

Original Article

Educational Philosophy and Instructional Practices of English Language Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between educational philosophy and instructional practices among English language teachers in public secondary schools in the Paquibato District of Davao City. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational design, the research surveyed teachers using a questionnaire assessing various philosophical domains (essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, social reconstructivism, and existentialism) and instructional practices (assessment for learning, ICT integration, and differentiated instruction). Overall, teachers reported highly extensive engagement in both their philosophical orientations and instructional methods. Existentialism emerged as the most prominent philosophy, while progressivism was the least. Regarding practices, ICT integration was prioritized most. Crucially, the analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between teachers' educational philosophies and their instructional practices. Furthermore, all philosophical domains significantly predicted instructional behaviors, with existentialism serving as the strongest predictor. Ultimately, the findings highlight that a teacher's philosophical foundation is deeply interconnected with how they assess students, utilize technology, and differentiate instruction.

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1. Introduction

Instruction in English depends not only on curricular mandates and classroom resources but also on the beliefs teachers hold about knowledge, learners, and the purposes of schooling. Recent scholarship shows that teacher beliefs shape the methods teachers prefer, the classroom roles they assign to themselves and their students, and the kinds of learning experiences they view as legitimate and worthwhile (Martinez et al., 2024; Wesely et al., 2024). In language education, these beliefs matter because English teaching demands constant choices about content, interaction, assessment, pacing, correction, and responsiveness to learner diversity.

Educational philosophy offers a useful frame for examining those choices. A teacher who privileges essentialist assumptions may stress disciplinary knowledge, explicit instruction, and mastery of core content, whereas a teacher who leans toward progressivist or existentialist assumptions may grant more space to learner agency, relevance, self-expression, or inquiry. The wider literature on teacher cognition in English as a foreign language supports this linkage between what teachers think and what they do, especially when classrooms serve learners with varied needs and unequal access to opportunity (Chen & Abdullah, 2022; Rahimi & Ong, 2023).

The issue becomes more important when instructional quality is judged through practices that directly affect classroom learning. Assessment for learning now occupies a central place in language education because it helps teachers monitor progress, adjust instruction, and support learner self-regulation. Recent syntheses show that formative assessment in English classrooms can improve learning outcomes when teachers possess the assessment literacy to use feedback, questioning, peer response, and ongoing evidence of performance in purposeful ways (Phakiti & Leung, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

Technology integration has become another defining marker of contemporary English teaching. Digital tools can broaden access to authentic language input, enable multimodal expression, support feedback, and extend classroom interaction beyond scheduled contact hours. At the same time, the educational value of ICT depends less on the presence of devices alone than on teachers' pedagogical decisions, confidence, and contextual support (Akram et al., 2022; Rintaningrum, 2023). For that reason, studies of English instruction increasingly treat technology use as a pedagogical rather than merely technical issue.

Differentiated instruction raises a similar concern. English classrooms often include students who differ in proficiency, pace, confidence, participation patterns, and access to prior language experience. Differentiation seeks to respond to those differences through variation in content, process, product, and learning environment, yet successful implementation requires teachers to connect beliefs about learners with practical classroom design. Recent research and reviews indicate that differentiation becomes more consistent when teachers receive sustained preparation, collaborative

support, and opportunities to align inclusive beliefs with classroom routines (Langelaan et al., 2024; Talain & Mercado, 2023).

The present study brings these strands together by asking whether educational philosophy is associated with the instructional practices of English language teachers in public secondary schools. This focus is significant for at least three reasons. First, public secondary teachers often work under conditions that intensify the need for sound pedagogical judgment, including large classes, wide variation in learner readiness, and uneven material support. Second, the English classroom is a setting in which philosophical orientation can manifest clearly in decisions about participation, assessment, authority, technology use, and differentiation. Third, literature in the field has examined teacher beliefs, assessment, digital integration, and differentiated instruction, but far fewer studies have tested their relationship within one empirical model in a local public-school English context (Chen & Abdullah, 2022; Razak et al., 2023; Wesely et al., 2024).

The study therefore aimed to determine the extent of educational philosophy and instructional practices among English language teachers in public secondary schools in the Paquibato District, Division of Davao City, to test the relationship between the two constructs, and to identify which philosophical domains significantly predict instructional practices.

2. Methodology

This study used a quantitative, nonexperimental descriptive-correlational design to examine the association between educational philosophy and instructional practices among English language teachers in public secondary schools in the Paquibato District, Division of Davao City. The target population comprised 225 English language teachers, and the final sample included 132 teachers, with the sample size determined through Slovin's formula at a 0.05 margin of error. Eligibility required current employment as an English language teacher in a public secondary school in the district during School Year 2025-2026 and at least one year of teaching experience in English. Teachers who did not meet these criteria, as well as school personnel without direct English teaching responsibilities, were excluded. A simple random sampling procedure was used so that each eligible teacher had an equal chance of selection.

