

THROUGH THICK AND THIN: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MARGINAL TEACHERS IN TEACHING ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the lived experiences of marginal teachers in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) through qualitative research design which uncovering critical themes that shape their teaching practices, challenges, and perceptions of the program's impact. Through thematic analysis, the research identifies twelve pivotal themes distributed across three distinct areas of focus. Firstly, the themes of Marginal Education, Patience and Flexibility, Inclusive Evaluation, and Team Engagement emerged, highlighting the unique educational approaches and collaborative strategies employed by marginal teachers in ALS. These themes emphasize the necessity for adaptability and teamwork in addressing the diverse needs of ALS learners, underscoring the complexity of their educational landscape. Secondly, the study reveals key operational challenges, encapsulated in the themes of Resource Deficiency, Infrastructure Limitations, Time Efficiency, and Needs Recognition. These themes underscore the constraints and demands faced by teachers in ALS, pointing to significant areas requiring systemic improvement and resource allocation. Thirdly, the analysis identifies the themes of Skills Development, Empathy and Collaboration, Learner Engagement, and Professional Development, which reflect the perceived impact of the ALS program. These themes indicate a multifaceted influence on both learners and teachers, emphasizing the program's role in fostering practical skills, collaborative learning environments, and continuous professional growth. Conclusively, this comprehensive exploration provides insightful revelations into the dynamics of teaching in the ALS, recommending the need for policy interventions, resource enhancement, and supportive teaching frameworks. The findings highlight the importance of understanding the unique challenges and contributions of marginal teachers in alternative education systems.

Keywords: *Alternative Learning System, Marginal Teachers, Thematic Analysis, Educational Challenges, Teacher Resilience, Matalam District North Cotabato.*

INTRODUCTION

Globally, Alternative Learning Systems (ALS) provide educational possibilities for students who may not have access to regular schools owing to a variety of factors including distance, poverty, or a lack of educational infrastructure. However, 87% of the marginal teachers working in ALS programs deal with a variety of global problems that have an impact on their daily lives. The quality of instruction these instructors provide may

be greatly impacted by these problems, which directly affect their personal experiences (Acevedo, M. R. G., & Velasco, V. P. 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to address these problems in order to make sure that marginalized teachers can excel in their positions and give their students a quality education. Such actions might include giving students access to enough funding, improving wages and benefits, giving them chances for professional growth, and giving them enough support from teachers, government officials, and other students. We can guarantee that all students have access to high-quality education and that marginalized teachers can contribute to determining the future of their communities by tackling these challenges (Alimuddin, M. 2022).

Moreover, in the Philippines, the living lives of marginalized instructors who work in alternative learning systems (ALS) are impacted by a number of troubling concerns. These problems may be roughly described as follows: a lack of resources, poor pay and benefits, discrimination, an excessive workload, a dearth of possibilities for professional growth, insufficient support, and worries about safety and security. These problems may have a severe effect on the quality of instruction given to pupils and can cause instructors to lose enthusiasm and become overworked (Biag, A. 2022).

In addition, in Matalam, North Cotabato, ALS is a significant teaching tool for underprivileged instructors because it enables access to education, promotes inclusive education, provides flexibility, possibilities for professional development, and supports lifelong learning. ALS may assist disadvantaged instructors in making a positive difference in the lives of learners who have limited access to formal education, as well as chances for teachers to expand their skills and expertise. ALS may help to create more equal and just societies by supporting great education and inclusion (Cañon, J. L. 2020).

Furthermore, understanding the lived realities of disadvantaged teachers who work in alternative educational systems has a huge research vacuum. Future studies should concentrate on figuring out how teachers in ALS programs perceive their role in promoting social justice and equity, how teachers in ALS programs deal with issues particular to rural and remote areas, and how ALS teachers deal with the digital divide in their teaching practices (Cielo, M. C. A. 2020).

Thus, the objective of the study is to determine the lived experiences of marginal teachers in teaching alternative learning system in the selected schools in Matalam, North Cotabato for the school year 2023-2024.

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the lived experience marginal teachers in teaching alternative learning system. Thus, the following statement problem is reflected below.

