

# Best practices among grade I teachers in teaching Social Studies in the K To 12 Curriculum

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DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.10.02.2020.p9882

<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.02.2020.p9882>

**Abstract-** The present research determines the best practices among grade 1 teachers in teaching social studies in the K- 12 Curriculum. This is to showcase instructional excellence and develop instructional materials that will enrich teaching and learning process. The study employs complete enumeration of 90 grade I teachers as research participants from South East Districts of Butuan City, Caraga, Philippines. A descriptive-survey method has been used and self-made questionnaire with open-ended interview guide was the instrument for data collection, and Focus Group Discussion ( FGD) was also conducted. A percentage was used to describe the data. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive measures such as percentage and mode. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were quantified using rubric and analyzed using quasi-statistics. Also, stacked bar graph was utilized for comparison across different grade levels. Findings revealed that art doing question and answer and storytelling are among the top 3 praiseworthy learning activities. Such learning activities have a positive impact on the life of the grade one learners and considered as their best practices. Different learning activities have different ways of implementation but focus on the specific needs of the learners, hence these best practice will only limit to enhance the learner’s knowledge but also develop the skills that will enable them to solve real-life problems.

**Index Terms-:** Best Practices, K-12 Curriculum, Instructional Material, Social Studies.

## I.INTRODUCTION

Children are born into social studies from birth, they begin exploring their world at each stage of early development—infant, toddler, preschool, and primary—children look around and try to make sense of their social and physical environments. They gradually learn more about their expanding community and eventually come to see themselves as citizens. Mindes ( 2005). Social studies course was considered as one of the main elements of the K-12 curriculum for it simply prepares young generations as exemplary citizens of the country. Kilinc (2014). Social studies involve the development of inquiry, research skills and methods, historical thinking, and geographic thinking. The skills and competencies learning outcomes are integrated throughout each cluster and are developed, refined, and applied across the grades ( Social Studies K-12 Curriculum). A social study is a field designed to meet the educational needs of society. it is subject that focuses on the social aspects of the human conditions. Brophy,J, et.al (2016). Research posits that constructivism is the most effective approach to educating social studies students. However, most social studies teachers of today still use traditional methods of teaching inside their classrooms, Wiersma, (2008). Thus, this study is to investigate what are learning activities considered as best practices in teaching social studies among grade I teachers.

Today's paradigm shift in the-12 curriculum in which Kindergarten to grade 3, the learners learn the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors through games, songs, and dances, in their Mother Tongue. Examples of these activities are songs, poems, stories, and illustrations that are based on local culture, history, and reality. This makes the lessons relevant to the learners and easy to understand and basically the learners will acquire in-depth knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through continuity and consistency across all levels and subjects. (officialgazette.gov.ph/k-12/).To facilitates the process of knowledge transmission, teachers should apply appropriate teaching methods specifically learning activities that best suit specific objectives and levels of understanding for the teacher to develop critical thinking, communication skill, collaborate skills even geospatial technology skills

and other 21<sup>st</sup> first century skills Beddow, (2011) as the standard skills required in the K-12 curriculum, thus it requires a lot of teaching and learning activities in order to meet all of these mentioned skills, There are many forms of teaching strategies and there are some difference and distinction among them cooperative learning, learning communities, reciprocal learning, peer teaching, peer learning, team learning, collaborative learning, collective learning, study circles, study groups, and group work are among them. There are three general types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study teams (Johnson & Smith 1991 as cited in Ur-Rehman, 2014). There are different ways that can be adapted to teach the students. These ways include direct instruction, providing reading materials, problem-solving method, cooperative learning, explore information, role plays, students' research, case study and students' writing. In direct instruction, we put emphasis on each level, in which we judge the student's level on the basis of authentic outcomes (Roseshine 1987). In this way, the teacher performs a various and significant role, that necessary and useful to the learners especially in providing learning activities that are exemplary and motivates the learners who have the same understanding of the concept which would be discussed in the class. According to Rehman et al (2014), Teachers use different methods and different learning activities to meet the different learning styles and that is why teaching strategy consists on various techniques ensuring that these techniques have a great impact on the learner's lives. As every man is different from each other same as every student have the different mental approach. Supported by (Vijayalakshmi, K.S.2004, P.1 as cited in Tariq et all (2011) teachers must always find ways and means to improve their teaching techniques. With the change in time, the teachers are asked to employ newer methods for teaching their learners more effectively so that they must be able to cope with the demand of the age. Hence, the latest techniques of teaching are a need of hour take note also that effective teaching techniques also depend on the teacher. (Hartley & Davies 1976). Thus, a teacher should adopt best and suitable techniques in accordance with the abilities and capabilities of the learners.

