

Contextualized Instructional Materials as Supplement to the Kindergarten Teacher's Guide

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the Content and Learning Competencies in the Kindergarten Curriculum with no existing contextualized learning materials, the available learning materials in kindergarten, the teachers' experiences in utilizing the materials, and develop learning materials for the competencies with no existing contextualized materials. This also measured the validity of the contextualized materials developed by the researcher. The researcher utilized a mixed-method research design. The research respondents are fifteen (15) kindergarten teachers in Malapatan 1 District. There are two methods of gathering the data: using a checklist and open-ended questions to gather rich stories and experiences of the teachers. Results showed no existing contextualized materials in the following learning competencies: recognize self, age, and birthday. Identify different places in the community; classify objects according to observable properties like size, color, shape, texture, and weight; identify objects in the environment with the

same color and identify the letters of the alphabet. All other competencies in the identified subjects have existing contextualized materials. The major theme that emerged in the experiences of the teachers in utilizing the developed materials revolved around the help and benefits it offered. There were also five developed instructional materials. The developed material has a very high level of validity regarding appropriateness, adequacy, and acceptability.

Keywords — contextualized learning materials, validity, research and development, appropriateness, adequacy, acceptability, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

One of the significant problems the education sector faces nowadays is the need for more suitability of instructional materials to help provide meaningful learning experiences for learners, especially in the lower grades. As a kindergarten teacher, one of the problems that the researcher has observed is the availability of contextualized learning materials that she can use in her class, considering that mother tongue-based multilingual education is also implemented in her class. In some of her lessons, she observed that her learners could not relate to some of the activities she gave them. One of the solutions the researcher gave is to provide contextualized learning activities for kindergarten learners.

Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach has the potential to strengthen the links between the learning environment and the community. Materials for classroom instruction are critical components of any interaction to acquire knowledge. It has been demonstrated by making school learning relevant and meaningful. The interaction between learners, society, and school will become a more active and enriching experience for learners' everyday lives and needs (Perin et al., 2011).

On the other hand, teachers are encouraged to create teaching resources that support the strategies and activities students require. Thus, appropriate and effective instructional materials can reinforce effective learning and teaching in kindergarten. It is well understood that suitable instructional materials can never replace the teacher but can help teachers achieve the desired learning outcomes. Teachers use various instructional materials to provide instructional scaffolding for students to invigorate learning by motivating them to learn and assisting them in quickly understanding their lesson (Effiong & Igiri, 2015; Tuimur & Chemwei, 2015).

The study's findings on the extent of curriculum contextualization and learners' academic achievement revealed extensive curriculum implementation, instructional process, and instructional materials. In contrast, learners' academic achievement in contextualized lessons is very satisfactory. Furthermore, the instructional process and materials are strongly linked to students' academic achievement. The data revealed that the curriculum implementation and instructional process are consistent with the learners' academic achievement, but the instructional materials are not. The lack of contextualized IMs and teachers' lack of training and resistance to contextualization impede the full implementation of the contextualized curriculum (Pariscal & Gonzales-Aboy, 2022).

On the other hand, the study is based on the constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Jean Piaget was a proponent of constructivist theory, and he believed that students learn concepts and construct meaning through interaction and interpretation of events in their environment. However, the Contextualized Teaching-Learning Approach was first proposed by John Dewey in his book *Learning by Doing* (Bumgarner, 2017).

Additionally, international research, particularly in European countries, demonstrates the need to rethink curricular development practices to ensure a meaningful curriculum for students from different cultures, social backgrounds, or social communities. According to research, students benefit when the curriculum is designed in ways that take into account their social backgrounds and cultures, as well as local characteristics, following the concepts of differentiation, personalized learning, and curricular contextualization (Fernandes et al., 2013; Macedo, 2013).

In Asian countries such as the Philippines, public schools are dealing with a lack of instructional materials due to the K-12 education reform. It was discovered that there is insufficient instructional material, which significantly impacts teacher performance and prevents students from reaching their full potential. Students need more instructional materials to understand their lessons, resulting in poor academic performance, low examination scores, and low practical skill acquisition. The poor performance of kindergarten students was explicitly attributed to a lack of instructional materials and other factors. As a result, students fail to master some standards and competencies mandated in K-12 curricula (Sergio, 2012).