1. What are the themes that emerged from the lived experiences of marginal teachers in teaching the Alternative Learning System?
2. What are the issues and concerns encountered by marginal teachers pertaining to teaching Alternative Learning System?
3. How do marginal teachers perceive the impact of the ALS program on the learners and their communities?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed qualitative research design. This research approach was used to explore and understand phenomena in-depth by gathering rich, descriptive data and examining the meanings, perspectives, and experiences of participants. It is a methodological framework that focuses on subjective interpretations and social constructions of reality, aiming to generate detailed insights into the complexities and nuances of human behavior, attitudes, and social interactions (Creswell, J. W. 2013). Qualitative research is utilized to get a thorough understanding of a subject by using techniques such as direct observation and interviews. Due to the lengthy nature of collecting qualitative data, a concentrated subset is often studied. When analyzing qualitative data, it's more important to dig deep than to cast a wide net. Understanding the inner workings and motivations of the world is a primary goal of qualitative research. Since qualitative research is subjective rather than objective, it produces textual rather than numerical results. Because of the potential lack of uniformity in qualitative research findings, quantitative methods cannot be used to analyze them. Assessments may provide common groupings, which can be coded to reveal further information (Cresswell, 2018).

Participants

The participants in this study were ten (17) teachers in selected public schools in Municipality of Matalam, Schools Division of Cotabato through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was used as the sample method. The researcher utilizes his or her own discretion to choose study participants from the general population. This is referred to as purposive or judgment sampling. Purposeful sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which the components chosen for the study are selected based on the researcher's discretion.

Meanwhile, the study's inclusion criteria were consisted of teachers who have provided services in the Matalam North Cotabato region for one or more years, specifically in the field of Alternative Learning System (ALS). Conversely, the study's exclusion criteria was included teachers from both public and private schools who have not taught in the ALS program.

Data Collection

A formal letter was composed to seek authorization from the Dean of Graduate Studies at Central Mindanao Colleges, followed by a request to the School District Supervisor to conduct research inside their respective educational institutions. As specified in the instrument, respondents would be asked to sign a permission letter on the day of data collection. Participants in this research would be limited to just those who provided written permission. Participants will be guaranteed that their opinions will be kept confidential and that their identities will not be exposed in any published component of this research. Once the data has been obtained, it is encoded with the correct label. To protect the confidentiality of the responses, the researcher would personally administer the questionnaire. The researcher would next summarize and tabulate the data before analyzing and interpreting them.

Following participant interviews, the researcher would personally collect the data and express gratitude for their involvement. I would do in-depth one-on-one interviews, direct participant observations, and focus group discussions to collect as much direct

qualitative information as possible on the thoughts and feelings of participants. This technique is based on a core tenet of qualitative research: the participant's viewpoint on the phenomena of interest should emerge according to the participant's perspective, not the researchers. Individual engagement and participation are essential throughout the interviewing process (Cresswell, 2007).

The researcher would use an informed consent form and accompanying script to discuss the purpose of the study, what it entails, why they would be asked to participate, that participation is voluntary, private, and anonymous, and what would be done with the data they provide. In addition, the interviews will be conducted in a distraction-free setting and at convenient times and locations for the participants. The researcher would then design the questionnaire, compile the data, and evaluate the outcomes. This study would then present its findings, conclusions, and suggestions. Thus, the duration of this study will be August 2023 up to July, 2024.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research involves the systematic examination and interpretation of textual, visual, or audio data to derive meaningful insights and conclusions using thematic analysis which focuses on identifying patterns, themes, and relationships within the data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis offers researchers the flexibility to adapt the process according to their research goals and the nature of their data. It's important to note that while thematic analysis is a structured method, it still requires researcher judgment and reflexivity. This means that researchers should be aware of their own biases and perspectives that might influence the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Lived Experiences of Marginal Teachers in Teaching the Alternative Learning System

Four themes emerged from the lived experiences of marginal teachers in teaching the alternative learning system: Marginal Education, Patience and Flexibility, Inclusive Evaluation and Team Engagement.

Marginal Education. This theme reflects the focus on teachers who work with marginalized students within the context of the Alternative Learning System (ALS). These educators often teach in non-traditional settings and cater to students who may have various responsibilities outside of school, such as work or family care.

Marginal Teachers in the context of ALS are those group of educators who teachers diversified learners in all aspects (IDI_P2).

A marginal teacher in the context of ALS is a teacher who have less interest in the implementation of the program which covers the Basic Literacy Program, Elementary and Junior High School (IDI_P5).

According to IDI_P2, marginal teachers are those who teach diversified learners in all aspects. This definition underscores the inclusive nature of their role, emphasizing

the ability to cater to a broad spectrum of students with varying educational needs, backgrounds, and learning styles.

