Exploring the Learning Action Cell Implementation and its Challenges in Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

The study explored the implementation of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) and its challenges in public elementary schools. Specifically, it answered the following questions: 1. What is the understanding of teachers on LAC? 2. What is the engagement of teachers in the implementation of LAC? 3. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of LAC? 4. What are the strategies employed to address the challenges? and 5. What intervention plan can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

An exploratory research design, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis techniques, was employed. Forty-five (45), out of 51 respondents, participated in the quantitative part, while 25 teachers and school heads from five schools participated during focus group discussions (FGD's) and interview for the qualitative part. Thematic analysis was used to identify teachers' understanding of LAC, its challenges, and for strategies employed. Mean was used to identify the teacher's level of engagement on the School Learning Action Cell (SLAC).

Major findings revealed that LAC served as an opportunity for teachers to reflect on teaching practices, engage in collaborative learning, and promote professional development. Teachers displayed high engagement in various LAC activities, group discussions and individual and group action planning. Challenges met in conducting LAC were conflicts in schedule conflicts, limited ICT knowledge of teachers, resource availability, and topic prioritization.

The major conclusions indicated that despite challenges, integrating LAC with regular teaching responsibilities can foster collaborative learning and exemplify best practices in the educational workplace. The study underscores active teacher participation, accountability, and fostering collaboration as effective strategies for successful LAC implementation.

Keywords

School Learning Action Cell, Teachers' Engagement, Teachers' Collaboration, Teachers' Understanding

INTRODUCTION

The Learning Action Cell (LAC) strategy is an initiative that has lately attracted interest. Teachers have been provided access to LAC as a reflective and collaborative space where they can engage in professional development activities, exchange best practices, and work together to address issues with their instructional approaches. However, collaborative learning sessions have become a professional development strategy with the potential to improve teachers' understanding and engagement. Collaborative learning is widely acknowledged also as an effective educational strategy that supports and equips teachers for the demands of the modern world. Teachers encounter a variety of challenges as they work to integrate collaborative learning.

Different countries have unique educational systems, policies, and cultural contexts that influence the implementation and effectiveness of collaborative learning sessions. In the Philippines, the Department of Education is certain that professional development initiatives must be offered to empower teachers. The Learning Action Cell, as a K to 12 Basic Education Program for School-Based Continuing Professional Development Strategy for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning policy, has been put into effect. This is In line with the third pillar of Sulong Edukalidad which focuses on the Teachers upskilling and reskilling. The Learning Action Cell, as described in DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 is a group of teachers who participate in collaborative learning sessions to address common problems that arise in the school, supervised by the head of the school or a certified LAC Leader.

The priorities of LAC are carried out through various activities. These include stimuli (such as lectures, orientation, coaching, workshops, development, and usage of instructional materials), followed by group discussion of potential next steps. The program's final activity involves individual and group action planning to complete specific tasks in the classroom.

There are however difficulties in implementing LAC in public elementary schools. Naparan et al. revealed that the teachers experience intrinsic, extrinsic, and system challenges and theses includes unpreparedness in teaching multi-grade, low multi-grade allowances, stress, language barrier, classroom management struggles, lack of resources, danger in going to stations, workload, absenteeism, lack of stakeholders' support, and lack of trainings.[1] These difficulties may result from organizational, cultural, and logistical aspects that affect the effective adoption of the LAC strategy. The key to maximizing the potential advantages of

LAC and supporting teacher development and student progress is to recognize and overcome these obstacles. It is essential to look into the challenges that teachers have experienced when setting up and leading LAC sessions.

This study, therefore, intends to explore the teachers' levels of engagement with the way LAC sessions are run, how it affects their professional growth, and determined how teachers deal with challenges with their understanding and engagement during collaborative learning sessions in public elementary schools.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Collaborative theory by Colbry, et al. and rooted to the Collaborative learning theory of Lev Vygotsky's The collaborative learning theory states that peer-to-peer learning is a crucial component of the collaborative learning philosophy, it encourages critical thinking in the school. The collaborative learning hypothesis postulates that group learning can aid in the growth of a person's leadership, self-management, oral communication, and higher-order cognitive capacities. [2]

This theory of collaborative learning also supports the Learning Action Cell's policy statement, which states that the essential elements in the process are ongoing problem solving or collaborative learning within a common area of professional interest, self-directed learning, reflective practice leading to action and self-evaluation, and collective competence. The DepEd uses a variety of teacher professional development strategies to enhance teaching and learning. Yet, majority of these involve top-down procedures that convey or share expert information.

