International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies
Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 10, pp. 793-800, November 2026
https://ijroms.com
Original Article

Technology Integration Among Experienced Elementary Teachers

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Article History:

Date Received: October 22, 2026
Date Revised: November 5, 2026
Date Accepted: November 18, 2026
Date Published: November 24, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.67903/ijroms0626

Document ID: *2026IJROMS0626*

Recommended Citation:
Arguido, L. M. & Paglinawan, J. L. (2026). Technology Integration Among Experienced Elementary Teachers. International Journal of Research on Multidisciplinary Studies, 1(10), 793-800. https://doi.org/10.67903/ijroms0626

Abstract. Qualitative studies in the Philippines have documented how experienced teachers learn to use digital tools, while research in Bukidnon has largely focused on teachers' information and communication technology competence. Less is known about how experienced public elementary teachers in Valencia City choose digital tools, respond to classroom disruptions, and turn those experiences into advice for colleagues. This study explored these experiences among 15 purposively selected teachers from four public elementary schools in District V, Schools Division of Valencia City, Bukidnon. Each participant had at least five years of teaching experience and regularly used digital technology in class. The study used a qualitative phenomenological design, gathered data through individual semi-structured interviews supplemented by field notes, and applied thematic analysis. Four themes emerged: Purposeful Technology Integration to Enhance Teaching and Learning; Dealing with Classroom Issues in Technology-Integrated Teaching; Modifying Teaching Practices for Sustaining Technology-Integrated Learning; Reflective and Adaptive Teaching for Meaningful Technology Integration. Teachers reported using technology to clarify concepts, encourage participation, find materials, and check pupils' understanding. They also described unreliable connections, limited equipment, competing duties, unfamiliar tools, and differences in pupils' readiness. Teachers responded by practicing before class, asking colleagues for help, reusing resources, keeping offline or printed alternatives, and adjusting activities to pupils' needs. One participant reported waiting for the internet connection to return before resuming use of online resources. Participants advised colleagues to continue learning, share materials, select tools for specific lesson goals, and prepare for disruptions. Their accounts suggest that hands-on training, peer support, dependable equipment, and preparation time would help teachers use digital tools under everyday school conditions. The study documents teachers' perceptions of pupil participation and understanding through their interview accounts.

Keywords: Adaptive Teaching; Elementary Teachers; Experienced Teachers; Phenomenology; Technology Integration

Introduction

Digital tools can help elementary teachers explain difficult concepts, encourage pupil participation, and check understanding. In public elementary schools, however, unreliable internet access, shared equipment, and limited preparation time can affect which tools teachers use and how they continue a lesson when those tools fail. The research problem was the limited qualitative evidence on how experienced public elementary teachers in Valencia City made and adapted these instructional decisions in their daily practice.

Philippine studies documented how seasoned teachers encountered initial difficulties, developed adaptive strategies, and gained confidence in using classroom technology (Ale & Escote, 2026; Jamilano, 2025). In Bukidnon, survey studies examined teachers' digital competence and its association with length of service (Ayunar et al., 2024; Lambunao, 2024). These studies provided evidence on professional adaptation and digital competence. A question remained about how the same teachers connected their reasons for choosing digital tools with the challenges they encountered, the adjustments they made during lessons, and the advice they offered to colleagues. Examining these decisions together can help schools identify where teachers need practical support, such as time to prepare, access to equipment, or help from peers.

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences and adaptive practices of 15 public elementary teachers from four selected schools in District V, Schools Division of Valencia City,

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Bukidnon. Participants had at least five years of classroom teaching experience and regularly integrated digital technology into their lessons. The study relied on individual semi-structured interviews supplemented by field notes. Its findings were limited to the participating teachers' accounts of classroom technology use and their perceptions of its instructional benefits.

Research Questions

This study explored the lived experiences of elementary teachers in integrating technology into classroom instruction.

