

# Cultivating 21st Century Learners: Grade One Educators' Blueprint in Building a Strong Foundation

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**Abstract:-** This qualitative phenomenological study examined the experiences, coping mechanisms, and educational insights gleaned by eight elementary school teachers in Tibungco District, Division of Davao City as they built a strong foundation for 21st century learners. Themes of their experiences that were identified included promoted critical thinking, fostered collaboration, and engaged parents. Coping mechanisms employed were committing to lifelong learning, engaging parents and community, and cultivating critical thinking. Educational insights included nurturing social and emotional skills, promoting lifelong learning habits, and fostering critical thinking as a foundational skill. These findings highlight the diverse skills in cultivating strong foundations in learners effectively. Furthermore, exploring teachers' experiences not only contributes to a nuanced understanding of modern teaching demands but also provides valuable insights for both educators and educational institutions, potentially leading to improvements in classroom management and cultivating strong foundations among modern learners. The study holds potential for publication in respected research journals.

**Keywords:-** 21st Century Learners, Grade One Teachers, Davao City, Philippines.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of elementary education, teachers hold a unique position in molding the minds of tomorrow's leaders. As educators of the youngest students, grade one teachers bear the responsibility of sowing the seeds of curiosity, adaptability, and resilience. They are the architects of the future, nurturing the potential of young learners to become 21st-century thinkers and problem solvers. In this digital age, their role extends beyond traditional classroom boundaries, as they equip students to thrive in a globalized, technology-driven world. This initial overview provides insight into the vital role these educators play in building a strong foundation for lifelong learning, empowering students to navigate in an ever-changing world with confidence and competence.

Grade one teachers worldwide cultivate 21st-century learners by emphasizing critical thinking, fostering collaboration, teaching digital literacy, employing adaptive methods, incorporating global awareness, implementing project-based learning, and engaging in continuous

professional development, thereby laying the essential foundation for their future success (OECD, 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2019; Livingstone, 2012; Tomlinson & Allan, 2000; NCSS, 2010; Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

In Italy, Grade one teachers employ various strategies for cultivating 21st-century learners. They utilize active learning methods, such as experiential learning and peer teaching, to actively engage students in the learning process (Prince, 2004). Furthermore, they promote inquiry-based learning, encouraging curiosity and self-directed exploration in students (Blumenfeld et al., 2001). In addition, teachers integrate subjects across the curriculum to foster interdisciplinary connections and help students see the real-world relevance of their learning (Jacobs, 2009).

In Germany, Grade one teachers like many other countries, employ a range of strategies to cultivate 21st-century learners and establish a robust educational foundation. These strategies encompass critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are nurtured through inquiry-based learning, open-ended questioning, and hands-on activities (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Collaborative learning is emphasized, with group projects and cooperative activities designed to help students develop teamwork, communication, and collaboration skills, all considered essential for thriving in the 21st century (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Digital literacy is a priority as teachers integrate technology into the curriculum, ensuring students can navigate the digital world effectively (Livingstone, 2012).

In Australia, grade one teacher akin to educators globally, employ a diverse array of strategies to foster 21st-century learners and lay a robust educational foundation. These strategies encompass nurturing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities through inquiry-based learning, open-ended questioning, and hands-on activities, which are deemed essential in the modern era (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Furthermore, they prioritize collaborative learning, facilitating group projects and cooperative activities that enable students to develop teamwork, communication, and collaboration skills vital for navigating the complexities of the 21st century (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Emphasizing digital literacy, they seamlessly integrate technology into the curriculum, ensuring students can adeptly navigate the digital realm (Livingstone, 2012).

Additionally, they embrace global perspectives and multiculturalism in their lessons, preparing students for an increasingly globalized world (NCSS, 2010). Project-based learning is a favored pedagogical approach, engaging students in real-world problem-solving and hands-on experiences that foster creativity and innovation (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). Committed to staying at the forefront of educational trends, Australian grade one teachers actively engage in continuous professional development (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

In the Philippines, like their counterparts worldwide, grade one teachers play a crucial role in cultivating 21st-century learners and laying the foundation for a strong educational journey. These educators employ a multifaceted approach, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving skills through inquiry-based learning, open-ended questioning, and hands-on activities (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Collaboration is encouraged through group projects and cooperative learning activities, fostering essential skills like teamwork, communication, and collaboration, all vital for navigating the complexities of the 21st century (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Digital literacy takes precedence as teachers seamlessly integrate technology into the curriculum to ensure students can navigate the digital world effectively (Livingstone, 2012).

Furthermore, Filipino grade one teachers employ differentiated instruction techniques to accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities, ensuring every student's unique needs are addressed (Tomlinson, 2014). The incorporation of global perspectives and multiculturalism into lessons serves to prepare students for an increasingly interconnected world (NCSS, 2010). Project-based learning is a favored pedagogical approach, engaging students in real-world problem-solving and hands-on experiences that nurture creativity and innovation (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

In the local scenario, particularly in the schools of Tibungco District, Division of Davao City, grade one teachers encountered a variety of experiences in cultivating 21st century learners that serves as blueprint in building strong foundation. Some of the experiences are enriching one, while others are negatively affecting their teaching profession. It is in this context that this study was conceptualized to collect the experiences of grade one teachers as they cultivate 21st century learner. Through this research, we aspire to shed light on the essence of cultivating 21st century learners that will serve as blueprint in building strong foundation, offering valuable insights that can form part of educational.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher of this study intends to get the insights and the experiences of grade one teachers as they cultivate 21st century learners as blueprint in building a strong foundation. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the experiences of grade one teachers in cultivating 21st century learners in building strong foundation?
- How do grade one teacher cope with challenges in cultivating 21st century learners in building a strong foundation
- What educational management insights gained are drawn from the experiences of the informants?

## III. THEORETICAL LENS

This study is anchored on Constructivism, a foundational educational theory, was promulgated by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget during the mid-20th century. Piaget's seminal works, including "The Construction of Reality in the Child" (1954) and "To Understand Is to Invent: The Future of Education" (1972), laid the theoretical groundwork for constructivism. Piaget's constructivist theory posits that learners actively construct their understanding of the world through interactions with their environment. He emphasized that knowledge is not passively absorbed but rather built by the learner through cognitive processes such as assimilation (incorporating new information into existing mental structures) and accommodation (modifying existing mental structures to accommodate new information). Piaget's theory also introduced the concept of developmental stages, suggesting that children progress through distinct cognitive stages as they grow, with each stage characterized by specific cognitive abilities and limitations (Piaget, 1954; Piaget, 1972).