Alleman, J. et. al (2007) suggests that practitioners must select and implement it carefully for the reason that it will influence learner's attitude, their values, their desire to learn, their retention level what they have learned, and the eventually to a real-life application. Based on the study when teachers are given a class of learners which consist of the range of abilities, when learners come, some of them are on the grade level, some are above the grade level and some are below the grade level. So it all depends on the teacher to select such strategy which is suitable for all the students (Whitman & Schwenk 1983 as cited Rehman 2004). Previous studies have proved the significant impact of teaching methods on the academic performance of the learner. Learners who were given instructions in modern teaching methods significantly secured higher mark in their subject tests as compared to those who were taught their lesson in a conventional way (Khurshid & Ansari, 2012). Learners not only learn the lesson effectively but activity based knowledge further enhance their ability to solve real-life problems and enrich their understanding at the highest level (Boud & Feletti, 1997). However, there are other researchers like (Cox, 1997; Gardner, 1990 as cited in Ilhan 2017) have explained that teachers who are lack of strategic teaching activities will result to the problem in an understanding the content. Previous research has demonstrated that reading strategies and limited teaching and learning strategies in teaching in social studies do not attract learners interest learners to learn, and in particular, concern inhibits the teachers to showcases its practices. (Harmon, Katims, & Whittington, 1999; Harmon, Wood, & Hedrick, 2006; Hedrick et al., 2004). Since previous studies give more emphasis on the teaching strategy but limited emphasis on learning activities, and also there were no proper documents that support on the study of best practices used by the grade one teacher in teaching social studies.

In this respect, one can clearly say that if social studies teachers have a better understanding of the best practices in teaching social studies, and the students' academic demands may be met with less struggle and their future experiences strengthened as they pass to higher grades it surely meets quality learning. Therefore, this study is to investigate social studies teachers' on their best practices in teaching social studies in order to showcase instructional excellence and develop instructional materials that will enrich teaching and learning process, accordingly students exposed to various teaching strategies such as texts and sets of specific words or concepts can gain greater multiple perspectives by enriching people's knowledge of societal events, geographical locations, and historical incidents (Massey & Heafner, 2004). This study will further answers to following queries: (1) What are learning activities used by the grade 1 teachers in teaching social studies? (2) What specific best practices do you employ in the first quarter to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. (3) What are the top 3 learning activities considered as best practices in teaching grade 1 social studies? (4) Based on the findings of the study, what instructional materials may be designed? The researcher explores the different learning activities that help not only the students but also effective for teachers and the researcher will not just identify these learning activities but also highlight the learning outcomes

## II RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

This study is anchored on the theory of constructionism an educational theory that is student-centered and emphasizes discovery learning, where students are encouraged to work with tangible objects in the real world and use what they already know to gain more knowledge. The point is to make the process of thinking and learning visible and to allow for a more process-oriented engagement with an idea via construction and deconstruction. Under constructionism, teachers take a backseat role as facilitators of student learning instead of giving lectures or step-by-step instruction. and emphasizes discovery learning, where students are encouraged to work with tangible objects in the real world and use what they already know to gain more knowledge. The point is to make the process of thinking and learning visible and to allow for a more process-oriented engagement with an idea via construction and deconstruction..( Papert, S., & Harel, I. (1991).