1. What reasons influenced experienced elementary teachers to integrate technology into their classroom instruction?
2. What challenges did experienced elementary teachers encounter in adapting to technology-integrated classrooms?
3. How did experienced elementary teachers manage the challenges they encountered in integrating technology into their teaching practices?
4. What recommendations did experienced elementary teachers offer to colleagues about integrating technology into classroom instruction?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study covered 15 public elementary teachers from four selected schools in District V, Schools Division of Valencia City, Bukidnon. Participants had at least five years of classroom teaching experience and regularly used digital tools. The study drew on individual interviews and supplementary field notes. Its scope was limited to teachers' reported experiences with classroom technology and the instructional benefits they perceived.

Literature Review

Purposeful Technology Integration to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Reviews of teachers' views agree that technology is valued most when it serves a teaching purpose. Abel et al. (2022) gathered qualitative studies of teachers' perceptions and pointed to context and professional development as the factors that most shaped how teachers took up ICT. Bui (2022), in a review of twenty studies of English teachers, examined the practices and factors that shape how teachers bring digital technologies into class. Bereczki and Kárpáti (2021) studied twelve expert secondary school teachers and found that the teachers' beliefs about creativity shaped how they used technology to foster it. In a phenomenological study of twelve elementary teachers in the United States, Buschmann and Fiore (2025) found that teachers saw technology as an essential tool that brought both benefits and difficulties. Falloon (2020) added that digital competence goes beyond operating devices and includes using technology for learning, ethical practice and professional growth.

Dealing with Classroom Issues in Technology-Integrated Teaching

Akram et al. (2022), in a review of studies from Pakistan, listed slow internet, power cuts, weak infrastructure, limited online teaching experience and limited training among the barriers teachers faced. Buschmann and Fiore (2025) found that the elementary teachers in their study worked under time pressure and uneven support. In a survey of K-12 teachers during school closures, Trust and Whalen (2020) found that many felt unprepared and overwhelmed and turned to colleagues for help. Reviews of teacher technostress examine what strains teachers about technology and how they cope with it (Mat Nang et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2025). These studies describe barriers in general terms, but most do not show how a single teacher handles them from one lesson to the next.

Modifying Teaching Practices for Sustaining Technology-Integrated Learning

Forsström and Amdam (2026), in a review of systematic reviews, found that teachers' professional digital competence develops within and across three connected levels: the classroom, the organization, and the wider structures around the school. This suggests that changing one's practice is seldom a solitary effort. Bereczki and Kárpáti (2021) gathered interviews, classroom observations and documents to see what expert teachers actually do with technology in class, which is the kind of everyday detail that survey studies tend to miss. They also found that even these experts had difficulty carrying out technology-based teaching within regular curricular time. Trust and Whalen (2020) called for better teacher training and support so that teachers can adjust when conditions change quickly.

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Reflective and Adaptive Teaching for Meaningful Technology Integration

Buschmann and Fiore (2025) suggested that teachers benefit from practical, steady professional development that builds knowledge, pedagogical beliefs and skills. Smestad et al. (2023) reviewed 116 articles to see how teachers' digital competence is understood, which matters because what teachers should be trained in depends on that understanding. Yao (2026) reviewed research on teacher resilience and adaptation in digital teaching and compared the psychological constructs, contextual conditions and teacher outcomes reported in it. Taken together, these reviews describe what supports teachers, but they say little about the advice teachers themselves would give to colleagues.

Philippine Studies on Experienced Teachers and Technology

On why teachers use technology, Philippine studies of experienced teachers tell a hopeful story. Jamilano (2025) interviewed seasoned elementary teachers and found that those who first struggled for lack of exposure had built adaptive strategies and a positive attitude toward learning. Ale and Escote (2026), who interviewed ten senior teachers in Tagum City, described professional growth that showed in greater confidence, adaptability and willingness to keep learning. Montebon (2022) used an online qualitative survey of Filipino teachers during the new normal and analyzed it with a transcendental phenomenological design, and the use of technology was one of his three themes. Jaurigue-Sublay (2023) described both challenges and benefits for Technology and Livelihood Education teachers who facilitated online learning.