In the context of education, constructivism has had a profound impact on pedagogical practices. It highlights the importance of active learning, inquiry-based approaches, and hands-on experiences. First grade teachers, drawing from constructivist principles and Piaget's insights, create learning environments that encourage students to explore, experiment, and engage with concepts directly. They promote critical thinking and problem-solving by providing opportunities for students to construct knowledge through meaningful experiences, fostering a deeper and more lasting understanding of foundational concepts.

The second theory used in this study is Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, is a prominent theory in the field of psychology and education. Bandura's theory posits that individuals learn not only through direct experiences but also through observation and modeling of others' behaviors, emphasizing the significant role of social interactions and the environment in shaping learning (Bandura, 1977). This theory recognizes that learners acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviors by observing the actions and consequences of others, particularly in social contexts.

In the context of education, Social Learning Theory underscores the importance of modeling positive behaviors and providing opportunities for peer interactions. For grade one teachers, this theory implies that creating a classroom environment that fosters positive role models, encourages cooperative learning, and promotes the sharing of ideas can have a profound impact on students' learning experiences. By incorporating cooperative activities and group discussions,

teachers can facilitate peer learning and provide opportunities for students to observe and learn from their classmates, strengthening their social and cognitive development (Bandura, 1977).

The third theory used in this study is Experiential Learning Theory, developed by David A. Kolb in 1984, is a widely recognized educational theory that emphasizes the central role of experience in the learning process. Kolb's theory is grounded in the idea that learning is most effective when it involves a continuous cycle of concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). This theory posits that learners actively engage with the world, reflect on their experiences, draw conclusions, and apply their newfound knowledge in

practical situations. Experiential learning promotes a holistic and iterative approach to learning, allowing individuals to develop both cognitive understanding and practical skills.

In the educational context, Experiential Learning Theory suggests that grade one teachers can enhance students' learning experiences by incorporating hands-on activities, real-world applications, and opportunities for reflection and experimentation. By encouraging students to actively participate in meaningful experiences, teachers promote deeper understanding and skill development (Kolb, 1984). This approach aligns with the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for 21st-century learners.

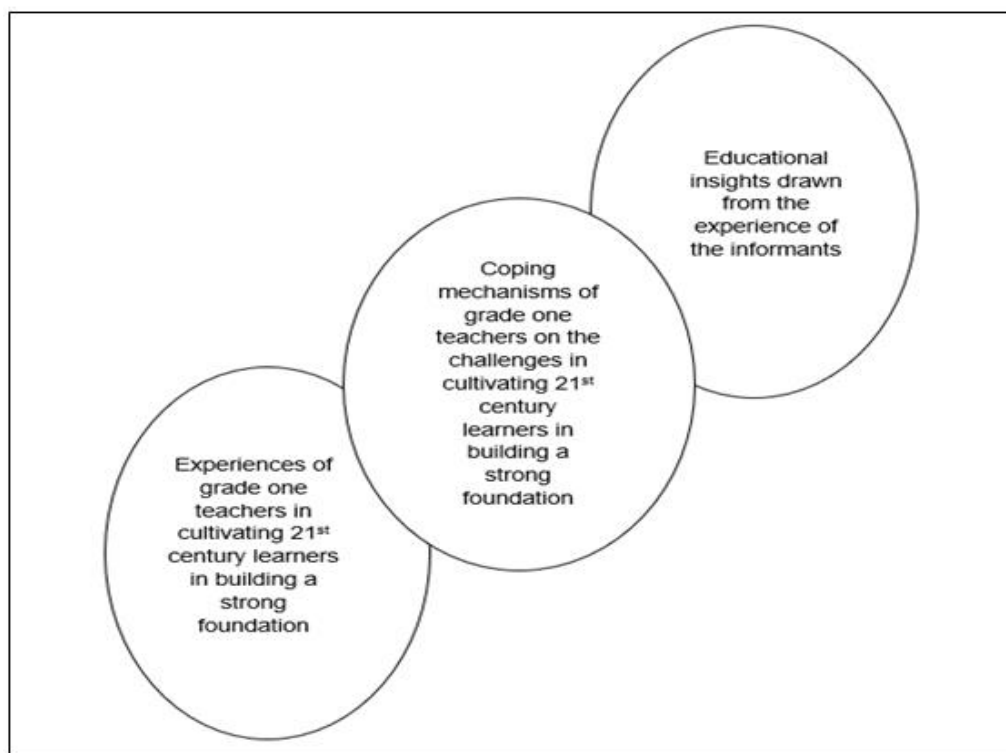


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 1. Based on the figure, there are three interconnected variables. These variables are the (1) experiences of grade one in cultivating 21st century learners in building a strong foundation; (2) coping mechanisms of grade one teachers on the challenges in cultivating 21st century learners in building a strong foundation; and (3) Educational insights drawn from the experiences of the informants.

#### IV. METHOD

##### A. Design and Procedure

This study employed a qualitative approach to research, specifically a phenomenological research design. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology was an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach was to arrive at a description of the nature of

the particular phenomenon. Typically, interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who have first-hand knowledge of an event, situation or experience. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art were also used. The data were read and reread and was culled for phrases and themes that was grouped into clusters of meanings. Through this process, the researcher was able to construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrived at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

Moreover, Maxwell (2013) also added that with the roots in philosophy, psychology and education, phenomenology attempt to extract the purest, untainted data and in some interpretations of the approach, bracketing were used by the researcher to document personal experiences with the subject to help remove him or herself from the process. One method of bracketing is taking notes.

According to Corbetta (2003), the phenomenological research design was a qualitative type of research for which interviews provide in-depth method that can grant access to deep knowledge and explanations and help grasp the subjects' perspective. Creswell, (2012) also claimed that interviews were primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audio tapes were utilized to allow more consistent transcription. Interviews are also useful to follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires, such as to further investigate their responses.

In qualitative research, interviews were used to pursue the meanings of central themes in the world of their subjects. The main task in doing interviews was to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say (McNamara, 1999). Withal, based on the statements of Quad (2016), the researcher transcribed and typed the data into a computer file, in order to analyze it after interviewing. Interviews particularly be useful for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information around a topic.

The researcher collected data, typically via long interviews, from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under investigation. Next, the data analysis involved triangulation that extracted significant statements from the transcribed interviews. The significant statements were transformed into clusters of meanings according to how each statement fell under specific psychological and phenomenological concepts. Moreover, these transformations were tied up together to make a general description of the experience both the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The researcher incorporated his or her personal meaning of the experiences here. Finally, the report was written such that readers understand better the essential, invariant structure of the essence of the experience.

