's where we copy and follow].	Copying competency from MELC as objective of the lesson	
Naga-unpack *kami kung mahaba gid ang* competency *pero* most of the time *na*-unpack *naman ang sa* MELC [We do unpacking, but I believe that the MELCs is already unpacked].	Misperception that most MELC competencies are already unpacked	Too much reliance on MELCs and textbooks.
Ang objective *gina*-copy sa MELCs *pero sometimes sa* book. *Pinaghalu-halo lang ang* source [The objective is coped from MELCs but sometimes from the book. The sources are just combined].	Copying competency from MELC and book as objective of the lesson	

Theme 5: Objectives with Multiple Topics

Lastly, a prevalent type of error spotted in the reviewed documents is the single-barreled objective with multiple topics. A sample objective that had this type of error is *"Describe the different uses of light, sound, heat and electricity in everyday life"*. It can be gleaned that it contains multiple topics (e.g., light, sound, heat, etc.). Like a high-level objective, it would be difficult for learners to achieve it in a single instruction. Gagne

(1974) extolled that unpacking the topic has several useful purposes. Chief among these purposes is the clarity of what the lesson is about, hence the overall learning focus.

Theme 1: Training on Lesson Planning That Does Not Include Unpacking

One important theme that appeared from the analysis is the lesson planning training that does not include unpacking. Some participants received training in lesson planning; however, most of them had it a long time ago. One participant mentioned when asked if she underwent training on lesson planning, *"Yes, pero 2014 pa ang last* [Yes, but the last training was in 2014]". The participant also added that during their training, unpacking the curriculum was not included. "*Wala ko naka-experience mag-unpack, Sir, since the introduction of MELCs* [I did not experience unpacking since the introduction of MELCs]", one of the participants uttered. These responses imply that teachers are more likely to commit errors because curriculum unpacking was not part of their training. Setyono (2016) indicated that lesson planning is a difficult and complex process that involves many skills. One of these skills and perhaps the foremost and most crucial is curriculum unpacking. Cahapay (2020) has observed such a problem in the lack of background on curriculum unpacking of teachers, which called for professional development programs that respond to such a problem in the field.

Theme 2: Different Conception of Unpacking as Adhering to Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Dimensions

Another recurring theme that emerged from the responses of the participants is the misconception of curriculum unpacking as a process of breaking down the competencies into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor [CAP] dimensions. One of the participants said, *"Gina-copy ko ang competency then gina-revise. Gina-consider ko nga may cognitive, affective kag psychomotor.* [I copy the competency and revise it. I also consider that my objectives adhere to CAP dimensions]". This response is related to the response of another participant who said, "*Consider the knowledge, attitudes, affective, cognitive and performance* [in unpacking the competency to objective]". With these responses, it can be deduced that teachers are more likely to make errors in unpacking since they limit conceptions of unpacking to writing objectives following the CAP dimensions. It is worth mentioning the idea of Taba (1962) that such three dimensions cannot be separated, and they simultaneously occur in the learning act. Thus, there is no need to specify them as separate objectives in instruction. Rather, the principles of task analysis (Gagne et al., 1964) and hierarchical learning (Bloom, 1956) provide more sound bases for a technically suitable process of unpacking.

Theme 3: Pressure to Copy Most Essential Learning Competencies Word for Word as Objectives

A relevant theme that also surfaced from the responses of the participants is the pressure from the observer to copy MELCs word for word as objectives. Participant 5 responded *"one time may nag-observe, maayo na lang nagtabo ang competency of the day* [one time, there was an observer, I was lucky that the objective matched the competency of the day]". Such a statement is supported by another participant who answered *"Hanapin [ng observer] kung ang lesson is based sa competency for that week* [thus copied] [The observer will check if the lesson is based on the competency for that week, thus copied]". These statements manifest that teachers are pressured to copy the given competency word for word since these are usually asked by the observer. This is the typical problem because of being too prescriptive in implementing the curriculum (Guttierez, 2000) to the point that some teachers feel like they are being put under pressure to the expectations of the observer (Juniper Education, 2022), which in this case is the prescriptive word-for-word following of the competencies. Gabriel et. al (2022) advised making the competencies more relatable and meaningful by considering the load of competencies and breaking them down to suit the needs of the learners.