Moreover, the researcher has conducted a pre-initial interview with her fellow kindergarten teachers in Malapatan 1 District about the number of

contextualized learning materials in kindergarten. Most of them shared that there are available instructional materials. However, some learning competencies still need to have contextualized learning materials. On the other hand, the teachers were found to need help understanding the activities included in the Kindergarten Teacher's Guide due to the unfamiliar photos, words, illustrations, and language used. Thus, the unfamiliar activities must be localized or contextualized for the teachers to effectively deliver the content of the curriculum and to better grasp and understand the learners with the lesson. With this, the researcher aimed to pursue the study to develop contextualized instructional materials to supplement the Kindergarten Teacher's Guide to enhance the teaching and learning among kindergarten learners in Malapatan 1 District, Malapatan, Sarangani Province.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study's primary objectives were to explore the content and learning competencies without existing contextualized learning materials, the existing learning materials, experiences of kindergarten teachers in using the available learning materials, developed learning materials, and to subject the developed learning materials to validation processes.

Specifically, it aimed to (1) identify the competencies and the content in the curriculum guide of kindergarten that may be contextualized, (2) list down all the existing contextualized instructional materials for kindergarten, (3) describe the experiences of kindergarten teachers while using the contextualized materials, (4) develop contextualized learning materials in kindergarten and (5) subject the developed contextualized instructional materials to validation processes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-method research design in which the descriptive-quantitative research method was used in the quantitative part because the data are presented in numerical and descriptive form, and the research design is descriptive quantitative. Descriptive research is a study to determine variables, whether one or more, without making comparisons or connections with other variables. Quantitative methods highlight objective measurements and statistical, mathematical, or numerical data analysis collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, as well as by manipulating pre-existing statistical data with computational techniques (Siedlecki, 2020).

On the other hand, the descriptive-qualitative research design was also used to describe the experiences of the teachers while utilizing the developed materials.

Research Site

This study was conducted in the identified public schools in Malapatan 1 District, Malapatan, Sarangani Province: Malapatan Central Elementary School, Mama Nawa Elementary School, Datu Pangolima Integrated School, Alyeng IP School, Lasang Elementary School, Malkahi Elementary School, Aspang Elementary School.

Respondents

The study's respondents were 15 Kindergarten teachers in the identified public schools in Malapatan 1 District in the school year 2022-2023. They are kindergarten teachers at Malapatan Central Elementary School, Mama Nawa Elementary School, Datu Pangolima Integrated School, Alyeng IP School, Lasang Elementary School, Malkahi Elementary School, and Aspang Elementary School. The research focused only on one district of the municipality, and the district has fifteen (15) kindergarten teachers. This also prioritized the development of contextualized materials fitted to the context of the teachers and learners in the Malapatan 1 district.

In determining the respondents, the researcher used a convenience sampling technique because there were many restrictions during the height of the pandemic. These schools are more accessible to the researcher.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in the study are the checklist, inventory, and evaluation tool for the developed materials. The respondents were tasked to check the boxes that correspond to their choice. They chose their responses from the Yes/No options.

Before the checklist and inventory were utilized, it was first checked by three Master Teachers and the Division Kindergarten Coordinator to make sure that all the content and learning competencies in Kindergarten Curriculum were included along with the developed and existing contextualized learning materials. This also ensures that the list was well-verified before giving it to the respondents.

On the other hand, the evaluators were tasked to fill out the validation forms the researcher gave. They were instructed to list all the recommendations in the comment section of the tool. After checking the validators and evaluators, the researcher incorporated all suggestions and comments and reflected them on the

checklist and inventory. After incorporating all the suggestions and comments, the researcher submitted a copy of the instrument to her adviser for checking.

Before the actual conduct of the survey, the researcher first conducted a pilot test to determine possible problems that may happen during the actual administration of the survey and to ensure that the instrument prepared is valid and reliable. Five (5) kindergarten teachers participated in the conduct of pilot testing.