Similarly, IDI_P5 presents a contrasting view, defining marginal teachers as those who exhibit less interest in implementing ALS programs. This perspective highlights a potential gap in teacher motivation or commitment, especially in delivering the Basic Literacy Program and curricula for Elementary and Junior High School levels.

The statement implies that there is a clear need for continuous professional development to equip ALS teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively teach a diverse range of learners. This includes training in inclusive teaching strategies, multicultural education, and special education.

Besides, research on teacher motivation highlights the importance of teacher commitment in the effective implementation of educational programs. Also, literature on educating marginalized groups, such as those with physical disabilities or from diverse racial backgrounds, underscores the unique challenges and approaches required in these settings (K. Yamamoto, 2022).

Moreover, the overarching theme that emerges from these statements is Resilient Teaching. This theme encapsulates the qualities of patience, perseverance, empathy, creativity, flexibility, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, and a positive attitude, all of which are vital for educators in challenging and diverse learning environments, especially when teaching marginalized students.

I consider to be the most important qualities or skills for a teacher working with marginal students in the ALS are patience, empathy, creativity, flexibility, communication skills, knowledge of the subject matter and positive attitude (IDI_P3).

As an ALS Teacher, the most important qualities or skills that can be considered in teaching marginal students are patience, perseverance, innovative, flexible as well as with a kind heart in which these abilities and skills will help teacher catering marginal students (IDI_P7).

As reflected by the statements of participants 3 and 7 these are fundamental virtues for any educator, but they hold special significance in the context of ALS. Marginalized students often face numerous challenges that can impede their learning process, such as socio-economic barriers, learning disabilities, or emotional struggles. Teachers must exhibit patience to understand and accommodate these challenges, and perseverance to continually support students despite any setbacks.

This implies that the teachers who exhibit patience and empathy can better connect with marginalized students, who often face unique challenges. This connection fosters a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment, leading to increased student engagement and better learning outcomes. By understanding and addressing the individual needs of each student, teachers can tailor their approach to maximize learning effectiveness.

Similarly, empathy in teaching, as explored by Mercer and Reynolds (2014), involves understanding students' emotions and perspectives, which is crucial for building trust. Kindness, as per Jenkins and Fredrickson (2013), fosters a nurturing environment, encouraging student engagement and resilience.

Creativity in teaching, according to Robinson (2011), involves thinking outside the traditional pedagogical frameworks to engage students effectively. Innovation in teaching methods, as highlighted by Wagner (2012), is particularly important for marginalized students who might not fit into the conventional education system.

However, the theme that encapsulates these practices is Inclusive Evaluation. This theme highlights the focus on accommodating different learning styles and phases of students through a range of assessment techniques, ensuring a comprehensive and fair evaluation of each student's progress.

In assessing learning outcomes and progress of marginal students in the ALS, I utilized functional literacy test (Pre and Post Test), summative test every one a week and utilized the ILA or the Individual Learning Agreement updated every month to assess learner's progress (IDI_P2).

To assess the progress and learning outcomes of the marginal students in the ALS, I make sure that I will use an essential and varied assessment methods to cater the different learning styles and to provide them constructive feedback to address their specific needs considering that they are learning by their own phase (IDI_P8).

Functional literacy tests, administered as pre and post-tests, are critical in measuring students' basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills before and after the instructional period. This approach, as indicated in IDI_P2, helps in understanding the initial skill level of the students and gauging their progress over time. Such tests are instrumental in identifying areas where students have improved and where further instruction is needed.

Furthermore, the statement implies that the focus on varied and flexible assessment methods in ALS caters specifically to the needs of marginalized students, who may not thrive under conventional education systems. By providing assessments that consider their unique circumstances and learning phases, ALS educators are better equipped to support these students in overcoming educational barriers.

Furthermore, the theme that emerges from these practices is Team Engagement. This theme highlights the importance of teamwork, regular meetings, shared decision-making, and resource sharing among teachers, administrators, and support staff to foster a supportive environment for the success of marginal learners in the Alternative Learning System.

I collaborate with other teachers, administrators or support staff to ensure the success of marginal student in the ALS through regular meetings, sharing information, coordination of services, professional development, data analysis and parent and community engagement (IDI_P3).