Conversely, several challenges have been pointed out. The researcher required a solid grounding in the philosophical guidelines of phenomenology. The subjects that were selected into the study were individuals who have actually experienced the phenomenon. The researcher needed to bracket his or her own experiences and observations, which was difficult to do. The researcher also needed to decide as to how and when his or her personal observations were incorporated into the study.

Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches were based on the paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasized the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. As such they were powerful tools for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the cluster of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom.

Since the focus of this study was to explore and assess the grade one teacher's experience in cultivating 21st century learners in building a strong foundation, the researcher

employed the phenomenology type of qualitative method research.

### *B. Research Participants*

Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size the quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions. Obtaining most or all of the perceptions will lead to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends five (5) to 25 and Morse (1994) suggests at least six (6). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 1990).

The participants of this study were Eight (8) elementary school teachers from Tibungco District, Division of Davao City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the service for at least 5 years; (2) grade one teacher; and (3) experienced in cultivating 21st century learners.

The researcher utilized the purposive sampling design since the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). It is also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

### *C. Data Analysis*

In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews with the use of Creswell's Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012) themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database.

Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative analysis, the researcher immersed herself in, and became intimately familiar with, their data; reading and re-reading the data and noting any initial analytic observations.

Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a method of data reduction; it was also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts.

Searching for themes was coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.



➤ *Reviewing Themes.*

The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data and began to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. For these, Thematic Content Analysis was employed by the researcher. Thematic Content Analysis was a descriptive presentation of qualitative data in which a detailed analysis of each theme was made by identifying the ‘essence’ of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy and informative name for each theme (Andersen, 2013). In addition, to enhance validity and to create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon, Environmental Triangulation was also employed by the researcher. It was a technique to analyze the results of the same study using different methods of data collection. The key was identifying which environmental factors, if any, might influence the information that is received during the study.

These environmental factors are changed to see if the findings are the same across the settings (David, 2015). This type of triangulation uses different settings, locations and other factors such as time, day, season in which the study took place. The idea was to determine which of these factors influence the information received, these factors are then changed to see if the findings are the same. If the findings remain unaltered under varying environmental factors, then validity can be established (Naeem & Saira, 2019). In this study, such triangulation was used considering that the requirements as mentioned was the use of environmental triangulation best suited the environment of the research being conducted.

Writing-up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

*D. Analytical Framework*

The framework analysis of this research was flexible to allow the researcher to either collect all the data and then analyze it or do data analysis during the collection process. In the analysis stage the gathered data was sifted, charted and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes. This involves a five-step process: (1) familiarization; (2) identifying a thematic framework; (3) indexing; (4) charting; and (5) mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher becomes familiarized with the transcripts of the

data collected (i.e. interview or focus group transcripts, observation or field notes) and gains an overview of the collected data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). In other words, the researcher becomes immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process the researcher will become aware of key ideas and recurrent themes and make a note of them. Due to the sheer volume of data that can be collected in qualitative research the researcher may not be able to review all of the material. Thus, a selection of the data set would be utilized. The selection would depend on several aspects of the data collection process. For example, the mix of methods used (e.g. interviews, documents, observations),

Identifying a thematic framework, the second stage, occurs after familiarization when the researcher recognizes emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes or issues may have arisen from priori themes or issues however it is at this stage that the researcher must allow the data to dictate the themes and issues. To achieve this end the researcher uses the notes taken during the familiarization stage. The key issues, concepts and themes that have been expressed by the participants now form the basis of a thematic framework that can be used to filter and classify the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Indexing means that one identifies portions or sections of the data that correspond to a particular theme. This process is applied to all the textual data that has been gathered (i.e. transcripts of interviews). For the sake of convenience Ritchie and Spencer recommend that a numerical system be used for the indexing references and annotated in the margin beside the text (1994). Qualitative data analysis tools are ideal for such a task.

The final stage, mapping and interpretation, involves the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This analysis should be able to provide a schematic diagram of the event/phenomenon thus guiding the researcher in their interpretation of the data set. It was at this point that the researcher was cognizant of the objectives of qualitative analysis, which are: “defining concepts, mapping range and nature of phenomena, creating typologies, finding associations, providing explanations, and developing strategies” (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Once again, these concepts, technologies, and associations are reflective of the participant. Therefore, any strategy or recommendations made by the researcher echo the true attitudes, beliefs, and values of the participants.

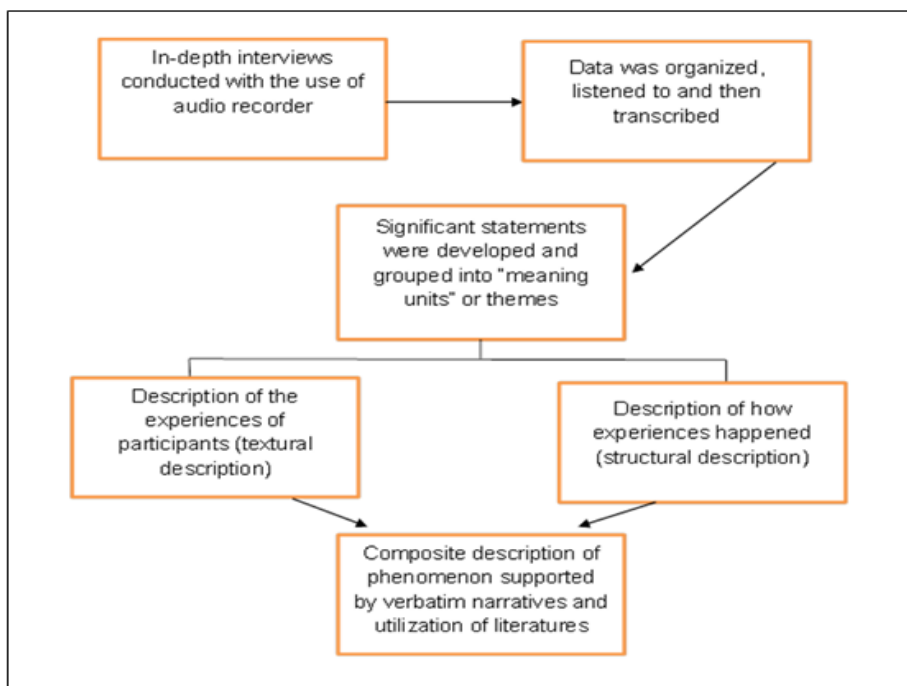


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Cultivating 21st Century Learners as Blueprint in Building a Strong Foundation

In today's rapidly evolving world, education faces the imperative of not only transmitting knowledge but also equipping students with the skills and competencies they need to thrive in the 21st century. The concept of cultivating 21st-century learners has emerged as a guiding principle in education, serving as a blueprint for building a strong foundation for students' lifelong learning journeys. This paradigm shift recognizes that academic knowledge, while essential, is no longer sufficient on its own. To prepare students for the multifaceted challenges and opportunities of the modern world, educators worldwide are emphasizing the development of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, digital literacy, global awareness, adaptability, information literacy, problem-solving, and self-directed learning (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012).