In the context of the study, school heads and teachers might be grounded in the Collaborative learning theory which is rooted to Zone of Proximal Development, it is a theory developed by Lev Vygotsky to promote critical thinking, which contends that task performance as motivated by goals, are the foundations of collaborative learning. The collaborative learning is used to describe a variety of educational strategies that involve students' or teachers' joint efforts to learn together. It refers to both approaches to education and learning environments where students, or in this case, teachers, participate in group activities and are reliant upon and accountable to one another. One of its main goals is to make it possible for teachers to collaborate in groups in order to complete a learning activity or seek for material understanding, meaning, or answers. As a result, it has a dialogic and multimodal structure. The fact that SLAC is a collaboration that takes the shape of a partnership when coming to an agreement, formulating a strategy, and putting it into action is seen as making this theory an ideal one to anchor this study. Not only can this theory be applied to surveys to assess the level of teacher engagement, but it can also be utilized to analyze and create intervention plan.

This collaborative learning theory offers the framework that is an enabling process for the utilization of LACs in the classroom. It aims to improve teachers' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes based on established competencies connected to the K-12 curriculum through the process of collaboration.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study explored on the implementation of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) and its challenges and strategies to address them in public elementary schools. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What is the understanding of teachers on Learning Action Cell (LAC)?
2. What is the engagement of teachers in the implementation of Learning Action Cell?
3. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of Learning Action Cell?
4. What are the strategies employed to address the challenges?
5. What intervention plan may be proposed based from the findings of the study?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The exploratory research design was used to provide answers to the objectives of this study. Both the qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed.

The Qualitative method was used in determining of the understanding of teachers on Learning Action Cell (LAC), as well as, in the challenges and strategies experienced in the implementation of the School Learning Action Cell (SLAC).

On other hand, the quantitative approach was used to determine the teachers' level of engagement on the SLAC along stimuli (lectures, orientation, coaching, development, and usage of instructional materials), group discussion and individual and group action planning.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 45 (out of 51) teachers for quantitative part of the study. These are the teachers who have rendered at least 1 year of service in the Department of Education. Some of the teachers were not able to participate in the data gathering procedure because they were on leave.

The locale of the study was Calabanga West District. The Calabanga West District consists of eight (8) small Schools namely: Balongay Elementary School, San Bernardino Elementary School, Punta Elemantary Scool, Balatasan Elementary School, Lope Guisic Elementary School, Siba-o Elementary School, Dominorog Elementary School and Fabrica Elementary School. These small schools conduct SLAC sessions as one school. From the eight (8) Schools, five (5) are supervised by a teacher-in- Charge while three (3) are handled by a Head Teacher.

For the qualitative approach, twenty-five (25) teachers and school heads from 5 schools voluntarily participated during the focus group discussion (FGD) and interview.

Research Instruments

The study utilized two data-generating methods: a survey questionnaire and an interview guide. The Survey questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data on teachers' engagement on SLAC.

The first section of the questionnaire was about respondent's profile. This part asked the age, gender, School, Civil Status, years in service, Designation, Educational Attainment and topics of SLAC session they attended.

The modified standardized tool was based on LAC Form 4: LAC Engagement Report, This standardized instrument is provided by Deped to be accomplished by each LAC member at the end of every LAC session. The indicators in the questionnaire were sub-divided into three activities in SLAC: Stimuli; (lectures, orientation, coaching, development and usage of instructional materials), Group discussion and Individual and Group action planning.

The instrument underwent the processes of validation and pilot testing in two small schools in Calabanga East District, namely; Tomagodtod Elementary School and Pinada Elementary School. The reliability statistics for the survey stimuli consisted of 20 items and the Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency and reliability. The result of the Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was $\alpha = .975$ (0.90 and above) indicating that the survey questionnaire was excellent. The Group Discussion consisted of 7 items and the Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was $\alpha = .942$, an excellent coefficient. The Individual and Group Action Planning had 4 items and the Cronbach's Alpha for the survey was $\alpha = .902$, also as excellent rating.