The difficulties reported in the Philippines resemble those found abroad. Cahapay and Labrador (2021) found that English language teachers were held back by poor internet connections, unfamiliarity with designing remote lessons, and limited skill with remote technologies. Magtoltol and Oropa (2025) found that many basic education teachers lacked formal ICT training, that institutional and personal barriers limited their digital literacy, and they recommended training programs and better ICT resources. Chin et al. (2022) reported that limits on time and money, together with weak logistical support, restricted Filipino teachers' access to professional development.

Studies that look at how teachers manage these difficulties are fewer. Montebon (2022) reported coping as a theme of its own, and Cahapay and Labrador (2021) identified self-directed learning of technology, instructional accommodations, and school and community support as enablers. Delgado and Dayaganon (2024) examined how technostress, ICT competencies and coping strategies relate among secondary school teachers. On what teachers need going forward, Jamilano (2025) stressed targeted support, continuing professional development and a collaborative environment, and Ale and Escote (2026) pointed to openness to continuous learning. These are the authors' conclusions. They are not recommendations that the teachers made themselves.

Local Context: Bukidnon and Valencia City

Studies in Bukidnon show that teachers' ICT use is a local concern. On the purposes and promise of technology, Dulay and Mahinay (2025) studied teachers' perceptions of ICT in science instruction at Valencia Colleges, Inc., and found that teachers saw ICT as enhancing engagement and instructional relevance, describing it as empowering, while Lambunao (2024), who surveyed 140 public elementary teachers in 12 schools of Manolo Fortich II District, found intermediate-level ICT competence with significant challenges in using ICT as a teaching tool, and teachers with longer service tended to do better.

Ayunar et al. (2024) surveyed 1,275 public school teachers in Bukidnon and reported a small negative association between teaching experience and ICT competency. Dulay and Mahinay (2025) focused on science instruction at one Valencia City institution, where teachers described infrastructure constraints and resistance to technology use. The survey identified a district-relevant resource and training issue at provincial scale, while the city study documented how those constraints appeared within a specific subject and institution.

On adjusting practice, Dulay and Mahinay (2025) included teachers' coping strategies and adaptive practices, but their study centered on science instruction at a single institution. On recommendations, Ayunar et al. (2024) urged stronger training and support, Dulay and Mahinay (2025) called for institutional investment and sustained professional development, and Lambunao (2024) recommended targeted training, better ICT infrastructure and ongoing professional development. These studies come closest to the present setting. However, none asked experienced public elementary teachers in Valencia City why they use technology, what they do when it fails or runs short, and what they would advise colleagues.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a qualitative phenomenological design to describe the meanings that experienced elementary teachers attached to integrating technology into daily instruction. The analysis used Braun and

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Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis to identify patterns across teachers' accounts. The four research questions informed how the themes were reported.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in four public elementary schools in District V, Schools Division of Valencia City, Province of Bukidnon, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The schools are Guinuyoran Central School, Lourdes Integrated School, Tugaya Integrated School and Barobo Integrated School. The district was chosen because its elementary schools are places where experienced teachers use technology in their classes under ordinary working conditions. The study describes what teachers reported in these four schools and does not assume that they share the same equipment or internet access.

Research Participants

The participants were fifteen (15) experienced elementary teachers from four schools in District V, distributed as follows: five (5) from Guinuyoran Central School, three (3) from Lourdes Integrated School, four (4) from Tugaya Integrated School, and three (3) from Barobo Integrated School, for a total of fifteen (15) participants.

Research Instrument

The semi-structured interview guide consisted of four questions derived from the study objectives. Two reviewers, one with expertise in qualitative research and one with experience in elementary education and research supervision, assessed the questions for clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and alignment with the study objectives using a rating form and written comments. Appendix A reproduces the four questions used. The guide contained four core questions, and the detail elicited varied with how fully each participant answered.