How do I collaborate with my colleagues in the ALS? Is that the questions? How do I collaborate with my colleagues so I meetings or meets once a week and our conversations are actually done online since that we have group chat or gc I think we ask questions, we share learning materials, we try to discuss or brainstorm any

problem in relation to ALS specifically to our students. That's how I collaborate, I ask questions (FGD_P4).

The sharing of information, learning materials, and resources, as described in FGD_P4, is crucial for creating a supportive educational environment. By pooling knowledge and materials, educators can enhance their teaching strategies and provide more comprehensive support to their students. This collaborative effort helps in addressing the diverse needs of marginalized students more effectively.

This statement implies that the emphasis on collaboration, as described in all three statements, implies that a team-based approach is essential for the success of students in the ALS. By working together, teachers, administrators, and support staff can pool their expertise and resources, leading to more effective and comprehensive educational strategies. This teamwork is likely to result in enhanced educational outcomes for marginalized students.

Research has consistently highlighted the significance of collaborative practices in educational settings. Hargreaves (2019) emphasizes that collaboration among teachers, administrators, and support staff leads to improved teaching strategies and student outcomes. This is particularly crucial in ALS where educators deal with diverse and complex student needs.

Issues And Concerns Encountered by Marginal Teachers Pertaining to Teaching Alternative Learning System

In this section, it identifies four themes that emerge from the issues and concerns encountered by marginal teachers pertaining to teaching alternative learning system: Resource Deficiency, Infrastructure Limitations, Time Efficiency, and Needs Recognition.

The first theme emerged from the issues and concerns encountered by marginal teachers pertaining to teaching alternative learning system was Resource Deficiency. This theme of resource deficiency extends to the professional development of teachers. Marginal teachers often lack access to training and development programs that are essential for honing their teaching skills and staying updated with the latest educational methodologies. This situation leaves them ill-equipped to handle the diverse and complex needs of ALS learners, who often require more individualized and innovative teaching approaches due to their varied backgrounds and learning challenges. Thus, various statements of the participants revealed below:

In addressing challenges and barriers, seeking assistance from other teachers, administrators and stakeholders are highly recommended for the betterment and improvement of ALS program (IDI_P2).

Addressing unique challenges and barriers faced by marginal teachers in the ALS by asking help to co-teachers, administrators and staff (FGD_P1).

The statements from IDI_P1, IDI_P2, and FGD_P1 these statements underscore a collective approach to problem-solving in education, where mentorship and collaboration are key strategies for overcoming the unique challenges faced by ALS teachers.

This implies that the emphasis on seeking mentorship and assistance points to a broader need for ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers. This development is not just in teaching methodologies but also in managing practical aspects like classroom management, time management, and adapting teaching styles to diverse environments.

Nevertheless, research on collaborative problem-solving in educational settings, such as the work of Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker (2011) in “Professional communities and student achievement – A meta-analysis,” supports the idea that sharing resources and solving problems collectively leads to better educational outcomes. This research underlines the importance of teachers and administrators working together to address challenges in ALS.

Nonetheless, the focus on equity and inclusion, especially in addressing the needs of marginal learners, is a key theme in contemporary educational research. Ainscow (2016), in “Struggles for Equity in Education: The selected works of Mel Ainscow,” discusses strategies for creating more inclusive school systems that cater to diverse student populations, including those with special needs or from marginalized backgrounds.

Although, Infrastructure Limitations was another theme emerged which Despite these limitations, ALS teachers are often required to adapt and find creative solutions, such as using non-traditional spaces for classrooms or seeking alternative methods to deliver education. This resilience is commendable but also points to the need for systemic improvements in infrastructure to support both teachers and learners. Thus, the significant responses of the participants revealed below:

In addressing challenges and barriers, seeking assistance from other teachers, administrators and stakeholders are highly recommended for the betterment and improvement of ALS program (IDI_P3).

I guess, it is most challenging problem in alternative learning system is the inconsistent attendance of the learners and other concerns. So somehow some of the als students were also working to support their families. However if those learners are prompted into modular and blended learning, the modules will come out. One of the challenges also, is that we don't have a formal ding-ding to have our classes to begun. For example in one of my community learning system we are having our classes in the kapilya or a small church. The area is not that good and the building is not that conducive for learning, if the rain is about to begin we have just to stop our classes because I don't want my also learners to get soak in the rain. Another is that, if we have our classes but need internet connection there are some areas that we cannot done our activities because of the lack of internet connection. But for me as a goal, I guess the most problem and challenges encountered in alternative learning system is somehow is to put up and fit those learners to continue their studies. Kasi along the way, the learners will meet some problems such as families and somehow they will lose hope na titigil na lang ako sa als. Somehow, the motivation of the teacher is very important to hold on to those als learners (IDI_P4).