A set of interview questions was used during the FGD for the teachers and school heads to be able to identify the challenges encountered and strategies employed in the conduct of school learning action cell.

The Interview questions focused on teachers' understanding of the purpose, structure, and objectives of the SLAC, explored their level of engagement, contributions, and responsibilities within the context of the SLAC and questions that aimed to identify any challenges or obstacles faced by the interviewee during the implementation of the SLAC or the creation of the action plan.

Data Analysis

To determine the understanding of teachers on Learning Action Cell (LAC) a thematic approach was used in the analysis and interpretation of patterns and themes based on the result of the discussion.

The thematic analysis was also used to determine the challenges encountered and strategies employed in the conduct of School Learning Action Cell. According to Maguire & Delahunt, the thematic analysis is used to identify themes, such as patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This consists of summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered and making sense of them.[7]

The following steps were adopted in analyzing the data gathered for qualitative data (Byrne). Phase one consisted of the familiarization with the data transcribed during the interviews conducted with the teachers in Calabanga West District. Results were transcribed in full to have a sense of how the participants answered the problems raised in this study. A repetitive careful reading of the transcripts of the teachers was made per interview question to avoid any researcher's influence based on prior knowledge and experience in the field. While reading the transcripts, the researcher noted key themes and interesting information. This was done so that the researcher becomes fully immersed with the whole data set and collected initial points of interest. This step helped the researcher to be well- informed about the depth and breadth of the content of the transcriptions. Phase two focused on generating initial nodes. All the transcripts were coded after reading the transcripts carefully for several times.

Phase three was the searching for themes. At this stage, the process of coding (and theme development) is flexible and organic, and very often evolves throughout the analytical process (Braun et al.). This was stated with a long list of the nodes that were identified across all applicable transcripts per problem. This was done to find out the patterns and relationships between and across the entire data set. The initial codes were further analyzed considering how different nodes could be combined to form an overarching theme. Hence, the purpose in this step was on the analysis of the broader themes rather than the categories within each theme.

Phase four focused on reviewing the themes for refinement and presenting each theme and sub-themes or categories more systematically. Themes serves as the researcher's reflective and thoughtful engagement with the data and analysis with the analytic process (Braun and Clarke). The researcher checked the themes for internal homogeneity (coherence and consistency) and external heterogeneity (distinctions between themes), All coded themes were reviewed. These themes were either renamed of clustered as sub-themes to check for commonalities. Some new codes emerged on this stage, some were merged, and some were discarded because they were not seen as substantial in the findings.

Phase five focused on defining and naming the final themes and categories. The aim for this phase is to further refine and define the themes. (Braun and Clarke) At this last stage, the researcher interpreted the data and analyzed the key characteristics as laid out in the created themes and categories. [6]

The qualitative findings were connected to the context of the overall study. In addition, the information revealed from the in-depth interview was categorized by considering the recurrence of reaction from the participant.

From the qualitative findings, the researcher came up with the framework that discussed the interplay of the mentioned challenges and strategies in the conduct of the School Learning Action Cell.

The researcher used mean to determine the teacher's level

of engagement on the School Learning Action Cell in terms of Stimuli, Group Discussion and Individual and Group Action planning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding of teachers on Learning Action Cell (LAC)

Three themes emerged in the transcript; The SLAC as an opportunity to reflect on teaching practices; SLAC as an opportunity for collaborative learning; and lastly, SLAC as a way of promoting professional development.

SLAC as an opportunity to reflect on teaching practices.

The first theme created Under the Understanding of teachers in SLAC was opportunity to reflect on teaching practices. Here is sample comment that were noted by the respondents:

"It helps us the teachers in teaching us to improved ability in seeing assessing the learners, and also to improve us the teaching learning process. (LGES/P1/2023)

The statements highlighted the teachers comprehension of how SLAC sessions contribute to their professional growth, instructional improvement, and student learning outcomes. These include awareness of the intended outcomes of SLAC, enhancing teaching practices, addressing common challenges, and fostering a culture of continuous learning.

The understanding of on SLAC as an opportunity to reflect on teaching practices varied based on their individual experiences and the specific implementation of SLACs in their school. The teachers however, understood the importance of reflective practice. They perceived SLACs as opportunity to reflect on their teaching approaches, assess student outcomes, and identify areas for improvement.