Data were gathered through an adapted survey questionnaire administered through face-to-face distribution. The instrument contained two main parts. The first measured educational philosophy across five domains: essentialism, perennialism, progressivism, social reconstructivism, and existentialism. The second measured instructional practices across three domains: assessment for learning, ICT integration, and differentiated instruction. Both parts used a 5-point Likert scale. For educational philosophy, the response continuum ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with interpretive bands from not extensive to very extensive. The instructional practices scale used the same 5-point response format and the same

descriptive bands. Before full administration, the questionnaire underwent expert review for clarity, relevance, and readability, followed by a pilot test with 30 teachers to assess face validity, logical flow, and reliability. The reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the study administration were .89 for the educational philosophy scale and .88 for the instructional practices scale, which indicate good internal consistency.

The data collection process followed formal institutional approval procedures and basic ethical safeguards. Respondents were informed about the study purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw without penalty. Consent was obtained prior to participation, confidentiality was protected, and responses were treated as research data only. After retrieval, the completed questionnaires were encoded and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the extent of educational philosophy and instructional practices. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship between the two constructs, and multiple linear regression was used to determine which domains of educational philosophy significantly influenced instructional practices. All hypothesis tests were evaluated at the .05 level of significance.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the reported summary of educational philosophy. The overall mean was 4.38 (SD = 0.75), which fell in the very extensive range. At the domain level, the highest reported mean was for existentialism (M = 4.40, SD = 0.82), followed by essentialism (M = 4.39, SD = 0.85) and social reconstructivism (M = 4.39, SD = 0.77). Perennialism obtained a mean of 4.37 (SD = 0.82), and progressivism obtained the lowest reported mean of 4.35 (SD = 0.80).

Table 1. Summary of educational philosophy among English language teachers.

| Domain | Mean | SD | Descriptive level |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Essentialism | 4.39 | 0.85 | Very Extensive |
| Perennialism | 4.37 | 0.82 | Very Extensive |
| Progressivism | 4.35 | 0.80 | Very Extensive |
| Social reconstructivism | 4.39 | 0.77 | Very Extensive |
| Existentialism | 4.40 | 0.82 | Very Extensive |
| Overall | 4.38 | 0.75 | Very Extensive |

Table 2 presents the summary of instructional practices. The overall mean was 4.39 (SD = 0.77), which also fell in the very extensive range. ICT integration obtained the highest mean (M = 4.40, SD = 0.79), followed by assessment for learning (M = 4.39, SD = 0.84) and differentiated instruction (M = 4.37, SD = 0.84).

Table 2. Summary of instructional practices among English language teachers.

| Domain | Mean | SD | Descriptive level |
|----------------------------|------|------|-------------------|
| Assessment for learning | 4.39 | 0.84 | Very Extensive |
| ICT integration | 4.40 | 0.79 | Very Extensive |
| Differentiated instruction | 4.37 | 0.84 | Very Extensive |
| Overall | 4.39 | 0.77 | Very Extensive |

Table 3 presents the relationship between educational philosophy and instructional practices. The correlation coefficient was $r = 0.64$, with $p = 0.000$, indicating a statistically significant positive relationship at the .05 level.

Table 3. Correlation results.

| Variables | r | p-value |
|--|------|---------|
| Educational philosophy and instructional practices | 0.64 | 0.000 |

Table 4 presents the multiple regression results. The model was significant, with $R = 0.66$, $R^2 = 0.435$, $F = 80.70$, and $p = 0.000$. All five domains of educational philosophy had statistically significant coefficients: essentialism ($B = 0.80$, $\beta = 0.61$, $t = 5.28$, $p = 0.000$), perennialism ($B = 0.73$, $\beta = 0.55$, $t = 5.15$, $p = 0.000$), progressivism ($B = 0.82$, $\beta = 0.60$, $t = 5.32$, $p = 0.000$), social reconstructivism ($B = 0.78$, $\beta = 0.63$, $t = 5.25$, $p = 0.000$), and existentialism ($B = 0.85$, $\beta = 0.78$, $t = 5.35$, $p = 0.000$). The constant was 3.24 ($SE = 0.70$, $t = 5.15$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 4. Regression results predicting instructional practices.

| Variables | Coefficient | t-stat | p-value | Remarks |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------|---------|-------------|
| Constant | 3.24 | 5.15 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Essentialism | 0.80 | 5.28 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Perennialism | 0.73 | 5.15 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Progressivism | 0.82 | 5.32 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Social reconstructivism | 0.78 | 5.25 | 0.000 | Significant |
| Existentialism | 0.85 | 5.35 | 0.000 | Significant |

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that English language teachers in the study context report a broad and consistently strong endorsement of multiple educational philosophies, alongside equally strong reports of assessment for learning, ICT integration, and differentiated instruction. Rather than suggesting allegiance to a single doctrinal position, this pattern points to a pragmatic or eclectic professional stance in which teachers draw from several orientations at once. That interpretation aligns with work on teacher beliefs that portrays instructional practice as a situated synthesis of

convictions, contextual pressures, and professional judgment rather than the simple enactment of one method or one theory (Martinez et al., 2024; Wesely et al., 2024).