As an ALS teacher, we find ways and means to overcome challenges and barriers we face every day. Everyday is a challenge for us on how to reach out our learners who lived in the mountain. Challenges on how to maintain the attendance of the learners until the end of the school year. To do that, we adjust ourselves and cope up with the life of our learners. We conduct home visitation on far flung areas (FGD_P4).

IDI_P3 and IDI_P4 seeking assistance from fellow teachers, administrators, and stakeholders underscores the importance of a collaborative approach. This strategy is crucial for pooling resources, sharing effective practices, and fostering a supportive community that is essential for the improvement of the ALS program.

Even though, the statement implies that the diverse challenges faced by ALS learners, such as balancing education with work or family responsibilities, imply a significant need for flexible and adaptable education models. Modular and blended learning approaches become essential to cater to these varied needs.

In contrast, David A. Kolb's theory emphasizes that learning is an active process where knowledge is constructed through experiences. Hands-on, experiential activities are key to this process, particularly for adult learners who benefit from directly applying knowledge to real-life situations (Kolb, D. A. 1984).

Conversely, Tomlinson, a leader in differentiated instruction, argues that teaching should be adapted to students' varying readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. This approach is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of marginal learners (Tomlinson, C. A. "The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners," 2014).

But the theme **Inefficiency of Time** which ALS teachers often deals with a wide range of responsibilities, from instructional duties to addressing individual student needs, managing resources, and engaging with stakeholders. Time efficiency in this context means strategically organizing and prioritizing these tasks to ensure that each responsibility receives the necessary attention without overwhelming the teacher. Thus, the significant remarks of the participants revealed below:

The keys to managing challenges will be creating systems, using your time efficiently and keeping your priorities in check (IDI_P5).

Barriers and challenges are normal in every situation or any kind of work. As an ALS teacher, working with marginal students there are several challenges and barriers that I encountered such as lack of facilities, supplies and of course learners attitude but I address those problems through adapting new ideas and being innovative and flexible. And of course, find stakeholders that will help in implementing the program (IDI_P7).

Every teacher has its own unique challenges. As an ALS teacher, we have a lot of barriers and challenges we face along the way as we deliver learning to our learners but we put extra effort and perseverance to overcome all the challenges. Asking support to our stakeholders and from the community, that's one way of overcoming challenges in the field as an ALS teacher (FGD_P7).

The statements from IDI_P5 and FGD_P7 emphasize on creating systems suggests the importance of establishing structured, organized methods for dealing with various issues. This could involve developing specific routines, protocols, or strategies that help manage teaching responsibilities more efficiently and effectively.

Yet, this implies that the focus on using time efficiently highlights the need for ALS teachers to develop strong time-management skills. This is crucial in balancing the diverse needs of marginal students, administrative responsibilities, and personal commitments. Efficient time management can lead to more productive classrooms and less teacher burnout.

Instead, setting achievable goals is a well-established strategy in education. It aligns with the goal-setting theory by Locke and Latham (1990), which posits that individuals are more motivated when they have specific, challenging, and achievable goals. In the context of marginal students, researchers like Pintrich and Schunk (2002) emphasize the importance of setting proximal goals that are within the students' reach, which can enhance their self-efficacy and motivation.

Despite this, positive feedback is a cornerstone of motivation. Educational psychologists, such as Hattie and Timperley (2007), have shown that feedback that is timely, specific, and focused on the task, rather than the individual, can have a substantial impact on student motivation and learning outcomes. It aligns with the principles of formative assessment and growth mindset.

Notably, the theme Needs Recognition encompasses strategies that involve fostering a supportive and optimistic atmosphere for marginalized students. This theme emphasizes the importance of maintaining open channels of communication and providing a positive perspective to address their socio-emotional needs. Educators who prioritize this theme aim to create an environment where students feel heard, encouraged, and valued. Key elements of this theme include offering guidance, listening attentively, and maintaining a constructive outlook to inspire and uplift students. Thus, various statements of the participants revealed below:

Addressing the unique challenges and barriers faced by marginal teachers in ALS involves recognizing the specific needs and implementing supportive measures. Example, professional development, opportunities. Provide targeted professional development opportunities that address the specific challenges faced by the marginal teachers. Focusing in alternative learning system methods or classroom management, strategies and work with diverse students population and mentorship program, peer collaboration, inclusive training programs, flexible teaching models. It is also important to have resource allocation, feedback and evaluation, advocacy support from the barangays, from the community, from your co-teachers, co-als implementers. Community engagement (IDI_P6).