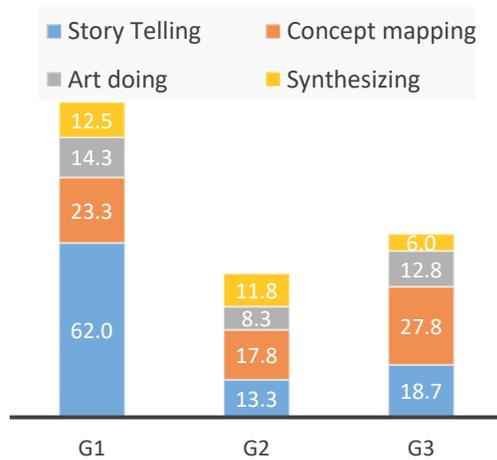
As inspired by this theory, the researcher would like to explore this constructionist instruction to be incorporated in making Instructional Materials and this can be realized with the help of (ADDIE) Model ( Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate) this model has been used to instruction design that has a proven record of success. This particular study used AD, Analysis and Design in the ADDIE model, the researcher determined the best practices by exploring the different strategies used by the grade 1 teacher teaching social studies, after the researcher had found its best practice Instructional material was made.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

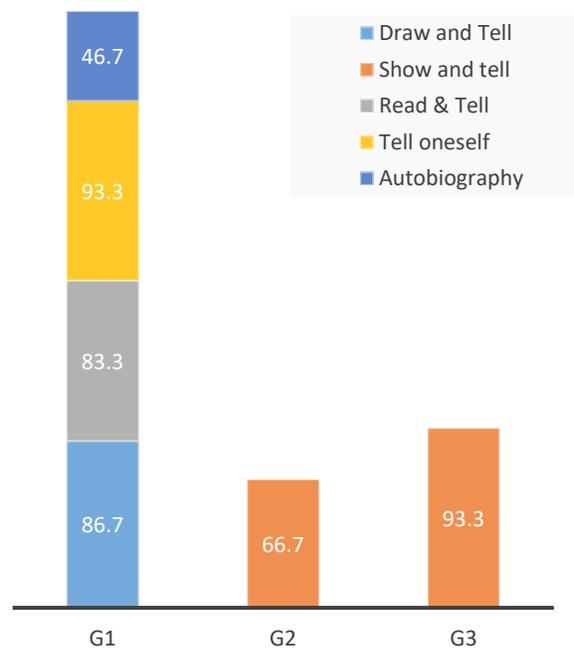
The descriptive-survey method has been used in this study; self-made questionnaire with open-ended interview guide was the instrument used for data collection, To ensure internal validity, focus group discussion (FGD) was also conducted. The instrument was composed of two parts Part 1: the profile of the respondents in terms of the name (optional), age, gender, number of years in teaching, work status and the school. Part 2: a checklist of individual and group learning activities, best activities or teaching strategies in each learning competencies and the top three best practices. Researcher made questionnaire was validated and pilot-tested prior to the actual data gathering. AD approach in the ADDIE Model particular on the analysis and design were utilized. Further, this study was conducted at South East District Schools of Division of Butuan City, Province of Agusan del Norte. The study employs complete enumeration of the 90 basic education teachers for the primary levels particularly grade 1 teacher as research participants. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive measures such as percentage and mode. Qualitative data from open-ended questions were quantified using rubric and analyzed using quasi-statistics. Also, stacked bar graph was utilized for comparison across different grade levels.

## III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Figure 1 shows the summary of the individual learning strategies employed by grade 1 teachers in social studies across the three (3) grading periods – 1<sup>st</sup> grading (G1), 2<sup>nd</sup> grading period (G2) and 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period (G3). The data revealed four (4) strategies namely: storytelling, concept mapping, art doing and synthesizing.