### B. Experiences of Grade One Teachers' in Cultivating 21st Century Learners as Blueprint in Building a Strong Foundation

The experiences of grade one teachers in cultivating 21st-century learners serve as a rich tapestry of insights into the dynamic landscape of modern education (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and ever-evolving societal demands, these educators play a pivotal role in shaping the future of their students. This introduction delves into the unique journey of grade one teachers who, armed with a blueprint for building a strong foundation, are on the frontlines of preparing young learners to thrive in the complexities of the 21st century.

Understanding that education continues to evolve, the experiences of grade one teachers offer invaluable perspectives on the strategies, challenges, and triumphs inherent in cultivating 21st-century learners (National Research Council, 2012). Their narratives provide a practical lens through which we can explore the integration of critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, collaboration, adaptability, and other essential skills into the early stages of education. This exploration is grounded in the belief that the experiences of these dedicated educators hold the key to unlocking a future where students are not only well-prepared academically but also equipped with the resilience and versatility needed to flourish in a world of constant change.

#### ➤ Promoted Critical Thinking

Promoting critical thinking is a fundamental experience for grade one teachers as they cultivate 21st-century learners and lay a strong educational foundation. This multifaceted approach involves several key components that contribute to the development of critical thinking skills in young students.

Grade one teachers create an environment that fosters curiosity and questioning. They encourage students to ask questions about the world around them, nurturing their natural sense of wonder. By emphasizing the value of curiosity, teachers lay the groundwork for critical thinking, as questioning is the first step in examining information critically (Chin, 2007).

Grade one teachers incorporate problem-solving activities into the curriculum. These activities challenge grade one students to think critically and find solutions independently. Whether it is sorting objects based on attributes or solving age-appropriate math problems, these tasks develop and hone problem-solving skills, a vital

component of critical thinking (Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 2015).

Storytelling and literature play a pivotal role in promoting critical thinking. Grade one teachers use storytelling and age-appropriate literature to stimulate discussions that require students to think deeply about characters, plot developments, and moral lessons. These discussions encourage children to analyze and evaluate information critically, fostering a deeper understanding of narrative and content (Wilhelm, 2014).

Additionally, hands-on exploration is a key strategy employed by grade one teachers. They provide opportunities

for students to engage in experiments and hands-on activities, allowing them to explore scientific and mathematical concepts. Through these trial-and-error experiences, children develop critical thinking skills by understanding cause-and-effect relationships and applying problem-solving strategies (Mayer, 2004).

Grade one teachers encourage divergent thinking by creating an inclusive classroom environment where students are free to generate multiple ideas or solutions to a problem. This approach celebrates creativity and emphasizes that there can be more than one "right" answer to a question, promoting open-mindedness and critical evaluation of various possibilities (Runco & Jaeger, 2012).

Table 1 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed

P1	<i>“Being a first-grade teacher taught me that teaching kids to think critically is key to making them successful 21st-century learners. It’s not just about grades, it’s about building skills for life.”</i>
P4	<i>“Every day in my grade one class is an opportunity to nurture critical thinking through hands-on experiments, questions, and creative projects, laying the groundwork for future innovators.”</i>
P7	<i>“As a first-grade teacher, I’m committed to instilling critical thinking skills from the start. Witnessing these young minds develop the ability to question, reason, and make informed decisions is amazing and sets the stage for a lifelong learning journey.”</i>
P8	<i>“As a first-grade teacher, I recognize the daily significance of nurturing critical thinking skills. My students develop the ability to analyze information, make decisions, and articulate their thoughts through interactive lessons and collaborative projects.”</i>

➤ *Fostered Collaboration*

Fostering collaboration is a pivotal experience for grade one teachers in their efforts to cultivate 21st-century learners and establish a robust educational foundation. Collaboration not only helps students work effectively with others but also develops essential social and cognitive skills. Here are five key aspects of how grade one teacher’s foster collaboration among young learners:

Grade one teachers design a variety of group activities and projects that require students to work together to achieve a common goal. These collaborative endeavors can range from creating a class mural to solving classroom challenges. Such experiences provide students with opportunities to develop teamwork, communication, and negotiation skills (Vygotsky, 1978).

Teachers encourage peer learning, where students help each other understand and master new concepts. This approach not only strengthens academic understanding but also cultivates empathy and mutual support among classmates. Peer learning allows students to learn from their peers' diverse perspectives and experiences, enhancing their social and cognitive growth (Slavin, 1995).

Additionally, teachers dedicate time to teaching conflict resolution skills to grade one student. In collaborative settings, conflicts may arise, and learning how to resolve them constructively is crucial. This experience equips young learners with problem-solving and communication skills that they can use in various aspects of their lives, both inside and outside the classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

Moreover, fostering collaboration in grade one extends beyond academics. Teachers promote social interaction and positive relationships among students, emphasizing the importance of empathy and effective communication. Through collaborative activities and discussions, students not only enhance their academic skills but also develop essential life skills that are critical for success in the 21st century (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

Grade one teachers play a crucial role in modeling collaborative behavior. They lead by example, demonstrating respectful communication, active listening, and cooperation. This modeling helps students internalize these behaviors and apply them in their interactions with classmates. Teachers serve as role models of effective collaboration, showcasing its significance in real-world contexts (Michaels, O'Connor, & Resnick, 2008).