Addressing all the challenges is necessary. At kailangan talaga ito bigyan ng atensyon. But in terms of the unique challenges na hinaharap ng mga marginal teachers, ang hirap ipaglaban kasi they are few in the population of the teachers at dahil sa liit ng populasyon na yon, hindi sila marinig sa kanilang mga hinaing.

So for me, to address this unique challenges, and barriers na hinaharap ng mga marginal teachers I encourage them na it is necessary for us, marginal teachers na ipakita sa kanila ang ating mga sitwasyon sa pamamagitan ng research upang mayron tayong valid and reliable basis sa lahat ng mga claims natin. At dahil doon, sa pamamagitan nun, pwede itong mabigyan ng karapat-dapat na solusyon na angkop at naayon sa ating mga pangangailangan (IDI_P8).

ALS teachers faces many challenges especially in the field. ALS teachers sometimes provide in term of supply for the learners because we don't have MOOE in ALS (FGD_P5).

There's a clear acknowledgment of the distinct and specific challenges faced by marginal teachers in ALS. This recognition is the first step in addressing their unique needs effectively.

This implies that the statements emphasize the need to recognize the specific challenges faced by marginal teachers in ALS. There is an implication for the education system to provide more targeted support to these teachers, who often work under more challenging conditions with fewer resources.

Nevertheless, researchers in the field of educational psychology have long recognized the importance of these strategies. For example, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) emphasizes the role of social interaction and communication in cognitive development. Additionally, the positive psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) highlights the benefits of maintaining a positive outlook to enhance motivation and resilience. These theories align with the notion that open communication and a positive perspective can contribute to students' socio-emotional well-being and academic success.

In any case, these practices are in line with contemporary educational research on culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive educators recognize the importance of acknowledging students' cultural identities, experiences, and perspectives. By building relationships that are inclusive and culturally respectful, educators can create an environment where students feel a sense of belonging and are more motivated to engage in their studies.

Marginal Teachers Perceive the Impact of The ALS Program on The Learners and Their Communities

In this section, there were four themes that emerged related to marginal teachers perceive the impact of the ALS program on the learners and their communities: Skills Development, Empathy and Collaborative, Learners Engagement, and Professional Development.

The first theme that emerged was the theme **Skills Development**. This theme focuses on the enhancement of personal development and goals, as well as the acquisition of essential life skills. It emphasizes the use of "Life skills mydev modules" and "UNESCO modules" to foster personal growth and development. Additionally, the theme suggests that the utilization of these modules contributes to the improvement of learning strands 1 to 6. This theme underscores the significance of skill-building as a key

component of the educational process for marginalized students. Thus, the remarks of the participants revealed below:

I utilized life skills mydev modules for the first two months to enhance personal development and goals. I also utilized UNESCO modules for the learning strands 1 to 6 (IDI_P2).

The resources and teaching materials I utilized to enhance the learning experience as marginal teachers are those provided to us such as the life skills mydev modules, UNESCO modules for learning strand 1 to 6 and we also utilized forms, the RPL or review of prior learning forms, the assessment forms 1 and 2 (IDI_P3)

We utilize modules provided by the department, the UNESCO modules. Life skills modules, RPL forms and Assessment forms. We also utilize curriculum guide of ALS (FGD_P1).

The engagement with UNESCO modules for learning strands 1 to 6 (IDI_P2) signifies a commitment to holistic education. UNESCO is a renowned international organization with a strong focus on promoting quality education worldwide. Utilizing their modules suggests that you have access to well-structured and comprehensive educational resources. Learning across these six strands likely exposed you to a diverse range of subjects, broadening your knowledge base and allowing you to provide a more comprehensive education to your students.

This statement implies that taken to enhance personal development and improve your educational experience as a marginal teacher. These actions demonstrate a commitment to self-improvement and the pursuit of knowledge despite potential challenges in your teaching environment.