Research Ethics Protocol

During the entire duration of this study, ethical considerations were observed by the researcher, and these are Informed Consent, Risk of Harm, Anonymity, and Confidentiality. The respondents fully know their roles as data providers in this study. They were given letters and signed to signify their willingness to participate in the research. Consent was also sought by their higher authorities so that their participation would not be questioned.

On the other hand, the researcher also assured the respondents that there were no risks in participating in the study. It will be made sure that the respondents' well-being will be prioritized throughout the study. Furthermore, the respondents were not harmed because their identities were kept private. Their safety and security are of the utmost importance.

Moreover, the respondents have the right to privacy, which should not be infringed upon without their informed consent by the existing Data Privacy Act 2012, which protects the fundamental human right to privacy. One way to ensure privacy and confidentiality in this quantitative study is to provide respondents with the option of not indicating their names on the survey questionnaire. Furthermore, confidentiality and privacy were maintained by not disclosing the informants' demographic information, such as age, gender, occupation, employment, and, if applicable, disease. As a result, their identities were kept with utmost confidentiality for their protection. Their responses to the survey questionnaire were kept private and considered confidential.

Data Collection

For the smooth flow of the conduct of the study, the following steps were followed: First, the researcher secured a letter of approval from the Graduate School Dean of Notre Dame of Dadiangas University. Another letter of approval was given to the Schools Division Superintendent of Sarangani Division; the same letter of approval was secured from the district supervisor of Malapatan

1 District. The researcher also sought the approval of the School Head of the schools where the respondents were assigned.

The data-gathering activities in this study consisted of three phases; Planning Phase (Needs Assessment), Development Phase, and Validation Phase. The researcher has examined the kindergarten teacher's guide's list of activities for kindergarten learners. The researcher also checked the learning competencies and content prescribed by the Department of Education for Kindergarten learners. The list was first checked and validated by Master Teachers and the Education Program Supervisor in Kindergarten to make sure that the list was complete and well-verified. After checking and incorporating the suggestions, the researcher began distributing the checklist to the respondents.

The second phase was the Development Phase. After the researcher had determined the competencies and content to be contextualized from the Kindergarten Teacher's Guide, the researcher developed and contextualized instructional materials based on the results on the checklist.

The third and final phase was the Validation Phase. It is essential that the developed material has to undergo a validation process to make sure that it is appropriate, adequate, and acceptable. To determine the level of validity of the developed contextualized instructional materials, learning resource evaluators in the Division of Sarangani were asked to evaluate and check the developed materials. The validators are five (5) Learning Resource Evaluators in Sarangani Division.

The experiences of the kindergarten teachers in utilizing the available contextualized learning materials were gathered through a focus group discussion. The teachers were gathered in one classroom, and open-ended questions about their experiences were asked the researcher. Lastly, the contextualized instructional materials were finalized based on the outputs yielded in the evaluation stage. Furthermore, the developed materials were presented to the Principal, District Supervisor, and Education Program Supervisor in Kindergarten for the possible reproduction for the learners as well as by the teachers.

Statistical Techniques

This study used frequency count in interpreting the data gathered in the survey on the Content and Learning competencies in kindergarten with no existing contextualized materials and the list of the competencies with contextualized materials. On the other thematic analysis was used to analyze the experiences of the kindergarten teachers in utilizing the contextualized materials used. Lastly,

a weighted mean was used to ascertain the level of validity of the developed materials regarding appropriateness, adequacy, and acceptability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Learning Competencies and Contents to be contextualized

Table 1 presents the learning competencies and contents in kindergarten that may be contextualized. Moreover, they are enumerated in the table below.

Table 1
Bases for Contextualized Instructional Materials

Content and Competencies	f	Rank
Pagpapaunlad sa kakayahang sosyo-emosyonal <i>Recognize self, age, and birthday.</i>	15	1
<i>Identify different places in the community</i>	14	2
Understanding the Physical and Natural Environment <i>Classify objects according to observable properties like size, color, shape, texture, and weight.</i>	12	4
Mathematics <i>Identify objects in the environment that has the same shape</i>	11	5
Language, Literacy, and Communication <i>Identify the letters of the alphabet (mother tongue, orthography).</i>	11	5

The results show five learning competencies in the four contents of the developmental domains in kindergarten. In the content of Pagpapaunlad sa kakayahang sosyo-emosyonal, two learning competencies need to be contextualized: recognizing self, age, and birthday and identifying different places in the community. On the other hand, in understanding the Physical and Natural Environment, one learning competency needs to be contextualized: classify objects according to observable properties like size, color, shape, texture, and weight. Additionally, in the content of Mathematics, one learning competency needs to be contextualized: identify objects in the environment with the same color. Lastly, one learning competency should be contextualized in language, literacy, and communication: identify the letters of the alphabet.