Data Gathering Procedure

The Schools Division Office of Valencia City and the four school heads granted administrative permission. The researchers obtained written consent and conducted individual, in-person interviews in quiet rooms at the participating schools. With participants' permission, the researchers audio-recorded the interviews and took descriptive field notes. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were coded KI1 to KI15.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What reasons influenced experienced elementary teachers to integrate technology into their classroom instruction?

Four themes corresponded to the research questions on why teachers integrated technology, what challenges they encountered, how they adapted their practices, and what they recommended to colleagues. The findings reflect the experiences of 15 public elementary teachers. References to pupils' engagement and understanding describe what teachers perceived during instruction.

On the reasons influenced experienced elementary teachers to integrate technology into their classroom instruction

Emerging Theme 1. Purposeful Technology Integration to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Clarifying concepts and encouraging participation. Teachers used digital tools to address specific instructional needs. KI2 used technology to explain difficult concepts, while KI9 selected images and videos to illustrate ideas that were difficult to demonstrate in class. KI1 perceived that visual materials helped pupils focus, KI6 reported that interactive activities encouraged pupils to ask questions, and KI13 observed that some shy pupils were more willing to participate. KI15 used digital resources to connect lesson content to real-world situations, while KI4 varied instruction to accommodate differences among pupils.

These accounts show that teachers selected tools in response to what they wanted pupils to see, understand, or do. This aligns with Bereczki and Kárpáti (2021), who found that teachers' pedagogical beliefs shaped how they used technology. Their study focused on expert secondary teachers and creativity. In the present elementary classrooms, teachers emphasized making concepts easier to illustrate and giving pupils more opportunities to participate. The interviews provide evidence of teachers' instructional intentions and perceptions. Changes in pupil engagement or understanding would require direct measurement.

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Finding resources, checking understanding, and learning from others. KI3 sought supplementary materials when textbook examples did not adequately illustrate a concept. KI7 used digital tools to organize instructional materials, KI14 valued being able to revise and reuse them, and KI12 used digital quizzes to check pupils' understanding. KI10 also wanted pupils to develop basic digital knowledge and practice responsible use. Teachers described different entry points into technology use. A program encouraged KI5 to experiment, KI8 continued using tools learned during the pandemic, and KI11 gained encouragement through exchanges with colleagues.

The accounts show how professional learning translated into specific classroom practices. Jamilano (2025) and Ale and Escote (2026) likewise documented adaptation and continued learning among experienced Filipino teachers. The present findings show how teachers put that learning to work in recurring tasks such as updating materials, supplementing textbook examples, and checking what pupils understood.

Research Question 2: What challenges did experienced elementary teachers encounter in adapting to technology-integrated classrooms?

On the challenges did experienced elementary teachers encounter in adapting to technology integrated classrooms

Emerging Theme 2. Dealing with Classroom Issues in Technology-Integrated Teaching

Connectivity, equipment, and resource limitations. KI1 reported slow internet, while KI2 and KI3 described difficulty accessing online resources during lessons. KI8 reported equipment failures that disrupted lesson momentum. KI7 described limited digital materials, and KI10 found that limited access to technology made digital lesson preparation difficult.

These accounts show that access problems occurred at different points in instruction. Limited equipment or materials could narrow what teachers prepared, while a connection or equipment failure could interrupt a lesson already underway. The connectivity difficulties resemble those reported by Cahapay and Labrador (2021) among English language teachers during emergency remote education. The present accounts show how the same barrier affected ordinary, in-person elementary lessons when a planned activity depended on online content.

Preparation time, workload, and unfamiliar tools. KI14 spent "more time than I anticipated to develop technology-based lessons" and had to check whether materials suited the lesson. KI5 explained, "It is time consuming to learn how to use a new tool that I have never used before." KI4 and KI6 linked limited opportunities to practice or try unfamiliar tools to competing duties and workload. KI15 reported difficulty fitting technology-based activities into the daily schedule, and KI9 occasionally struggled to use unfamiliar applications.