Table 2 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed

P2	<i>“Collaborative experiences lay the groundwork for a generation that understands the power of teamwork in navigating the complexities of the 21st century. Whether it's working together on a creative assignment or solving problems as a team, I witness the transformation in their social skills.”</i>
P3	<i>“I see the magic unfold as students learn to communicate, share ideas, and appreciate each other's strengths. These early experiences not only build a strong foundation for teamwork but also instill the importance of collective achievement, preparing them for a future where collaboration is key.”</i>
P5	<i>“I believe in cultivating collaboration from the start. Through activities that encourage peer interaction and shared learning, I observe my students growing into natural collaborators. These early lessons not only enhance their academic journey but also instill values of cooperation and respect”</i>
P6	<i>“Promoting collaboration is a cornerstone in my grade one class. These experiences not only contribute to their academic growth but also lay the groundwork for a future where collaboration is not just a skill but a mindset—a tool for building a stronger, more inclusive society.”</i>

➤ *Engaged Parents*

Engaging parents is a critical aspect of grade one teachers' experiences in cultivating 21st-century learners and building a strong educational foundation. Collaborative partnerships between educators and parents have been shown to have a significant impact on students' academic success and holistic development. Grade one teachers establish open and consistent communication channels with parents. Regular updates through emails, newsletters, or online platforms keep parents informed about classroom activities, curriculum, and their child's progress. This transparent communication ensures that parents are actively involved in their child's educational journey (Epstein, 2018).

Grade one teachers organize parent-teacher conferences to discuss each student's progress, strengths, and areas needing improvement. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for teachers to share insights and strategies for parents to support their child's learning at home. Collaborative goal setting between teachers and parents enhances the child's academic growth (Epstein, 2018).

Teachers offer workshops and seminars for parents on various topics related to child development and education. These sessions may cover strategies for supporting literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional growth at home. By equipping parents with these tools and insights, teachers

empower them to actively participate in their child's learning process (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Grade one teachers encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom or participate in school events. Volunteering not only strengthens the sense of community but also allows parents to witness firsthand the educational environment in which their child is learning. This experience fosters a deeper understanding of the school's culture and educational goals (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Teachers provide guidance to parents on how to support their child's homework and home learning activities. This may include suggestions for effective study routines, reading strategies, and ways to reinforce classroom concepts at home. Collaborative homework efforts between parents and teachers ensure that students receive consistent support in and out of school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Engaging parents as partners in education is essential for building a strong foundation for 21st-century learners. It recognizes that learning extends beyond the classroom and involves a collaborative effort between educators, parents, and the community. By fostering these partnerships, grade one teachers create a supportive and enriching educational environment that benefits students throughout their academic journey and beyond.

Table 3 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed

P1	<i>“Engaged parents play a pivotal role in the early education journey of grade one students. From assisting with homework to participating in school events, their involvement fosters a sense of curiosity and enthusiasm in our learners.”</i>
P3	<i>“In my classroom, engaged parents are like our partners. Through their active participation in parent-teacher meetings, volunteering, and staying informed about their child's progress, we collectively build a strong foundation.”</i>
P6	<i>“I'm grateful for the support of engaged parents in shaping the educational journey of our young learners. Their involvement goes beyond the classroom, extending to enriching activities and meaningful conversations at home.”</i>
P8	<i>“The collaboration between grade one teachers and engaged parents is the secret in building a strong foundation for 21st-century learners. Through constant communication, workshops, and joint initiatives, we create an educational ecosystem that goes beyond the classroom.”</i>



*C. Coping Mechanisms of Grade one Teachers on the Challenges in Cultivating 21st Century Learner to Build a Strong Foundation*

Cultivating 21st-century learners to build a strong educational foundation is a noble yet challenging endeavor, particularly for grade one teachers. These educators are tasked with preparing young students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world that demands a diverse set of skills and knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). As they embark on this educational journey, grade one teachers encounter various challenges that can impact their ability to foster the essential qualities of 21st-century learners. This introduction explores the coping mechanisms employed by grade one teachers to navigate these challenges effectively.

In this pursuit, grade one teachers often find themselves grappling with several obstacles, such as adapting to new teaching methodologies, integrating technology into the classroom, addressing diverse learning needs, and engaging parents in the educational process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Additionally, they must foster critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and adaptability in their students – the core attributes of 21st-century learners. Each of these challenges presents unique complexities that demand innovative and resilient coping strategies.

To successfully navigate these challenges, grade one teachers often draw upon a diverse toolkit of coping mechanisms. These strategies may include professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching skills, creating inclusive classroom environments that cater to different learning needs, and leveraging technology as an educational tool rather than a distraction (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Moreover, they actively engage with parents and the wider community to create a collaborative and supportive learning ecosystem. By understanding and implementing effective coping mechanisms, grade one teachers can overcome obstacles and build a strong foundation for 21st-century learners.

➤ *Committing to Lifelong Learning*

Committing to lifelong learning is a fundamental coping mechanism that grade one teacher employ to effectively address the multifaceted challenges in cultivating 21st-century learners and building a strong educational foundation. Lifelong learning, for educators, represents an ongoing dedication to self-improvement, staying updated on best

practices, and continuously evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of students and the education landscape.

Grade one teachers engage in continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). They actively seek out workshops, seminars, and courses to expand their knowledge and refine their teaching skills. This commitment ensures that teachers remain well-informed about the latest educational trends and research-driven instructional strategies. By staying current, they can adapt their teaching methodologies to incorporate innovative approaches that resonate with 21st-century learners.

Lifelong learning includes a dedication to ongoing self-reflection and improvement (Schön, 1983). Grade one teachers routinely evaluate their teaching practices, seeking feedback from peers and mentors. This reflective process enables them to identify areas for growth and make adjustments accordingly. This ongoing self-assessment fosters a culture of continuous improvement, benefiting both teachers and their students.

Educators understand that the field of education is dynamic, with evolving student needs and emerging technologies. Therefore, grade one teachers continuously update their knowledge and skills, embracing new teaching methodologies and digital tools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). They recognize the importance of integrating technology into their lessons and are committed to ongoing digital literacy development.

Committing to lifelong learning also involves staying informed about pedagogical research and innovative instructional strategies. Grade one teachers regularly engage with educational literature and research articles (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). This proactive approach ensures that they are well-equipped to apply evidence-based practices in their classrooms, promoting effective learning and skill development among their students.

Lifelong learning extends beyond formal professional development and includes collaboration with colleagues and participation in professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Grade one teachers actively collaborate with peers, sharing insights, strategies, and resources. This collaborative approach allows them to learn from one another and collectively address challenges, ultimately benefiting their students' educational experiences.