The positive correlation between educational philosophy and instructional practices supports the claim that teachers' beliefs and assumptions are not peripheral to classroom work. In English education, what teachers believe about knowledge, learner agency, authority, and the purpose of schooling influences how they assess progress, structure interaction, and decide when to adapt instruction. Recent reviews of EFL teacher cognition likewise argue that cognition shapes practice in visible ways, especially when teachers attempt to respond to diversity, equity, and participation in the classroom (Chen & Abdullah, 2022; Rahimi & Ong, 2023).

The very high ratings for assessment for learning suggest that respondents see evaluation as part of instruction rather than as a terminal act of measurement. This matters because current language assessment literature emphasizes that formative assessment is most effective when it is woven into classroom decisions about support, feedback, and next steps, not when it is reduced to routine testing alone. Zhang et al. (2024) show that teacher and student beliefs strongly mediate the effectiveness of formative assessment in K-12 EFL settings, while Phakiti and Leung (2024) argue that classroom assessment in language teaching must connect evidence, pedagogy, and fairness. The present findings fit that view by suggesting that stronger philosophical orientation coincides with stronger classroom assessment practice.

ICT integration emerged as the highest-rated instructional domain, which suggests that digital tools have become a normalized component of English instruction in the study context. That pattern is consistent with evidence that teachers generally hold favorable views of technology integration when digital tools are perceived to extend access, engagement, and instructional flexibility (Akram et al., 2022; Lindo & Cutad, 2024; Lindo & Panes, 2024). It also echoes Rintaningrum's (2023) argument that technology becomes pedagogically valuable when teachers use it to support language input, interaction, and feedback rather than as an add-on. The result therefore implies not merely device use but a belief-practice alignment in which teachers' educational orientations support deliberate digital pedagogy.

The comparatively lower, though still very extensive, mean for differentiated instruction is also informative. Differentiation often receives strong rhetorical support but can be difficult to enact consistently because it asks teachers to redesign materials, tasks, grouping, and assessment in response to learner variance. Langelaan et al. (2024) conclude that teachers are more likely to sustain differentiation when preparation attends to attitudes, knowledge, and practical routines over time, and Talain and Mercado (2023) similarly report that English teachers perceive differentiation as potent but demanding. In that light, the present result may reflect both commitment and implementation strain: teachers endorse differentiated practice strongly, but it may remain slightly less entrenched than assessment and ICT routines.

The regression analysis adds a more specific contribution by showing that all five philosophical domains significantly predict instructional practices. This pattern suggests that instructional work in English classrooms draws strength from multiple

belief systems at once. Essentialism and perennialism may support clarity, structure, and intellectual rigor; progressivism may support relevance, participation, and problem-solving; social reconstructivism may support attention to voice and broader social meaning; and existentialism may support choice, selfhood, and personal ownership. The significance of all five predictors indicates that effective English teaching in public secondary settings may depend less on doctrinal purity than on a teacher's capacity to mobilize different philosophical commitments when classroom demands shift.

Existentialism emerged as the strongest predictor in the model, which is noteworthy because English classrooms often rely on personal expression, identity work, and communicative risk-taking. When teachers value agency, choice, and the learner's search for meaning, they may be more likely to use practices that invite participation, adaptation, and responsive support. This interpretation resonates with studies that connect teacher cognition to learner engagement and to classroom climates that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Rahimi & Ong, 2023). It also helps explain why philosophical orientations may matter not only at the level of abstract belief but in everyday acts such as feedback, task design, grouping, and technology use.

The findings also speak to pedagogical content knowledge. Razak et al. (2023) show that stronger pedagogical content knowledge is associated with better classroom-based assessment practice among ESL teachers, which suggests that beliefs alone are not enough; teachers must also know how to translate belief into pedagogical action. The present study complements that insight by indicating that philosophical orientation may form part of the cognitive base that helps teachers choose and justify instructional practices. In practical terms, professional development may be more effective when it addresses both what teachers do and why they believe those practices matter.

Taken together, the results support a view of teacher development that is reflective, dialogic, and practice-linked. Professional learning that treats assessment, ICT integration, and differentiation as isolated techniques may miss the belief structures that sustain or constrain implementation. Recent reviews of digital professional development emphasize that durable instructional change depends on contextualized, collaborative, and sustained support that can reshape confidence and practice over time (Amemasor et al., 2025; Akram et al., 2022). The same logic applies to philosophical reflection. Teachers may benefit from structured opportunities to articulate their educational beliefs, examine tensions across those beliefs, and connect them to concrete instructional decisions in English classrooms.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that English language teachers in public secondary schools reported very extensive educational philosophy and very extensive instructional practices. Educational philosophy was significantly and positively related to

instructional practices, and all five philosophical domains significantly predicted instructional practices in the regression model. The findings suggest that English teachers do not work from technique alone. Their classroom assessment, technology use, and differentiation practices appear closely tied to the philosophical assumptions they hold about teaching, learning, and the role of education. Professional development for English teachers may therefore be stronger when it treats philosophical reflection as part of pedagogical improvement rather than as a purely theoretical concern.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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