The use of Life Skills MyDev modules aligns with the literature emphasizing the importance of life skills education. Life skills are considered essential competencies that enable individuals to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life. Research suggests that integrating life skills into educational curricula can lead to improved personal development, including enhanced communication skills, decision-making abilities, and emotional intelligence (UNESCO, 2017).

Moreover, the incorporation of UNESCO modules for learning strands 1 to 6 reflects a commitment to a holistic and comprehensive educational approach. UNESCO is recognized globally for its contributions to education. Studies have shown that curriculum materials developed by reputable organizations like UNESCO can significantly improve the quality of education, ensuring a well-rounded and culturally relevant learning experience (Barton & McCully, 2019).

In the same way, another theme emerged was **Empathy and Collaboration**. This theme emphasizes the importance of promoting empathy and collaboration in the classroom. Empathy in education involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others, which is crucial for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, refers to educational approaches that involve students working together to solve problems, complete tasks, or learn new concepts. This collaboration fosters a sense of community and mutual respect among students, as they

learn to value each other's contributions and perspectives. Furthermore, by incorporating cultural-related lessons, educators can deepen students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures, thereby promoting a more empathetic and interconnected classroom community. Thus, the remarks of the participants revealed below

Promoting positive and inclusive learning environment for all students including marginal students through respecting everyone's opinion, cultures and traditions. Use inclusive teaching strategies and approaches and treating them equally and giving them the best education they deserve (IDI_P7).

To promote a positive and inclusive learning environment, it is necessary as a teacher to establish clear expectation. Number one, for respect and number two for understanding. Respect and understanding their own differences and background. By starting that one, it is really important in promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment (IDI_P8).

Treat your students fairly to employ positive and inclusive learning environment. Emphasize cultural-related lessons, collaborative learning and promoting empathy and understanding (FGD_P2).

According to the statement of participants, the emphasis on creating a positive, respectful, and inclusive learning environment where all students, including those who are marginalized, are valued and supported. This involves a multifaceted approach that includes respect, understanding, clear expectations, inclusive teaching strategies, collaborative learning, and fair treatment, all aimed at providing the best possible education for every student.

This implies that inclusivity in education is not just a moral imperative but a practical necessity. It recognizes that each student, irrespective of their background, abilities, or identities, brings unique value to the learning environment. Inclusive education ensures that all students feel seen, heard, and understood, which is essential for their academic and personal growth. This approach promotes a sense of belonging, which research shows is critical for academic success and emotional well-being.

Also, the statements' focus on respecting and integrating students' cultures and traditions into the curriculum aligns with the principles of culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education. These approaches emphasize the importance of recognizing and valuing the cultural backgrounds of students as assets in the learning process. Research by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) and Geneva Gay (2000) has shown that when teachers are responsive to the cultural backgrounds of their students, it leads to more effective teaching and higher levels of student engagement and achievement.

The emphasis on empathy and understanding in the classroom is supported by research in social-emotional learning (SEL). SEL programs, which focus on developing skills such as empathy, self-awareness, and relationship building, have been shown to improve academic outcomes, reduce behavioral problems, and enhance students' ability to relate to people from different backgrounds (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins et al., 2004).

Furthermore, **Learners Engagement** was another theme which emerged. This theme revolves around the unique challenges and needs of adult learners, especially

those who are working parents. Adult learners often benefit from an educational approach that acknowledges and integrates their life experiences, work responsibilities, and family commitments. Teaching strategies that align with their real-world experiences and challenges are more effective in engaging this demographic. Adult learners typically have a wealth of experiences that can be tapped into to make learning more relevant and impactful. Hence, the significant statements of the participants depicted below:

Identify a problem or issue. Create inferences on why the problem exists and how it can be solved (IDI_P1).

Encourage learners to critical and problem-solving skills through real -life problems or situations, allow for thinking practice, promote interaction among students and ask open-ended questions (IDI_P3).

As an ALS teacher, I provide real-life scenarios to promote critical and problem-solving skills among my learners because most of my learners were adult and working parents so they are more into real-life situations and they can learn easily by connecting your lessons to their daily life scenario (FGD_P1).

Adult learners, especially those who are working parents, often find it challenging to engage with academic content that feels disconnected from their daily realities. By integrating real-life scenarios into the learning process, the education becomes more tangible and directly applicable to their personal and professional situations. This relevance increases their motivation and engagement, as they can see the practical benefits of what they are learning.