**Figure 1.** Percent (%) distribution of learning strategies employed in grade 1 Social Studies



**Fig 1[A].** Percent (%) distribution of learning activities in storytelling

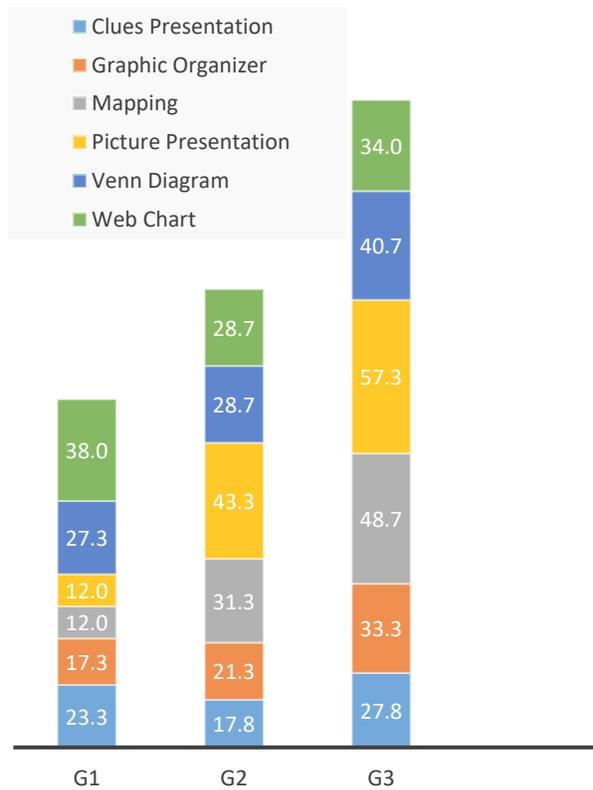
Data further show that the 4 strategies were employed in the 3 periods at varying extent. The storytelling strategy was employed by the majority of the teachers (62.0%) during the preliminary period but sustained by only a few in the subsequent periods (13.3% and 18.7% for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grading periods, respectively). This can be accounted to the variation in the unit topic - to wit, for G1 *Ako ay natatangi* G2 *Ang aking Pamilya* G3 *Ang aking Paaralan*.

On the other hand, the other strategies were employed by some teachers uniformly across the study periods for the teachers see it effective in teaching grade 1 pupils. Teaching aids (audio/video lectures, documentaries, pictures and images, art and craft material) are used as innovative teaching style. Researchers have demonstrated that storytelling and art doing proved to be an effective learning tool for students (Shefton, 2001).

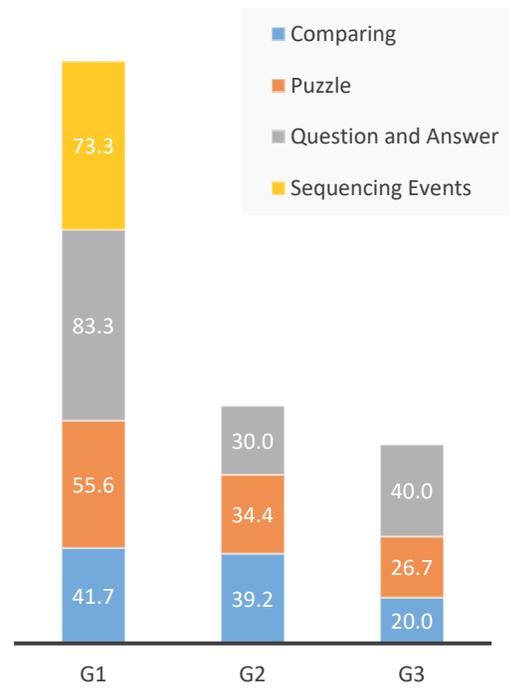
Fig 1[A] shows the distribution of the learning activities employed by the teachers in storytelling. Data revealed that the majority of the teachers employed tell oneself (93.3%), draw and tell (86.7%) and read and tell (83.3%).

The learning activities are diverse in the 1<sup>st</sup> grading period but become scarce in the subsequent grading periods for the reasons that teacher able observes best learning activity that can be best applied in their lesson. In Kindergarten through grade 3, students learn the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors through games, songs, and dances, in their Mother Tongue. Examples, activities, songs, poems, stories, and illustrations are based on local culture, history, and reality. This makes the lessons relevant to the learners and easy to understand. (officialgazette.gov.ph/k-12/).