Table 4 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed

P2	<i>“Cultivating 21st-century learners requires adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning. As a grade one teacher, I make a conscious effort to engage in professional development, attend workshops, and explore new teaching strategies.”</i>
P4	<i>“In my role as a grade one teacher, I find solace and inspiration in committing to lifelong learning. Embracing this mindset allows me to stay updated on the latest educational trends and innovative teaching methods.”</i>
P7	<i>“One of my coping mechanisms as a grade one teacher in cultivating 21st-century learners is my unwavering commitment to lifelong learning. This dedication not only enhances my teaching skills but also ensures that I can provide my students with an education that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities.”</i>
P8	<i>“The education landscape is constantly evolving, and as a grade one teacher, I recognize the importance of staying informed and adaptable. Embracing continuous learning not only revitalizes my teaching approach but also instills in my students the value of curiosity and a proactive approach to knowledge acquisition in the fast-paced world of the 21st century.”</i>

➤ *Engaging Parents and Community*

Engaging parents and the community is a vital coping mechanism employed by grade one teachers to effectively address the challenges of cultivating 21st-century learners and building a strong educational foundation. The collaboration between teachers, parents, and the wider community forms a robust support system that enhances the overall learning experience for students. First and foremost, grade one teachers establish open and consistent communication channels with parents (Epstein, 2018). They maintain ongoing dialogues through emails, newsletters, and online platforms, keeping parents informed about classroom activities, curriculum, and their child's progress. This transparent communication ensures that parents are actively involved in their child's educational journey, fostering a strong home-school connection.

Furthermore, regular parent-teacher conferences are organized by grade one teachers (Epstein, 2018). These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for teachers to discuss each student's progress, strengths, and areas needing improvement with parents. Collaborative goal setting between teachers and parents enhances the child's academic growth, as it allows for tailored support and interventions to be put in place.

Workshops and seminars for parents on various educational topics are another crucial aspect (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Grade one teachers provide opportunities for parents to participate in these sessions, which cover strategies for supporting literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional growth at home. Equipping parents with these tools and insights empowers them to actively participate in their child's learning process, reinforcing what is taught in the classroom.

In addition, grade one teachers encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom or participate in school events (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Volunteering not only strengthens the sense of community but also allows parents to witness firsthand the educational environment in which their child is learning. This experience fosters a deeper understanding of the school's culture and educational goals, further solidifying the partnership between school and home.

Lastly, teachers provide guidance to parents on how to support their child's homework and home learning activities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Suggestions for effective study routines, reading strategies, and ways to reinforce classroom concepts at home are regularly shared. Collaborative efforts between parents and teachers in the realm of homework ensure that students receive consistent support in and out of school, reinforcing their educational foundation.

Table 5 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed

P2	<i>“Regular communication through newsletters, parent-teacher meetings, and community events fosters a collaborative environment. By involving parents in their child's learning journey, I create a support system that extends beyond the classroom, laying a strong foundation for my students to thrive in the 21st century.”</i>
P3	<i>“Cultivating 21st-century learners goes beyond the classroom, and as a grade one teacher, I've found solace in actively engaging parents and the community. Through regular updates, workshops, and community projects, I ensure that parents are active partners in their child's education.”</i>
P5	<i>“Engaging parents in their child's education not only supports the child's growth but also builds a network that contributes to the overall success of our students as they navigate the challenges of the 21st century.”</i>
P6	<i>“I've embraced the importance of engaging parents and the community to cultivate 21st-century learners. Through open communication channels, involvement in school activities, and community partnerships, I create a support network that extends the learning experience beyond the classroom.”</i>

➤ *Cultivating Critical Thinking*

Cultivating critical thinking skills is a central coping mechanism employed by grade one teachers to effectively address the challenges in cultivating 21st-century learners and building a strong educational foundation. Critical thinking is a fundamental skill that equips students with the ability to analyze information, solve problems, and make informed decisions – skills essential for success in the modern world.

First and foremost, grade one teachers incorporate critical thinking activities into their daily lessons (Fisher & Frey, 2015). These activities encourage students to think deeply and critically about the subjects they are learning. By posing open-ended questions, encouraging discussions, and challenging assumptions, teachers stimulate curiosity and prompt students to explore concepts from multiple perspectives.

Furthermore, teachers foster a classroom environment that encourages questioning and exploration (Fisher & Frey,

2015). They create a safe space where students are comfortable asking questions, expressing their opinions, and even making mistakes. This environment nurtures the development of critical thinking by valuing intellectual curiosity and promoting a growth mindset.

Critical thinking is further cultivated through problem-solving exercises (Fisher & Frey, 2015). Grade one teachers present students with real-world problems that require thoughtful analysis and creative solutions. These exercises challenge students to apply their knowledge and critical thinking skills in practical scenarios, bridging the gap between theory and real-life application.

Grade one teachers also emphasize the importance of evidence-based reasoning (Fisher & Frey, 2015). They encourage students to support their arguments and conclusions with facts and evidence, teaching them the value of critical evaluation. This approach empowers students to become discerning consumers of information and critical thinkers in the digital age.

Lastly, teachers model critical thinking themselves by engaging in thoughtful inquiry and problem-solving (Fisher & Frey, 2015). They demonstrate the process of asking questions, researching, and evaluating information. This

modeling not only reinforces the importance of critical thinking but also provides students with a practical example to follow.

Table 6 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed:

P1	<i>“Instilling critical thinking skills in my students is paramount to cultivating 21st-century learners. I work in incorporating problem-solving activities into daily lessons, encouraging curiosity, and creating an environment that fosters inquiry.”</i>
P3	<i>“As a grade one teacher, my coping strategy for cultivating critical thinking in 21st-century learners involves incorporating interactive and thought-provoking activities. I encourage my students to think beyond rote memorization, fostering a mindset of inquiry and problem-solving.”</i>
P6	<i>“I employ a curriculum that challenges young minds through activities that encourage analysis and problem-solving. By consistently providing opportunities for critical thinking, I aim to equip my students with the skills necessary for success in the fast-paced world of the 21st century.”</i>
P8	<i>“I use curriculum that challenges young minds through activities that encourage analysis and problem-solving. By consistently providing opportunities for critical thinking, I aim to equip my students with the skills necessary for success in the fast-paced world of the 21st century.”</i>

**D. Insights Gained from the Experiences of Grade One Teachers in Cultivating 21st Century Learners in Building a Strong Foundation**

The insights gained from the experiences of grade one teachers in cultivating 21st-century learners and building a strong educational foundation offer valuable lessons that contribute to the ongoing evolution of modern education. These educators, who are at the forefront of shaping young minds, face a myriad of challenges and opportunities as they prepare students for a world marked by rapid technological advancements, complex problem-solving, and global interconnectedness (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). By navigating these challenges, grade one teachers have accumulated profound insights that inform both their teaching practices and the broader educational landscape.