This finding is supported by the proposition that the Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach can strengthen the connection between the learning environment and the stakeholders. Materials for classroom

instruction are critical components of any interaction to acquire knowledge. It has been demonstrated by making school learning relevant and meaningful. The interaction between learners, society, and school will become a more active and enriching experience for learners' everyday lives and needs (Perin et al., 2011).

Existing Contextualized Instructional Materials for Kindergarten

A survey was conducted among the kindergarten teachers regarding the available contextualized learning materials for the learners. There were twenty-nine (29) available contextualized materials in Pagpapaunlad sa kakayahang sosyo-emosyonal, forty-three (43) in Mathematics, nineteen (19) in Understanding the Physical and Natural Environment, and thirty-two (32) in Language, Literacy, and Communication. Almost all of the learning competencies have available contextualized learning materials. However, among all the listed learning areas and the learning competencies in kindergarten, the teachers shared that five (5) curriculum content and learning competencies had no existing contextualized materials. For the content, Pagpapaunlad sa Kakayahang Sosyo-emotional, all fifteen (15) teachers agreed that the competencies How Old am I and Places in the Community have yet to be available contextualized learning materials.

On the other hand, in the mathematics subject content, the fifteen (15) teachers agreed that there are no available contextualized learning materials in the competency Same and Different Objects. Conversely, all fifteen (15) kindergarten teachers agreed that in the content of the subject Understanding the Physical and Natural Environment, there are no available contextualized materials in the competency It is A Match: Shapes. Lastly, regarding Language, Literacy, and Communication, the fifteen (15) teachers agreed that no contextualized learning materials exist in the competency of writing the letter Ss. The results implied that there are still subjects and learning competencies in the kindergarten that need contextualized learning materials. Thus, there is a need for kindergarten teachers to contextualize their materials for better learning experiences for the learners.

In consonance with the results, the Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) Method is based on spatial memory. Unlike traditional instruction, it usually integrates multiple subjects. The value of information is determined by the needs of the students and is based on prior knowledge of the students. A practical application of a real problem is used to conduct an authentic assessment (Ambrose et al., 2013).

Experiences of Kindergarten Teachers

In the qualitative interview, the researcher conducted with the kindergarten teachers regarding their experiences in using the contextualized learning materials; there were seven significant themes emerged: Innovativeness, comprehensiveness, resourcefulness, motivation, teachers' creativity, accessibility, and attention-getting.

Theme 1: Innovativeness

The first central theme from kindergarten teachers' experiences using contextualized learning materials is innovativeness. The teachers have shared that they are also innovating their materials using contextualized learning materials as the bases. Additionally, they also make sure that they think of ways to provide learning materials that will suit the level of the learners and even write learning activity sheets that are appropriate to their learners. Kindergarten teachers also do their share to provide what is lacking to ensure that the learners' learning will not be affected.

The result is supported by the idea that the concept of innovativeness has meaning in various fields in the age of science and technology, where changes and developments occur. Innovativeness is defined as the process by which new ideas are implemented and implemented. Innovativeness is the expression of an idea and its transformation into a marketable, new, or improved product or the production of goods and services. The degree of early adoption or willingness of an individual and society in comparison to other individuals and societies is defined as innovativeness. Individuals differ in their innovativeness based on their reactions to new things (ideas, products, and practices) and their effects on their success and failure (Balkar, 2018).

Theme 2: Comprehensive Materials

The second central theme that emerged from the experiences of the kindergarten teachers is comprehensive materials. The teachers shared that they also do their best to ensure that the contextualized learning materials are comprehensive enough during the delivery so that the learners can understand the lessons well. Some of the teachers are even translating all the content of the materials into the mother tongue so that it would be easy for the learners to comprehend. Some even modified the materials based on their learners' learning styles and preferences.

