

Lived experiences of daycare center teachers in Laguna during the pandemic transition period

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Abstract: Amid the crisis in the learning of Filipino learners, the teachers faced another yet more challenging task of teaching from a distance. Having in mind the importance of using experiences to find the solutions to existing problems, the researchers explored the Lived Experiences of Daycare Center Teachers in Laguna during the Pandemic Transition Period using the phenomenological approach to a qualitative study. Six (5) daycare center teachers participated in a series of in-depth interviews, the interviews were transcribed, and responses underwent open coding. Four major themes describing the lived experiences of daycare center teachers were formulated i.e., parents' lack of attention in their child's education, advantages and disadvantages in teaching face-to-face during the transition period, patience, cooperation, and preparation. It is observed that the parents' lack of attention to their child's education greatly contributed to the children's learning and development. Most parents let their children use gadgets than guide them in answering their modules. Lack of learning support at home is also another factor. Parents do not have enough time to help their children with school work, which results in the parents doing their child's activities instead of the learners. Parents also sit in with their children inside the classroom during the lessons. Daycare center teachers in Laguna during the pandemic transition period still consider conducting face-to-face classes or having teacher-student interaction as a better mode of teaching. In terms of patience, teachers had to have long patience, catch student interest, and use pictures or visual aids to get the learners' attention.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most recent public health emergencies of global concern is the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which started in China and almost infected every country in the whole world. This disease is caused by a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2, previously known as 2019-nCoV) and has received global attention from growing infections and on how to remove the disease and flatten the curve of infections (Guo et al, 2020) Cough, fever, and shortness of breath are some of the symptoms. can be spread via direct contact with an infected individual, respiratory droplets, or aerosols from sneezing, coughing, or otherwise (Shereen et al., 2020).

The battle against COVID-19 pandemic threats was unsuccessful, with tremendous repercussions and ramifications on practically every aspect of human society. These have the pervasive disturbance, including travel restrictions School closures (Chinazzi et al., 2020; Viner et al., 2020), the world's economic downturn (Fernandes, 2020), and political unrest and racism (Habibi et al., 2020), (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020), and Misinformation and

disagreements are just a couple examples (Enitan et al., 2020). The educational sector has been particularly impacted.

Nearly two epidemic months were seen by most countries worldwide. Educational institutions have been temporarily closed to stop the spread to combat COVID-19 and stop infections (UNESCO, 2020). Around the world, this shutdown has had an impact on more than 1.2 billion students. In the Philippines, there are more than 28 million students (UNESCO, 2020). Responses such as communal quarantine and lockdown. Several nations have encouraged teachers and students to learn and work from the delivery of online learning platforms, which started at home (Crawford et al., 2020).

A childcare worker, often known as a daycare worker, is in charge of maintaining a fun and safe environment for young children to preteens. Their duties include coming up with creative and educational activities, preparing and providing snacks to children, and maintaining a kid-friendly environment. Daycare instructors, caring for children, including setting up schedules and routines, grooming, feeding, changing diapers, and cleaning play areas and rooms. fostering and encouraging developmentally appropriate learning and socializing to ensure that children learn fundamental skills and concepts, such as sharing, communication, and politeness maintaining a secure workplace by monitoring children for health, behavioral, and emotional issues and reporting concerns to the staff and parents helping children learn.

Karalis (2020) Asserts what merits study as life returns to normal, what are the ramifications that have emerged for the following day, namely, what modifications must be done, the extent of the circumstance and to identify the fundamental components of education studying in institutions and systems of formal education while interruptions in education.

Kindergartens and schools were closed as a result of the lockdown connected to COVID-19. For many families, homeschooling, the absence of peer relationships, and child care at home presented formidable challenges. The compulsory starting age for education.

(if applicable) in the Philippines is between 6 and 12 years old. A comprehensive strategy and national system for early childhood care and development are established under the Philippine Republic Act 8980: Early Childhood Care and Development Act, which also allocates monies for other purposes. To support young children's optimal growth and development, the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) System refers to the whole spectrum of health, nutrition, early education, and social services programs that cater to their basic, all-encompassing requirements from birth to age six.