➤ **Nurturing Social and Emotional Skills**

Nurturing social and emotional skills is a profound insight gained from the experiences of grade one teachers in their mission to cultivate 21st-century learners and build a strong educational foundation. Recognizing that academic achievement alone is not sufficient for success in today's complex world, these educators have emphasized the development of social and emotional competencies as an integral part of early education (Durlak et al., 2011).

Grade one teachers understand that social and emotional skills are essential for building positive relationships and effective communication (Durlak et al., 2011). They create classroom environments where students learn to express

themselves, listen actively to others, resolve conflicts, and collaborate effectively. This insight underscores the importance of these skills in a world that values teamwork and collaboration.

Furthermore, nurturing social and emotional skills is seen as a means to promote empathy and kindness among students (Durlak et al., 2011). Grade one teachers actively teach children to recognize and understand their own emotions, as well as the emotions of their peers. By fostering empathy, they encourage students to support one another, reduce bullying, and create a more inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Another key insight from grade one teachers' experiences is that social and emotional skills contribute to improved self-regulation and self-awareness (Durlak et al., 2011). Through activities like mindfulness exercises and emotional check-ins, teachers help students manage their emotions, handle stress, and make better decisions. This insight highlights the role of these skills in enhancing students' overall well-being and self-confidence.

Grade one teachers also recognize that social and emotional skills play a significant role in academic success (Durlak et al., 2011). Students who can regulate their emotions and stay focused are better equipped to engage in learning. By addressing social and emotional development alongside academics, teachers set the stage for a more effective and balanced education.

Table 7 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed:

P1	<i>“In my role as a grade one teacher, I recognize the importance of nurturing social and emotional skills to build a strong foundation for 21st-century learners. By incorporating activities that promote emotional intelligence, I aim to equip my students with the interpersonal skills necessary for success.”</i>
P4	<i>“Nurturing social and emotional skills is a key aspect of my educational management strategy as a grade one teacher. I believe that cultivating a positive classroom culture contributes significantly to building a strong foundation for 21st-century learners.”</i>
P7	<i>“I emphasize the importance of nurturing social and emotional skills through daily interactions and targeted activities. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, I believe I'm laying the groundwork for my students to navigate the complexities of the modern world with resilience and empathy.”</i>

P1	<i>“In my role as a grade one teacher, I recognize the importance of nurturing social and emotional skills to build a strong foundation for 21st-century learners. By incorporating activities that promote emotional intelligence, I aim to equip my students with the interpersonal skills necessary for success.”</i>
P4	<i>“Nurturing social and emotional skills is a key aspect of my educational management strategy as a grade one teacher. I believe that cultivating a positive classroom culture contributes significantly to building a strong foundation for 21st-century learners.”</i>
P8	<i>“Through intentional lesson planning and creating opportunities for positive social interactions, I strive to develop in my students the ability to understand and manage emotions, communicate effectively, and build meaningful relationships.”</i>

➤ **Promoting Lifelong Learning Habits**

Promoting lifelong learning habits is a significant insight gained from the experiences of grade one teachers in their pursuit of cultivating 21st-century learners and building a robust educational foundation. These educators have recognized that fostering a love for learning and instilling a growth mindset from an early age lays the groundwork for a lifelong journey of acquiring knowledge and skills (Dweck, 2006).

Grade one teachers understand that encouraging curiosity and exploration is paramount in nurturing lifelong learners (Dweck, 2006). They create an environment that stimulates students' natural inquisitiveness, allowing them to ask questions, explore topics of interest, and engage in independent discovery. This insight underscores the importance of nurturing a sense of wonder and an intrinsic motivation to learn.

Furthermore, promoting lifelong learning habits involves teaching students how to set goals and take ownership of their educational journey (Dweck, 2006). Grade

one teachers guide children in setting achievable objectives, breaking tasks into manageable steps, and persisting in the face of challenges. This insight emphasizes the role of goal setting and resilience in cultivating self-directed learners.

Another key insight from grade one teachers' experiences is that modeling a passion for learning is instrumental in inspiring students (Dweck, 2006). These educators exhibit their own enthusiasm for acquiring new knowledge and skills, whether through ongoing professional development or personal interests. By serving as role models of lifelong learners, teachers convey the message that learning is a lifelong pursuit.

Grade one teachers also recognize the value of integrating real-world relevance into lessons (Dweck, 2006). They emphasize the practical applications of what students are learning, connecting classroom knowledge to everyday life. This insight highlights the importance of helping students see the relevance of their education beyond the classroom, motivating them to continue learning outside school.

Table 8 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed:

P2	<i>“I’ve found that instilling a love for learning is vital for the learners. I incorporate curiosity-driven activities, encourage exploration, and celebrate the joy of discovery. By fostering a mindset of continuous learning, I believe I’m laying a robust foundation for my students.”</i>
P3	<i>“I focus on creating an environment that sparks a passion for lifelong learning. By fostering a growth mindset, I aim to equip my young learners with the curiosity and adaptability needed for success in the dynamic world they’ll face in the future.”</i>
P5	<i>“I believe that cultivating a thirst for knowledge early on is crucial for building a strong foundation for 21st-century learners. Through a combination of engaging lessons, exploration corners, and encouraging independent inquiry, I aspire to instill in my students the belief that learning is a lifelong journey.”</i>
P6	<i>“I integrate elements of inquiry-based learning, encourage self-reflection, and celebrate the process of acquiring new skills. By fostering a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom, I aim to empower my students to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners in the ever-evolving landscape of the 21st century.”</i>

➤ **Fostering Critical Thinking as a Foundational Skill**

Fostering critical thinking as a foundational skill is a vital insight gained from the experiences of grade one teachers in their efforts to cultivate 21st-century learners and build a strong educational foundation. These educators have recognized that critical thinking is not only a skill but also a mindset that equips students with the ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge effectively (Fisher & Frey, 2015).

First and foremost, grade one teachers emphasize critical thinking activities that encourage students to question, explore, and solve problems (Fisher & Frey, 2015).

They create a classroom environment where open-ended questions are welcomed, discussions are encouraged, and diverse viewpoints are respected. This insight highlights the importance of fostering an inquisitive mindset early in a child's education.

Furthermore, critical thinking is viewed as a means to nurture independence and decision-making skills (Fisher & Frey, 2015). Grade one teachers guide students in making informed choices, weighing evidence, and considering consequences. This insight underscores the role of critical thinking in empowering students to become responsible and self-reliant learners.