This statement implies that the approach also stresses the importance of interaction among students and the use of open-ended questions. This method promotes a more dynamic, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning environment. Adult learners benefit from this interaction by sharing their diverse experiences and perspectives, which enriches the learning experience for everyone involved. It also fosters a sense of community and mutual support among learners, which is particularly beneficial for adult learners who might be balancing educational pursuits with other responsibilities.

Additionally, research in situated cognition suggests that knowledge is best acquired and more fully understood when learned in the context of its application (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). Authentic learning tasks that mimic real-world challenges enhance learning as they provide a context for learners to apply their knowledge. Using real-life scenarios in teaching provides this authentic context, making learning more meaningful and effective for adult learners.

Problem-Based Learning, a method where learners gain knowledge and skills by working on complex, real-world problems, aligns closely with the approach described in the statements. PBL has been shown to enhance problem-solving skills and critical thinking (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). By engaging with real-life scenarios, adult learners can better understand and retain concepts as they apply them to solve realistic problems.

Additionally, **Professional Development** was the theme emerged that encompasses the need for continuous learning, adaptation, and growth for educators. It emphasizes staying updated with technological advancements, participating in seminars and workshops, and engaging in professional communities to enhance teaching skills and

adapt to the evolving landscape of education. The significant statements of the participants revealed below:

Attend seminars, whenever possible. Stay up-to-date with news on educational oriented technology. And last, become active in social media group made for educators (IDI_P1).

Attend seminar-workshop and trainings to improve professional growth (IDI_P2).

As for me, attending seminar-workshops, trainings and upskilling ALS teachers to provide them up-to-date and will improve their teaching skills where in the world of education is changing and innovating (FGD_P1).

The participant highlights the necessity for educators to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in education-oriented technology, recognizing its growing impact on teaching and learning.

This implies that the emphasis on attending seminars and workshops underscores the ongoing need for educators to engage in continuous learning and development. This is crucial for keeping pace with new teaching methodologies, educational theories, and best practices.

However, professional development for educators, encompassing seminars, workshops, and training, is widely recognized as crucial for improving teaching quality and student outcomes. Desimone (2009) defines effective professional development as ongoing, experiential, collaborative, and linked to practice. According to Guskey (2000), professional development activities should be results-driven, focusing on enhancing educators' skills to improve student achievement. Research by Avalos (2011) in the "Journal of Education for Teaching" supports the notion that continuous professional development (CPD) is essential in adapting to educational changes and innovations.

In addition, the integration of technology in education has been a significant focus in recent educational research. Mishra and Koehler (2006) developed the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, emphasizing the importance of integrating technological knowledge with pedagogical and content knowledge. In their study, they argue that educators need to stay abreast of technological advancements to effectively integrate these tools into their teaching. A study by Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) in the "Journal of Research on Technology in Education" suggests that technology integration is most successful when teachers have both the belief in its benefits and the technical skills to implement it.

IMPLICATIONS

The research implications were derived from a detailed summary of results, providing critical insights and understanding into the study's core findings.

1. The thematic analysis underscores the complex nature of teaching within the ALS. Marginal teachers navigate through 'Marginal Education' challenges, demonstrating 'Patience and Flexibility' in their approach. The need for 'Inclusive Evaluation' methods and 'Team Engagement' highlights the importance of

collaborative and adaptive strategies in addressing the unique educational needs within ALS. This suggests a need for targeted support and resources to enhance these teachers' capabilities. Educational policies should focus on developing inclusive evaluation tools and fostering a collaborative environment that accommodates the diverse challenges of ALS teaching.

2. The study reveals significant operational challenges faced by marginal teachers in the ALS, including 'Resource Deficiency' and 'Infrastructure Limitations'. The difficulties in 'Time Efficiency' and recognizing the specific 'Needs' of ALS learners underscore the necessity for tailored support and infrastructure improvements. This means that the policymakers and educational administrators should prioritize resource allocation, infrastructural enhancements, and efficient time management strategies. Recognizing and addressing the specific needs of ALS students and teachers is crucial for the system's effectiveness.
3. Marginal teachers perceive the ALS program as instrumental in 'Skills Development', fostering 'Empathy and Collaboration', enhancing 'Learner Engagement', and contributing to their 'Professional Development'. This underscores the program's multifaceted impact on both learners and educators. These insights call for a curriculum that emphasizes practical skills, collaborative learning, and engagement strategies. Additionally, professional development opportunities for teachers should be a focus to further enrich the ALS's impact on communities.

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