The difficulties that Filipino children face today are related to their poor physical and mental health, inadequate early education, insufficient psychosocial support and stimulation, inadequate protection, and, more recently, the Pandemic. These primary dangers to young children's health have an impact on ensuring their rights to life, growth, and safety. The issues are interconnected and highlight the urgent need for an aggressive and comprehensive effort to safeguard children's healthy development (0 to 6).

Statement of the problem

This study described the lived experiences of daycare center teachers in Laguna during the post-pandemic transition. It specifically addressed the following;

- 1) What are the experiences of Day care center teachers during the transition period?
- 2) What are the challenges and opportunities of transitioning from pandemic to post-pandemic early childhood education?
- 3) What strategies work best during the transition?
- 4) How do the experiences of the teacher affect their career plans?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on early childhood care development

Burger (2022) has stated that the effect of early childhood education and care programs on children's development has been studied by several writers. They have frequently concentrated on the impact on kids from low-income families.

Recent important research was assessed to evaluate the effects of different preschool programs on cognitive development. Additionally, the ability of these initiatives to provide kids from various social situations with equal educational chances was assessed. The considerations were program commencement, intensity, and duration. The results show that the vast majority of recent early education and care programs had significant positive short-term effects and somewhat smaller long-term impacts on cognitive development.

To add, the results are relative to their peers from more advantaged families, children from low-income families made as much progress or slightly more. Despite this, developmental deficiencies brought on by unfavorable learning environments in underprivileged environments cannot be entirely made up for by early childhood education and care. Research and policy implications are presented.

Jylanki (2022). The current systematic review aimed to examine the efficacy of basic motor skill and physical activity interventions on academic and cognitive abilities in typically developing 3 to 7-year-old children as well as the methodological quality of these interventions.

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement was followed when conducting the review and when reporting its findings. Seven electronic databases were used in April 2020 during a literature search. The Effective Public Health Practice Project (EPHPP) Quality Assessment Tool was used to rate the studies' methodology. For the included studies, post hoc power analyses and Cohen's d-effect size estimations were performed.

35 studies in total, covering 2472 kids, met the requirements for inclusion. 24 of the studies were deemed to have a bad methodology, while only two showed a strong methodology. The majority (71%) of the studies that were examined showed that the intervention had a positive impact on cognitive and academic performance. The effects were most pronounced in improving memory, and the strongest evidence was seen for executive processes, language, and numeracy. When compared to merely fundamental motor

skill and physical activity interventions, the combined interventions had greater impacts on cognitive and academic skills, while fundamental motor skill interventions had greater effects than physical activity interventions. These results suggest that basic motor skill and physical activity interventions may be able to support the cognitive and academic learning of toddlers who are generally developing.

The supplied evidence was viewed as weak because the majority of studies in this field have poor methodological quality. When compared to merely fundamental motor skill and physical activity interventions, the combined interventions had greater impacts on cognitive and academic skills, while fundamental motor skill interventions had greater effects than physical activity interventions.

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Britto et al. (2017) A historical chance to scale up programs that support early childhood development is offered by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Although more data is supporting the importance of early childhood development, the study is spread across different fields, groups, and environments, with differences in scope and focus being observed.

The five fields of health, nutrition, education, child protection, and social protection are covered in our thorough, current analysis of early childhood development interventions. Our analysis leads us to the conclusion that interventions must be carried out as multi-sectorial intervention packages grounded in nurturing care to be effective, wise, and durable. The recommendations emphasize that intervention packages should be used throughout the life course at developmentally appropriate times, target various hazards, and draw on current delivery platforms for scale-up viability.

The data currently firmly supports that for early childhood to realize their developmental potential, parents, caregivers, and families need to be supported in providing caring care and protection, even though interventions will continue to improve as developmental science advances.

Suarez et al (2022). Investments in early childhood education can decrease the inequality gap, encourage education, and deter crime. The state initiative Centros de Desarrollo Infantil (CDI) offers free early childhood education to kids from disadvantaged homes. To determine how exposure to a CDI program affects children's cognitive, socio emotional, and nutritional development, this research does a treatment intensity analysis. In six distinct evaluations in Quito Centro, Ecuador, we collected 16,322 observations from 2016 to 2018.