Another key insight from grade one teachers' experiences is that critical thinking goes hand in hand with effective communication (Fisher & Frey, 2015). They provide opportunities for students to articulate their thoughts, express their ideas, and engage in constructive debates. This insight emphasizes the importance of communication skills in conveying and defending critical analyses.

Grade one teachers also recognize the value of real-world problem-solving exercises (Fisher & Frey, 2015). They present students with authentic challenges that require thoughtful analysis and creative solutions. This insight underscores the role of critical thinking in preparing students to address complex issues in their future careers and lives.

Table 9 Here is the Transcript of the Participants as Transcribed:

P1	<i>“I design lessons that encourage students to ask questions, analyze information, and express their ideas. By providing opportunities for problem-solving and decision-making, I believe I am laying the groundwork for my young learners to become agile and independent thinkers.”</i>
P3	<i>“It is vital to create an environment where students are encouraged to think critically, solve problems, and make informed decisions. Through interactive activities and open-ended challenges, I aim to nurture a mindset that values curiosity and analytical thinking.”</i>
P6	<i>“I recognize the significance of fostering critical thinking skills in building a strong foundation for my learners. By encouraging students to explore various perspectives and think independently, I believe I am preparing them for success in our rapidly changing world.”</i>
P8	<i>“I strive to create a learning environment where students are challenged to question, analyze, and apply their understanding. Through hands-on activities and thought-provoking discussions, I aim to instill in my young learners the ability to think critically and adapt to the complexities of the 21st century.”</i>

**VI. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

*A. Implications*

Based on the experiences of the grade one teachers as they cultivate 21st century learners as blueprint in building a strong foundation, results of the interview revealed the following themes: First, promoted critical thinking. First-grade educators establish a setting that encourages curiosity and inquiry. They prompt students to inquire about their surroundings, nurturing their inherent sense of fascination. By highlighting the importance of curiosity, teachers establish the foundation for critical thinking, recognizing questioning as the initial phase in critically examining information. Second, fostered collaboration. Promoting collaboration is a crucial aspect for first-grade teachers as they strive to nurture 21st-century learners and build a strong educational base. Collaboration not only enhances students' ability to work efficiently with peers but also fosters the development of vital social and cognitive skills. Third, engaged parents. Effective collaborations between teachers and parents have demonstrated a notable influence on both academic success and overall development in students. First-grade teachers create open and reliable communication avenues with parents, providing regular updates via emails, newsletters, or online platforms to keep them abreast of classroom activities, curriculum, and their child's progress. This transparent communication fosters active parental involvement in their child's educational journey.

On the coping mechanisms of the grade one teachers as they cultivate 21st century learners as blueprint in building a strong foundation, one of the themes that was shown was committing to lifelong learning. Continuous learning is a perpetual commitment for educators, signifying a dedication to self-enhancement, staying current with best practices, and adapting to the constantly evolving needs of students and the educational environment. Teachers proactively pursue workshops, seminars, and courses to broaden their knowledge

and enhance their teaching skills. This dedication guarantees that educators stay well-versed in the latest educational trends and research-backed instructional strategies.

The second theme identified was: engaging parents and community. The partnership among educators, parents, and the broader community creates a strong support network that enriches the overall learning journey for students. Sustained communication occurs through emails, newsletters, and online platforms, updating parents on classroom activities, curriculum, and their child's advancements. This transparent communication actively engages parents in their child's educational path, nurturing a robust connection between home and school. The third theme identified was: cultivating critical thinking. Grade one teachers employ the cultivation of critical thinking skills as a key approach to effectively tackle the challenges of nurturing 21st-century learners and establishing a solid educational groundwork. Critical thinking, a foundational skill, provides students with the capacity to analyze information, solve problems, and make informed decisions – vital abilities for success in the contemporary world.

On the educational management insights gained from the grade one teachers as they cultivate 21st century learners as blueprint in building a strong foundation, the first theme identified was nurturing social and emotional skills. First-grade teachers recognize the significance of social and emotional skills in fostering positive relationships and proficient communication. They establish classroom atmospheres where students develop the ability to articulate their thoughts, engage in active listening, manage conflicts, and collaborate successfully. This awareness highlights the crucial role of these skills in a world that places value on teamwork and cooperation.

The second theme identified as promoting lifelong learning habits. First-grade teachers recognize the importance of promoting curiosity and exploration to foster a love for

lifelong learning. They establish an atmosphere that sparks students' inherent inquisitiveness, enabling them to pose questions, delve into areas of interest, and undertake independent exploration. These educators assist children in establishing attainable goals, breaking down tasks into manageable steps, and persevering in the face of difficulties. This understanding underscores the significance of goal setting and resilience in nurturing self-directed learners. The third theme was fostering critical thinking. The teachers prioritize critical thinking activities that prompt students to inquire, investigate, and address challenges. They establish a classroom setting that embraces open-ended questions, promotes discussions, and respects diverse perspectives. These educators acknowledge that critical thinking is not just a skill but also a mindset that empowers students to effectively analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge.

### B. Future Directions

Examining teachers' experiences with cultivating strong foundation on their learners offers a valuable lens through which to dissect the intricate complexities of the classroom environment. The future directions for those benefiting from a study on the experiences of grade one teachers in cultivating 21st-century learners with a strong foundation should emphasize the implementation of inventive teaching approaches and initiatives for professional growth. Promoting collaboration among educators to exchange successful methodologies and integrating technology into the curriculum can enrich students' abilities in critical thinking and problem-solving. Furthermore, it is essential to foster collaborations between schools and communities to bolster comprehensive development and instill habits of lifelong learning. Advocacy for policies that endorse a flexible and adaptive education system is crucial. This ensures that grade one teachers receive continual training and access to resources, enabling them to effectively nurture the skills essential for success in the 21st century.

To further support the beneficiaries, grade one teachers can take proactive steps in their classrooms. They should embrace a student-centered approach, integrating project-based learning and real-world applications to stimulate critical thinking. Continuous professional development is essential, encouraging teachers to attend workshops and training sessions that focus on the latest educational trends and pedagogical methods. Collaborating with fellow educators within and outside the school setting can facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas and best practices. Teachers should also engage parents through regular communication and involvement in their child's education, promoting a holistic approach to learning that extends beyond the classroom. By staying abreast of educational advancements and fostering a collaborative environment, grade one teachers can contribute significantly to the cultivation of 21st-century learners with a robust foundation.

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