Theme 4: Too Much Reliance on Most Essential Learning Competencies and Textbooks

Lastly, a significant theme referring to too much reliance on MELCs and textbooks as a factor of errors in unpacking emerged. Participant 5 responded, *"Based sa MELCs; didto gina-copy kag ginasunod lang namon* [Based on MELCs; that's where we copy and follow]." Participant 6 similarly commented that *"Ang objective gina-copy sa MELCs pero sometimes sa book. Pinaghalu-halo lang ang source* [The objective is copied from MELCs but sometimes from the book. The sources are just combined]". These utterances show the tendencies of teachers to just copy the MELCs as objectives from the MELCs and textbooks; hence, too much reliance on curriculum documents happens. Following this observation, Gutierrez (2000) spelled out that teachers are expected to tightly follow the prescribed curriculum, which could explain why teachers tend to rely on what is written on MELCs and textbooks. Cahapay (2020)

recommended a more adaptive approach to allow teachers to be more creative in unpacking the competencies into more relevant, appropriate, and responsive objectives.

Conclusion

Generally, this study aimed to analyze the errors committed by teachers in unpacking the curriculum to instruction. The results indicated the following prevailing errors in unpacking the curriculum to instruction: a.) double-barreled objectives with different behaviors; b.) double-barreled objectives with same level behaviors; c.) objectives with complex behaviors and multiple topics; d.) objectives with higher order behaviors; and e.) objectives with multiple topics. Qualitative probes revealed significant factors explaining such errors in unpacking curriculum for instruction as follows: a.) training on lesson planning that does not include unpacking; b.) different conception of unpacking as adhering to CAP dimensions; c.) feeling pressured in copying MELCs word for word as objectives; and d.) too much reliance on MELCs and textbooks.

These results offer teachers with some crucial insights for improving the translation process of curriculum to instruction. Unpacking the curriculum requires attention to detail and precision. To address the identified errors, it is imperative to seek focused training that explicitly covers unpacking techniques. Additionally, teachers should foster a comprehensive understanding of unpacking that goes beyond merely being fixated on certain dimensions. Moreover, it is essential to resist copying all curriculum competencies verbatim as instructional objectives. Instead, focus on technically interpreting them based on principles like task analysis and appropriately adapting them to suit the needs of the learners. Balancing the use of prescribed materials with diverse instructional resources can also help enrich lessons and promote more effective and efficient instruction.

Overall, this study provides knowledge on the possible errors that are committed when the curriculum is translated into instruction, offering theoretical insights in this area of interest. Moreover, in light of the practical results of this research, teacher training programs should include comprehensive instruction on curriculum unpacking as an integral part of the lesson planning process. Lastly, this study only included a single case with a small sample. Thus, it is suggested to replicate similar research in different cases or contexts to validate the current results or build on them.

Authors' Contributions

E.J.G.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Visualization, Writing-original draft, Writing-review and editing, Data Collection, Data Analysis

J.M.G.A: Conceptualization, Methodology, Visualization, Writing-original draft, Writing- review and editing, Data Collection, Data Analysis

A.M.A.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Visualization, Writing-original draft, Writing-review and editing, Data Collection, Data Analysis

J.P.D.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Visualization, Writing-original draft, Data Collection, Data Analysis

S.M.L.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing-original draft, Data Collection, Data Analysis

N.R.F.G.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing-original draft, Data Collection, Data Analysis

M.E.B.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing-original draft, Data Collection, Data Analysis

J.T.G.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing-original draft, Coordination, Data Collection

M.B.C.: Conceptualization, Visualization, Writing and editing-original draft, Writing-review and editing

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