Draw and tell (46.7%) is least employed in the storytelling activities in the first grading period and not sustained in the second and 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period.



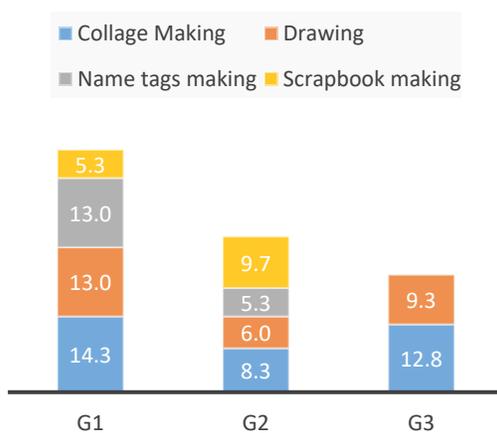
**Fig 1[B].** Percent (%) distribution of learning activities in concept mapping



**Fig 1[C].** Percent (%) distribution of learning activities in synthesizing

Specific activities for concept mapping and synthesizing were presented in figure 1(B) and figure 1 ( C). Learning activities like picture presentation, ( 12.0%; 43.3%. 57.3%) Venn diagram, ( 27.3%, 28.7%, 40.7%) mapping, ( 12.0%, 31.3%, 48.7%) graphic organizer, (17.3%, 21.3%, 33.3%) are activities that are commonly employed by the grade 1 teacher across grading period. These specific activities are the powerful way for learners in grade 1 to reach high levels of cognitive performance. A concept map is not just a learning tool, but an ideal evaluation

tool for grade 1 teachers in measuring the growth and assessing learners learning. As the learners create concept maps, they reiterate ideas using their own words and help identify incorrect ideas and concepts; teachers problem-solving see what learners do not understand, providing an accurate, objective way to evaluate areas in which learners do not yet grasp concepts fully. Another highly employed activities for synthesizing are question and answer (83.3%) sequencing events ( 73.3%), Puzzle, (55.6%) and comparing, (41.7%) but these were not sustained for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grading period and 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period teachers in grade one able to identify what learning activities that promote active learning. It is helpful to remember that what the student does is actually more important than what the teacher does. (Schuell, 1986)



**Fig 1[D].** Percent (%) distribution of learning activities in art doing

Fig 1[D] shows the learning activities in art doing strategy. The majority of the teacher employed collage making (14.3%, 8.3%, 12.8%) and drawing ( 13.0%. 6.0%,9.3%) across grading period. On the contrary learning activities like scrapbook ( 5.3%. 9.7%)

and name tags making \*13.0%, 5.3%) were also use from the 1<sup>st</sup> grading period but not sustained until 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period This results were supported by Wilks Keeper (2005) connect learning outcomes to relevant learning activities that the learner can easily express their experiences, knowledge through their creative products like drawing and collage making, Thus, giving such kind of learning activities may always address to the learners need

Table 1. Topmost individual learning activities employed in grade 1 social studies and the intended learning outcomes

Activities	%	Intended learning outcomes
Art doing	87.0	<p><b>Relate</b> to their day to day experiences</p> <p><b>Display</b> resourcefulness in their unique output</p> <p><b>Develop</b> visual spatial skills</p> <p><b>Express</b> their own knowledge of understanding</p> <p><b>Show and discover</b> their own potentials as great artist</p> <p><b>Enjoy</b> expressing their understanding of the concept presented</p> <p><b>Creates</b> creativity by allowing the learners to express themselves</p> <p><b>Builds</b> the learners confidence</p> <p><b>Focus</b> on what they were doing</p>
Question & answer	44.0	<p><b>Promote</b> discussions and interaction among learners</p> <p><b>Stimulate</b> thinking and allows freedom to share their ideas</p> <p><b>Check</b> the retention of previously learned information</p> <p><b>Make</b> their own judgment</p> <p><b>Fun and interactive</b> especially learning the previous lesson</p>
Storytelling	76.7	<p><b>Makes</b> them aware of their own local culture</p> <p><b>Instills</b> virtues and right values to the learners</p> <p><b>Improves</b> listening Skills</p> <p><b>Express</b> themselves to their new learning</p> <p><b>Establishes</b> great tool for sharpening memory</p> <p><b>Enhances</b> verbal Proficiency</p> <p><b>Helps</b> the learner in doing better communication</p>