The major theme was supported by the finding that students become more engaged in lessons that provide teaching and learning resources for student

interaction. When students are presented with a carefully selected assortment of materials, they actively explore those materials (resources). This should motivate students to learn more about the materials, thereby promoting knowledge construction among students who are appropriately challenged to learn. Teachers are thus prevented from shifting from their traditional role as information disseminators to that of facilitators, as teaching and learning resources can be created by teachers to meet local demands and specifics (Bukoye, 2019).

Theme 3: Resourcefulness

The third central theme of the experiences of kindergarten teachers in using contextualized learning materials is resourcefulness. The teachers shared that they make use of available materials. Despite this, they still deliver quality teaching and learning to their learners. They were only using the provided materials by the Kindergarten Teacher's Guide.

The finding was corroborated by the idea that textbooks, charts, maps, and audiovisual and electronic instructional materials such as radio, tape recorder, television, and video tape recorder are material resources that should be available in a kindergarten class. Paper supplies and writing materials, such as pens, erasers, exercise books, crayons, chalk, drawing books, notebooks, pencils, rulers, slate, workbooks, and so on, are another category of material resources. When these are unavailable, implementing of the classroom activities and goals might be affected (Atkinson, 2012).

Theme 4: Motivation

The fourth central theme that emerged is that motivation. Kindergarten teachers ensure learners' interests are considered in teaching the readily available contextualized learning material. Thus, the materials must motivate learners to actively engage and participate in class discussions. They shared that the materials are also exciting and manipulative, which allows for better experience and retention for pupils. Also, use various activities to present realistic scenarios in which learners could relate r own experiences.

This theme is supported by the idea that motivation increases students' learning. Students learning can be accelerated by their natural desire to perform or complete a task; however, students' learning can also be influenced by external factors such as rewards or incentives. Students learning does not rely solely on their motivation. Teachers, through motivational support, play a critical role in increasing students' learning. Teachers can support students' autonomy,

relevance, relatedness, competence, teachers' interests in the subject, and self-efficacy (Johnson, 2017).

Theme 5: Teachers' Creativity

The fifth central theme that emerged is the essence of teachers' creativity. The teachers mentioned that a teacher's creativity plays a vital role in teaching kindergarten learners. During the interview, the teachers shared that they ensure the materials are done creatively because kindergarteners love to see colorful materials. The teachers also shared that the learners are attracted to the materials because they find the colors exciting and attractive.

Research has documented the benefits of cultivating creativity in the classroom. Creativity is more important now than it has ever been. The problems we face in our families, communities, and nations are novel and difficult, and we must think creatively and divergently to solve them. Furthermore, he explains that learning must be a lifelong endeavor and that students must learn to think in new ways regularly, which begins in the classroom (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2018).

Theme 6: Accessibility

The sixth central theme of the teachers' experiences using contextualized learning materials is that the accessibility of materials is a great help. The teachers have shared that when materials are ready and available, they can save time and efficiently teach the learners. It helps them ease the burden of preparing learning materials for their learners.

This finding was also supported by the proposition that contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) must be available for use because it offers one promising approach to helping learners learn more effectively by relating the material to meaningful situations that learners encounter in real-life. This approach is based on a number of interconnected theories about how people learn. These studies include motivation theory, problem-based learning, social cognitive theory, and learning style (Lewis et al., 2019).

Theme 7: Attention-Getting

The last central theme of kindergarten teachers' experiences utilizing contextualized learning material is attention-getting. The teachers believed they could gain the learners' attention when they used the contextualized learning material because they could relate to the situations presented in the materials. Because the materials are creatively done, the learners' attention can be quickly gained during the classes since they will be amazed when they see the materials.

This is in consonance with the finding that the potential strategy to mitigate the negative effects of boredom is to increase arousal. Using of an external stimulus - a hook, trigger, attention-getter/grabber, or anticipatory set - is a popular teaching strategy with plenty of anecdotal evidence. These external stimuli pique students' interest by claiming to increase arousal (decrease boredom), focus attention, and improve learning and memory (Belton & Priyadharshini, 2017).