The findings showed that CDI had beneficial and significant impacts as exposure to the program lengthened cognitive and socio emotional development. The exposure to the program did not result in any appreciable improvement in nutritional development.

Forssman et al. (2022). The early home learning environment that children experience has an impact on their cognitive growth, pre literacy abilities, and eventual academic outcomes. Early intervention programs that support good parenting practices and child development have a strong chance of improving children's preparation for school and promoting social equality. Interactive book sharing is one frequently recommended parental strategy for fostering a child's linguistic and cognitive development.

Kim (2022) this study investigates whether a large expansion of pre-primary education in Ethiopia had an impact on the learning results of later pupils during the period of pre-primary education reform at the country level. The study makes use of two similar, representative early-grade reading testing data that span the 2010–2016 reform era when pre-primary enrollment rates increased by almost ten times across the country. Although no such links were seen before the reform, it was found that associations between preschool attendance and reading outcomes were favorable and significant following the expansion.

However, there was little variation in the benefits of preschool enrollment according to parental literacy, urbanity, or gender. We talked about the consequences of ongoing reform, like inclusive and strategic policies to bridge the learning gap between children from privileged and underprivileged families.

The objectives, difficulties, and solutions associated with measuring early childhood learning environments that influence early developmental growth as well as the capacities and skills of young children are given and examined. First, the study design is described together with a brief explanation of the German laws governing parental leave and early childhood education and care (ECEC).

The assessments of early child functioning and development's domain-specific and domain-general cognitive and socio emotional indicators are then given, along with

descriptions of the structural, orientation, and process quality evaluations of the learning environments for kids at home and in daycare. A special focus is placed on direct evaluations and how reliable and valid they are. Additionally, some chosen social disparities research is reported, and the future of data analysis is examined.

Studies in day care in the Philippines

The term "daycare" refers to services provided to young children between the ages of one and six, whether in the child's own home, the home of a parent or other caregiver, or a center-based facility.

There are three (3) main types of daycare: center-based care, in-home care, and care given by a relative, neighbor, friend, or even a neighbor. A daycare center is another name for center-based care. The main goal of daycare services is to promote children's growth and development. It is the responsibility of service providers to promote children's growth in all spheres.

As a result, contemporary daycare facilities are experiencing a variety of concerns and issues. The primary problems that teachers face are typically connected to the instructional materials, such as the furniture and fixtures in daycare facilities, which contribute to musculoskeletal ailments (MSD). MSD may come with a broad range of inflammatory and degenerative diseases that affect the bones, joints, nerves, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and so on.

Several types of types of research address MSD and user discomfort in educational settings, however, few studies concentrate on daycare facilities. Every childcare center in the Philippines is built differently, according to the owners' judgment, and as a result, the classrooms are not sized for the children and teachers who are the facility's main users.

Young children's learning and development can be impacted by their physical environment. All young children value situations that are orderly, tidy, engaging, and appealing. The finest care and attention at the family and community levels should be provided for Filipino children up to the age of six, according to Republic Act 6972, also known as An Act of Establishing a Day Care Center in Every Barangay.

However, the local government entities in charge of the daycare centers' physical infrastructure, particularly the classrooms, outdoor play areas, comfort rooms, and others, require special attention. It was discovered that there is no operational or work plan for the barangay daycare facilities. In addition, the barangay daycare centers were reliant on the federal and local governments to upgrade their physical facilities. Due to the community's rapid expansion in the number of children, it was determined that the primary considerations for building a barangay daycare center were the amount of classroom space and location.

Additionally, it was noted that every piece of educational equipment used at the three barrio daycare facilities was age- and developmentally appropriate. The daycare staff members concluded by saying that a large classroom should be able to hold more youngsters.

To manage effectively and develop their physical facilities, local government entities and daycare employees should place a high priority on management duties. Without a plan, it will be incredibly challenging to convince private companies, people, and groups to support your proposal for replacement. The barangay daycare centers' physical infrastructure was deemed to be in good and usable shape.