Highlighting the learning outcomes of the topmost individual learning activities employed by the grade one social studies teachers were considered as their best practice. In particular Table 1 shows different learning outcomes as mentioned by the research participants during the conduct of the study to the every learning activity mentioned. Further, the table shows qualitative frequencies of the verb used to wit. Majority of the grade teachers confirmed that Art doing (87.7%) by grade 1 learners will surely develop visual-spatial skills, express their own knowledge of understanding, show and discover their own potentials as great artist, display resourcefulness in their unique output, creates creativity by allowing the learners to express themselves, builds the learners confidence, relate to their day to day experiences, the last establish focus on what they were doing.

As to the learning activity particularly the question and answer (44.0%), most specific outcome were revealed are the following; aside from the fact that it is fun and interactive especially learning the previous lesson, it will also stimulate thinking skills and allows freedom to share their ideas, it helps them aware of their own local culture, and able to express themselves to their new learning and eventually promote discussions and interaction among learners and help them make their own judgment. They found even more interesting and noteworthy learning outcome to an specific learning activity in storytelling ( 76.7%) in particular, according to the teacher participants using this learning activity it instills virtues and right values to the learners, making them aware of their own local culture, helping the learner in doing better communication and improving their listening skills, expressing themselves to their new learning, enhancing verbal proficiency and this is a good avenue for establishing great tool for sharpening memory.

These learning outcomes support to the k-12 curriculum intended for grade one learner that they may acquire in-depth knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through continuity and consistency across all levels and subjects (officialgazette.gov.ph/k-12/).

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The paradigm shift of the educational system of the country due to the K-12 Curriculum brought big impact in the mind and heart of every teachers in the field specially the government believes that K to 12 curricula in the Philippines will put Filipino learners at par with the rest of the world and this can only be realized if we have right mind seat on how we can help and contribute to the educational system of the country since it is the key toward reaching national growth and development.

In line with this goal, East Butuan District 1 of Butuan City Divison, Caraga Philippines, find their way how they can contribute by simply modeling their Best Practice in teaching social studies among grade 1 learners, It was found out, that if we make (teaching and learning) more interesting and challenging for the learners it becomes more effective and proficient it later they define it as their best practice. Thus, the teachers and learners both learned more due to the implementation of these best practices.

Different learning activities have different ways of implementation but focus on the specific needs of the learners that who can process, understand, and absorbed the important concepts that will impact in her life as a lifelong learner. There were four individual learning strategies employed by grade 1 teachers in social studies across the three (3) grading periods – 1st grading (G1), 2nd grading period (G2) and 3rd grading period (G3). These are the story telling, concept mapping, art doing and synthesizing, under story telling there were draw and tell, show and tell, read and tell, tell oneself and autobiography, for concept mapping there were graphic organizer, picture presentation, mapping, venn diagram and web chart, for art doing, collage making, name tags making, drawing and scrapbook making and for synthesizing they have to compare, puzzle, questions and answer and sequencing events, , hence teachers in grade one are more creative and resourceful in facilitating learning.

Based on present findings, It has top 3 best practices that are considered praiseworthy. These were the art doing, question and answer and storytelling, such learning activities have a positive impact on the life of the grade one pupil as evident by the present findings. Learners obtained different skills, attitudes, and values that help them to become a well-rounded individual. These best practices will not limit to enhance their knowledge but also enable them to solve real-life problems. In fact, effective learning activities as their teaching methods give boundless results. The Researcher strongly recommends that the school administrator should implement the used of contextualized and localized instructional materials using these best practice. Train teachers to explore more on the 21<sup>st</sup> teaching and learning strategies especially on the use of technology in the classroom and conduct further study on the relationship of the identified best practices and to the academic performance of the learners.

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