Developed Contextualized Instructional Materials for Kindergarten

The basis for crafting this was the finding that five (5) curriculum content and their learning competencies had no existing contextualized materials. In the content of Pagpapaunlad sa kakayahang sosyo-emosyonal, two learning competencies were contextualized: nakikilala ang sarili, gulang o kapanganakan and natutukoy and iba't ibang lugar sa komunidad. Additionally, one learning competency was contextualized in understanding the Physical and Natural Environment: classifying objects according to observable properties like size, color, shape, texture, and weight. On the other hand, in the content in Mathematics, one learning competency was also contextualized: identifying objects in the environment that has the same color. Lastly, one learning competency was contextualized in language, literacy, and communication: identifying the letters of the alphabet.

In total, two contextualized instructional materials were developed per learning competency. These materials will develop the kindergarten learners' skills in classifying objects, reflective thinking, identifying shapes, enunciating the sound of letter Ss, and identifying places in the community.

Table 2

Validity of Contextualized Instructional Materials

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. The content of the contextualized instructional material is appropriate to the learner's level of development.	4.53	Very High
2. The content of the contextualized instructional material is appropriate for the learners as it is free of ideological, cultural, religious, racial, and gender biases and prejudices.	4.53	Very High
3. The content of the contextualized instructional materials can arouse the learners' interest.	4.53	Very High

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
4. The material is appropriate for achieving specific grade levels/ competency/ objectives of the subject area/grade/year level.	4.53	Very High
5. The vocabulary used is appropriate to the reading and understanding level of students to whom the instructional materials are intended.	4.53	Very High
6. The content is appropriate and suitable to the learners' needs and level of development	4.53	Very High
7. Overall Mean	4.53	Very High

With an overall mean of 4.53, the contextualized learning material's validity is Very High in appropriateness, adequacy, and acceptability. The most critical role of materials is to involve students in making decisions about their learning. Making materials relevant to students' needs, encouraging independent language learning, developing creativity and critical thinking, and doing cooperative learning are all ways to accomplish this. This supports the finding because the developed learning material criteria evaluation have met the requirements of the psychological aspect of learning material evaluation (Tomlinson, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

There are four domains in kindergarten with five learning competencies that have no available contextualized learning materials. In total, there were five learning competencies with no available materials. There were twenty-nine (29) available contextualized materials in Pagpapaunlad sa kakayahang sosyo-emosyonal, forty-three (43) in Mathematics, nineteen (19) in Understanding the Physical and Natural Environment, and thirty-two (32) in Language, Literacy, and Communication. There were seven essential themes on the experiences of the kindergarten teachers in using the contextualized materials: Innovativeness is the Answer, Making it More Comprehensive, Maximizing what is Available, Motivating Learners is a Priority, the Essence of Teachers' Creativity, and Accessibility of Materials is a Great Help and Gaining Learners' Attention. There were five developed contextualized materials that will help the kindergarten learners develop their skills in classifying objects, identifying their age and places in the community, identifying objects in the environment with the same color, and identifying the letters in the alphabet. The developed material has a very high

level of validity regarding appropriateness, adequacy, and acceptability. Thus, the materials could also be shared with other kindergarten learners.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

Additional contextualized materials must be made for the contents and learning competencies with no available materials. This will help the teachers deliver the content of the learning competencies with supplementary materials, which will help deepen learners' understanding of the concepts discussed.

Existing localized or contextualized learning materials must be used in all the domains in the kindergarten curriculum. For the developed contextualized materials to serve their purpose, kindergarten teachers may use them in teaching kindergarten learners after the validation processes.

Kindergarten teachers must be encouraged to innovate meaningful learning materials suited for every learner in the kindergarten class. There are learning competencies and contents that have no existing contextualized materials. Therefore, kindergarten teachers have to extend efforts to provide these lacking materials.

The experiences of the kindergarten teachers must also be shared with other teachers so that they can learn lessons from the stories shared by the teachers. Teachers may find strength and draw inspiration from the stories kindergarten teachers share.

Since the developed contextualized materials are at a very high level of validity in terms of appropriateness, adequacy, and acceptability, they can also be used by kindergarten teachers in their classes. This can be shared with other kindergarten teachers in the department.

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