However, given the rapidly rising child population, bigger classrooms, new tables and chairs, educational materials, and toys should take precedence. The daycare providers and local government representatives should expand their networks to look for collaboration and assistance. Local government entities and daycare staff should prioritize management responsibilities to manage efficiently and enhance their physical facilities. Without a plan, it

will be very difficult to persuade private businesses, individuals, and organizations to embrace your alternative proposal.

The physical infrastructure of the barangay daycare facilities was judged to be in good and usable condition. Larger classrooms, new tables and chairs, educational resources, and toys should take precedence, nonetheless, in light of the rapidly expanding child population. To find opportunities for cooperation and support, daycare providers and local government representatives should broaden their networks.

The municipality has 43 daycare centers in total. Despite being close to the town, the majority of them originate in rural areas with limited access to public transportation due to the distance and state of the roads leading to these barangays. The daycare centers offer preschool teaching to children ages 3 to 5. The preschoolers' essential developmental milestones in seven areas are being tracked and evaluated by the daycare provider: gross motor, fine motor, and self-help, receptive, expressive, cognitive, and social-emotional.

Also mentioned is the idea that the daycare staff serves as the kids' second mothers and that the daycare centers operate as their second homes. Children remain at the center for at least two hours, learning the alphabet, various lines, shapes, and colors, as well as informal education fundamentals like reciting short poems and playing.

The facility is committed to encouraging kids' initiative and creativity as well as exposing them to various situations and people they might not often interact with at home (Garcia, 2013). So, to say that preschool education is successful, several aspects are required, including those related to the school, society, and families. To underline the elements found, it was listed the following: parents' optimistic outlook and active involvement in their kids' activities; daycare workers' eligibility; and the setting of the centers.

This study was designed to identify the variables that influence preschoolers' growth in terms of their cognitive competency both before and after the test. Additionally, this would assess a child's readiness for school in terms of cognitive competency, emphasizing the child's ability to carry out fundamental learning skills. It would also recognize the positive effects of the daycare service and eventually point out any areas that require improvement in terms of the training abilities of the daycare staff.

Studies on the transition to face-to-face classes

Most universities around the world are currently changing their regular schedules and organizational structures at the institutional and global levels to create a secure and productive learning environment (UNESCO, 2022). In the Philippines, institutional leaders such as deans and campus administrators in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) take in ways on the anticipated or targeted resumption of face-to-face classes.

The lowering of the alert level status by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) in the country allows more ease of physical interaction and movements in academic institutions. On the other hand, the quandary of the projected face-to-face classes also bears the sentiments from the views and insights of these institutional leaders.

This study examined the transition to possible in-person instruction from the sentiments, views, and insights of institutional leaders within the context of a Philippine state college. The learning communities or group setting campuses and/or colleges in a specific state college where the campus directors and deans take in their collection of academic leadership styles are a case in point. At the college level, face-to-face classes or courses are now to be offered after two years of distance learning modality because of the threats imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) guidelines (CHED, 2021), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are set to eventually expand, and progressively limited face-to-face classes especially, to skills-based or laboratory-based courses.

Literature studies on how pandemic change the education landscape in the country

Pham et al. 2020 the pandemic has created enormous problems in the educational systems, affecting over 1.5 billion students. It has involuntarily made the government cancel the national examinations and put the schools to be temporarily closed, cease face-to-face instruction, and strictly observe physical distancing.

These circumstances have started the digital transformation of higher education and challenged its capacity to respond in time and effectively. Schools adopted relevant technologies, prepared learning and staff resources, set systems and infrastructure, established new teaching protocols, and adjusted their curricula.

However, the transition from face-to-face to online classes was smooth for some schools but rough for others, particularly those from developing countries with limited infrastructures.

Naturally, schools and other learning spaces were forced to change their modality of learning from face-to-face classes to fully online learning as the world continues the battle to control the rapid spread of the virus. Usher, Barak & Huang stated that online learning refers to a learning environment that uses the Internet and other technological devices and tools for synchronous and asynchronous instructional delivery and management of academic programs.

However, this transition to a new learning style has faced several major concerns relating to policy, pedagogy, logistics, socioeconomic factors, technology, and psychosocial factors (Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020; Khalil et al., 2020 because of the policies that needed to be followed, teachers who were used to conventional teaching delivery were also obliged to embrace the technology despite their lack of technological literacy.