KI14 and KI5 described two demands on preparation time. KI14 needed time to develop and review lesson content, while KI5 needed time to learn how the tool worked. Chin et al. (2022) identified time constraints as a barrier to Filipino teachers' professional development. The present accounts show how those constraints carried into lesson preparation, where teachers had to learn an application and decide whether its content or functions suited their pupils.

Differences in pupil readiness and engagement. KI11 reported that several pupils needed help with digital assignments at the same time. KI13 observed, "Not every learner has the same experience with technology." KI12 also found it difficult to sustain some pupils' attention during technology-based activities.

These experiences qualify the reports of greater participation in Theme 1. Teachers perceived that some pupils responded positively to interactive activities, while others needed help using the tools or staying engaged. Buschmann and Fiore (2025) similarly described technology integration as bringing both benefits and difficulties for elementary teachers. In the present study, differences in pupils' familiarity with digital tools shaped how much guidance teachers had to provide during the same activity.

Research Question 3: How did experienced elementary teachers manage the challenges they encountered in integrating technology into their teaching practices?

On the experienced elementary teachers manage the challenges they encountered in integrating technology into their teaching practices

Emerging Theme 3. Modifying Teaching Practices for Sustaining Technology-Integrated Learning

Preparing alternatives and responding to disruptions. KI1 prepared digital materials before class, KI3 used previously downloaded or self-prepared materials, and KI14 saved lesson resources on an external device

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for offline use. KI8 checked equipment and prepared an alternative activity. KI10 adjusted lessons to the tools available, while KI15 simplified activities that would take too long. KI2 described a different response: "I wait for my internet connection to come back up before I start using additional teaching resources."

The accounts distinguish between preparing a substitute for an online resource and postponing its use until access returned. KI2's account shows that the online portion of instruction could still be delayed. Cahapay and Labrador (2021) identified instructional accommodations as an enabler during emergency remote education. The present accounts illustrate what those accommodations looked like in face-to-face instruction, including downloading materials ahead of time, switching activities, and simplifying a lesson when resources were limited.

Practicing, sharing, and adjusting instruction. KI4 and KI5 practiced with unfamiliar tools before using them in class. KI11 sought help from colleagues and exchanged teaching resources with them. KI7 updated existing materials, and KI9 saved useful resources for similar lessons. KI6 combined digital and other teaching methods, while KI12 reviewed pupils' work and revisited difficult material. KI13 provided additional support to pupils who struggled with digital activities.

These adaptations addressed both teacher preparation and pupil needs. Practice helped teachers become familiar with tools, while sharing and reusing materials gave them resources they could draw on when preparing lessons. Revisiting content and assisting individual pupils addressed difficulties that became apparent during the activity. This extends Jamilano's (2025) account of seasoned teachers developing adaptive strategies by showing how adaptation occurred before, during, and after a lesson.

Research Question 4: What recommendations did experienced elementary teachers offer to colleagues about integrating technology into classroom instruction?

On the recommendations did experienced elementary teachers offer to colleagues about integrating technology into classroom instruction?

Emerging Theme 4. Reflective and Adaptive Teaching for Meaningful Technology Integration

Continuing professional learning and working with colleagues. KI1 encouraged colleagues to try new approaches, KI5 recommended attending training, and KI14 emphasized continued learning as technology changes. KI4 advised teachers to practice and ask for help, KI6 stressed allowing time to learn, and KI11 recommended sharing materials and assisting colleagues.

The advice reflects the teachers' experience of learning tools alongside their regular duties. Jamilano (2025) and Buschmann and Fiore (2025) emphasized continuing professional development and practical support. The participating teachers identified actions they could take with colleagues between formal training sessions, including practicing a tool before class and exchanging materials they could adapt for their own lessons.

Selecting tools purposefully and preparing for interruptions. KI2 and KI9 advised choosing tools that serve the lesson objective. KI13 recommended considering pupils' needs and abilities, and KI12 advised checking whether a digital activity helped pupils understand the lesson. KI15 told colleagues to keep pupils' learning as the priority. KI7 emphasized responsible online conduct and privacy, while KI3, KI8, and KI10 suggested offline copies, free educational applications, and alternative lessons, respectively.