To solve the increasing dropout rates problem of students due to economic, psychological, and academic reasons, online learning webinars and peer support systems were launched. Although students can learn anything online, Franchi 2020 stated that learning may perhaps be less than optimal, especially in courses that require face-to-face contact and direct interactions.

Recently, there has been an overwhelming phase of studies relating to the new normal in education. While many focused on national policies, professional development, and curriculum, others zeroed in on the specific learning experience of students during the pandemic. Among these are Copeland et al. (2021) and Fawaz et al. (2021) who analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on college students' mental health and their coping mechanisms.

As reported by Copeland 2020 et al. the pandemic adversely affected students' behavioral and emotional functioning, particularly attention and externalizing problems specifically the mood and wellness behavior, which were caused by separation, economic, health effects, and uncertainties. In Fawaz et al.'s (2021) study.

Fawaz et al. (2021) students stated their concerns about learning and evaluation methods, overwhelming task load, technical difficulties, and confinement. To deal with these difficulties, students actively dealt with the situation by seeking help from their teachers and relatives and engaging in recreational activities.

Tang et al. (2021) examined the efficacy of different online teaching modes among engineering students. The study revealed that students were dissatisfied with online learning in general, particularly in the aspect of communication and question.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The design used in this research was qualitative research. this descriptive study aims to describe lived experiences of day care center teachers in laguna during the pandemic transition.

Locale of the study and respondents

The researchers gathered the data at Brgy. Zone 1 Lusiana, Laguna, Brgy. Yukos Nagcarlan, Laguna, Brgy. Maytalang 2 Lumban, Laguna and Brgy. Santisima, Sta Cruz Laguna. The place was selected to know The Lived Experience of Day Care Center Teachers in Laguna during the Pandemic Transition Period.

Research instruments

The researchers conducted a face-to-face interview with selected Day Care Center teachers. The teachers were oriented about the questionnaire that they will answer and were informed about the purpose of the study. The researchers also emphasized that their identity and privacy will be ensured, and their answers to the questions will be confidential to others. After the data has been collected it was analyzed and interpreted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Parents' lack of attention in their child's education.

Parents let their children use gadgets than guide them in answering their modules

When teachers were asked about their experiences in teaching reading, they unanimously indicated it was more challenging to teach during the pandemic period. Teachers go to their students' house to house just to teach the students and collect the learning modules that they left.

However, teachers could not help but to feel disappointed. There are some sentiments that they shared:

“Sometimes the module or the learning material is missing because the parent didn't discuss it at home. Specially those parents who have 5 children, how would the mother explain it if she lacks of... it's not like were degrading them but they don't have enough ability on how would they teach their child. They would say, oh! It's just a daycare level never mind that.”

The teachers could not also help but to compare that

“The students in time of pandemic compared today their focus is different. Because when they are in their houses instead that the parent would give pencil and paper, the mother will give the cellphone. So, now that the students are in school they are not used on studying.”

The teachers see that the parents donot give much attention on their child's education, resulting for their child to have late development in learning.

Lack of learning support at home

Not far from the other teachers' experience, they also experience going to the house of the student to bring the students learning materials and because of being unable to afford a data or an internet they are capable of conducting an online learning. As a result, the student did not have a proper guidance in studying.

Parents do not give enough time to their children so they end up doing their child's activities instead of the learners

Another problem that a daycare teacher has experienced was not seeing their students in person, it's like the student does not have a proper role model of what a teacher really is. This has resulted to the parents deciding that they will just write and do the activities on their own, instead of teaching them so the students become lazy to study.

Parents sit-in with their child inside the classroom

Another experience of a daycare teacher teaching during the pandemic transition period was related to the parents. The teacher narrated that when the first face-to-face classes started, she observed that there are parents inside the classroom who doesn't want to leave their children.

As the teacher took care of the child, she uses lot of strategies to make the children stop from crying then as the time goes by the teacher got the students attention and started to focus on learning.

Advantages and disadvantages of teaching face-to-face during the transition period

Direct learning

When we asked teachers what opportunities they had in this transition period they said they had a better experience this season. Because they see children personally it's not like a pandemic that they know only by name.