The advice brings together two considerations that teachers faced in practice: whether the tool served the lesson and whether they could carry out the activity with the resources available. This aligns with Falloon's (2020) view of teacher digital competence as encompassing pedagogical and ethical judgment. The participants made those judgments concrete by recommending that teachers consider pupil readiness, protect personal information, and prepare a usable alternative when technology fails.

Ethical Considerations

The Central Mindanao University Research Ethics Committee (CMU-REC) issued ethics clearance under CMU Control No. 0403 s. 2025. The Schools Division Office of Valencia City and the heads of the participating schools granted separate administrative authorization. Before the interviews, participants provided written informed consent and gave permission for audio recording. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could skip questions, pause an interview, or withdraw without penalty. Interview data were treated as confidential under the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). The researchers knew the participants' identities because interviews were conducted and recorded in person. Transcripts and quotations used codes KI1–KI15. The manuscript reports school-level totals and keeps participant codes separate from school assignments to reduce identification risk in small groups. The research team restricted access to audio recordings, transcripts, and codebooks and stored the digital files in encrypted,

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password-protected storage. Printed field notes and consent forms were kept in a locked cabinet. The records are to be retained for five years after study completion, then securely deleted or shredded, as applicable.

Conclusion

The 15 experienced elementary teachers in four public schools in District V, Schools Division of Valencia City, described how they chose digital tools, responded to disruptions, and advised colleagues. Their accounts yielded four themes: Purposeful Technology Integration to Enhance Teaching and Learning, Dealing with Classroom Issues in Technology-Integrated Teaching, Modifying Teaching Practices for Sustaining Technology-Integrated Learning, and Reflective and Adaptive Teaching for Meaningful Technology Integration. The study's specific contribution is to show how the same teachers linked their instructional goals with decisions made when internet access, equipment, preparation time, or pupil readiness affected a lesson. Teachers perceived that digital tools helped explain concepts, encourage participation, and check understanding. When access failed, some used offline resources or switched activities, while KI2 waited for the connection to return before resuming use of online resources. For the participating schools, these accounts identify concrete priorities for support: usable backup materials, time to prepare, and access to colleagues who can help with unfamiliar tools.

Recommendations

The following actions address specific conditions reported by the participating teachers and can be incorporated into existing school activities. Classroom teachers and grade-level leaders. Before each new unit, teachers should test unfamiliar tools and prepare an offline digital copy of essential materials and a non-digital alternative, such as a worksheet, chart, or textbook activity. Grade-level leaders can pool these materials in the first quarter and update them each term. School ICT coordinators. Use a short segment of an existing monthly professional learning session for teachers to exchange ready-to-use materials and troubleshoot one common problem. Once each quarter, use that same session for hands-on practice with a task teachers identify as difficult, such as setting up a projector, preparing a digital quiz, or saving a resource for offline use. School heads. At the start of the school year, designate a regular preparation slot within existing planning time and review it each quarter. Where school-level deadlines are flexible, stagger digital reporting tasks during weeks with heavy teaching and assessment workloads. Schools Division Office of Valencia City. During the first quarter, ask school heads and ICT coordinators to document recurring connectivity problems, equipment faults, and their effects on lessons. Use the inventory to prioritize repairs, redistribution of available equipment, and technical support within existing resources. Future researchers. Follow teachers in other districts or grade levels across a school term and combine interviews with classroom observations and pupil feedback. Observations could document how much instructional time is lost during disruptions and how often offline or non-digital alternatives allow the activity to continue. Pupil feedback and classroom assessment evidence could help examine the engagement and understanding that teachers reported in their interviews.

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Online ISSN: 3116-4137 | Print ISSN: 3116-4145
Volume 1, Issue 10, pp. 793-800, November 2026
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