Socializing problem

As for some of the challenges teachers have had, they said they have struggled with children's behavior because some children are dependent on their parents with special needs and because they have been training their parents for almost a few years, so others are struggling to leave the daycare center.

Teachers can provide basic learning

Now we are in face-to-face classes Day Care teachers are given the learning that fits their age where children first learn to interact with fellow students, singing, dancing, playing, tracing lines, and identifying colors and so on.

In this theme, both children, parents, and teachers are experiencing challenges because children are also trained to be at their parents' side and can do what they want to do at any time and it can be regularly given to parents especially if they want to eat or sleep at a time when the child's learning is not improved. Children also love watching television and using a cellphone, it's also the way parents stop crying for their children. The face-to-face class will see the difficulties of both sides as they are not trained in the time they are now in a face-to-face class.

Patience

Long patience

When teachers were asked about their strategies and how they teach in the current situation, they unanimously indicated that they need to have a lot of patience.

Teachers could not avoid comparing their current experience with what should and could happen with face-to-face and modular learning. Teachers experience that there is a spoiled child at home who doesn't listen and throws away his bag and shoes when he is at school. "Kaya ang mga daycare teacher po ay flexible kung ano pong gustonggawin ng mga bata ay yun din kami. Alanganipilitmoyungayawnila".

Student interest

Since the pandemic started getting the children's interest in learning became challenging for teachers. because children got used to having their play time at home. Therefore the teachers needed to align their thinking with the thinking of our students to get the students' interest.

Pictures or use visual aids to get the learners' attention

Because of the pandemic, students received poor learning. Pictures make learning fun using visuals along with words makes any activity much more enjoyable. Therefore, words can be difficult for young ones to grasp and understand, so pictures give them something visual that stays in their mind.

Cooperation and preparation

Plans/preparation is to be always prepared

When teachers were asked about on what are their expectations and plans in the coming months relative to their teaching career, they unanimously indicated that they are always prepared. Since the pandemic started, teachers could not help but compare their experiences with face to face and modular learning. Teachers expected the parents to cooperate to teach their child at home. Also, based on the interview, some students receive poor learning support from their family members and this poses additional challenge to them

Nevertheless, teachers were exhausting all means available to them to reach out and provide for their students. However, the study highlights the continuous efforts which teachers exert to cope with the pandemic transition period.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of the study indicated that the teachers still consider face-to-face classes or teacher-student interaction as a better mode of teaching so they can easily observe and communicate with the learners. Teacher-student interaction for learning is only possible through home visitations, even though the daycare teachers manage to do so, the students' socialization development did not develop fully because of restrictions and fear of contracting the virus.

In addition, the teachers also viewed that the students' work is above the level or not accurate with the skills daycare students should have. Therefore, the conclusion is that the parents do the learning modules for their children instead of providing them assistance. Lastly, due to these problems, when the learners return to face-to-face classes the daycare teachers allot more patience, understanding, and preparation in teaching their learners.

The study's findings propose several recommendations targeted at enhancing different facets of the day care system. Firstly, it is recommended that day care centers prioritize the redesign of their rooms to enhance teachers' ability to identify behaviors and offer suitable activities. This may entail establishing adaptable settings that foster observation and interaction among children, while also guaranteeing access to resources for a wide range of learning encounters.

Furthermore, parents are urged to enhance their participation in their child's daycare experience, building a more intimate partnership with the staff to facilitate early education. This can be accomplished through workshops, frequent communication channels, or other programs that encourage parents to actively participate in their child's education from an early age.

Moreover, it is crucial for the community to lend their support to local government and barangay officials in ensuring the provision of sufficient resources for day care centers. This entails pushing for an adequate provision of resources and infrastructure to enable efficient instruction and learning, benefiting both educators and learners.

Finally, it is strongly recommended that academics broaden their investigations to acquire a more profound comprehension of the difficulties encountered by day care educators, specifically in the context of the pandemic and the resumption of in-person encounters. Through an examination of the actual experiences of teachers, researchers can get useful knowledge to guide future interventions and support systems.

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