The results are supported by the finding of Cabral et al. who elaborated that LAC sessions that are held have a significant positive impact on instructors' professional growth. However, it was noted, that it is necessary to set more specific goals on its purpose and importance for teaching and learning. [5] Sessions on innovation and research need to be improved. When creating professional development sessions, it is important to take the diversity of teacher profiles into account.

SLAC as an opportunity for collaborative learning.

Some of the teachers highlighted the advantages of the SLAC as a collaborative learning opportunity for their work and professional growth. These are indicated in their statements:

This is the time when where teachers engage in collaborative learning sessions to solve shared challenges encountered in the school; this is facilitated by the school head as a LAC leader. (BES/P1/2023)

"My understanding about SLAC cell is about a group of teachers who engaged in collaboration/ collaborative

learning session. (BES/P3/2023)

Teachers' understanding of the SLAC as an opportunity for collaborative learning based on their statement is based on their perceptions of how participation in SLAC positively impacts their teaching effectiveness and professional satisfaction. This understanding includes recognizing the value of collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and reflection within SLAC sessions.

The SLAC has numerous opportunities for collaborative learning including supporting data-driven decision making, building a professional learning community, and enhancing instructional techniques. They are important in empowering teachers, promoting a culture of ongoing professional development, and accelerating school-wide progress. In the end, the SLAC improves teaching and learning resulting to better student outcomes.

The answers conform with the findings of Burstow who cited that a comprehensive system of teaching and learning helps students in developing the information, skills, and competencies needed to thrive in the 21st century. It should be viewed as including a well-designed and implemented professional development (PD) like the SLAC sessions. [8] Professional learning should be connected to teachers' experiences during preparation and induction, as well as to teaching standards and evaluation, in order to provide a cohesive framework that supports them across the whole professional continuum.

SLAC as a way of promoting professional development.

In a SLAC teachers have specific roles and responsibilities that contribute to the overall success and effectiveness of the collaborative learning community. Here is a sample teachers' perceptions:

"SLAC gives me and other teachers a chance to become a speaker like the last one or facilitator it enhances their skills and as well a great chance to be able to share valuable knowledge. (BES/P1/2023)

Teachers' understanding of SLAC, as a way of promoting professional development, refers to their awareness of the expectations and active involvement required during SLAC sessions. It includes understanding the need to actively contribute, share experiences, providing feedback, and engaging in reflective discussions to foster collective growth.

To improve their instructional strategies, teachers in SLACs reflect and conduct research. In addition to analyzing student data and soliciting peer feedback, they consider their teaching strategies. Teachers can find opportunities for growth through self-reflection and inquiry, then use practices that are supported by research.

Regarding the SLAC sessions, there is a reasonable level of understanding and positive perception of LAC among teachers. LAC is typically seen positively by teachers in boosting colleagues' collegial collaboration and professional advancement. Some teachers have a thorough understanding while others don't have much of a grasp.

According to their statements, teachers have a fundamental understanding of the goals of national policies and how to contribute to the educational reform program like the SLAC sessions as a Continuing Professional Development Program. Pasilan further elaborated teacher cooperation is essential in carrying out the SLAC for Responsible Management Education. Teachers should possess commitment, a persistent understanding of policy/program concepts, character strength, community involvement, and inventiveness in order to achieve and realize the school's goals. School administrators, as well as instructors, need to show more leadership and devotion.[4]

Based on the result under the understanding of SLAC, it can clearly see that most of the teachers are aware of the existing national and school-based policies being implemented to promote School Learning Action Cell as Continuing Professional Development Program.
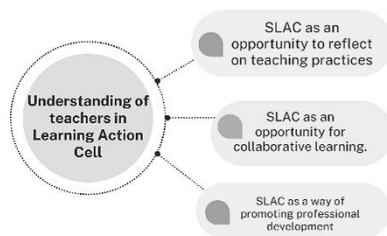

Fig 1. Understanding of Teachers in School Learning Action Cell

This Figure illustrates the concept map constructed based on the analysis of the teachers' understanding of the Learning Action Cell. The themes that emerged were the following: SLAC as an opportunity to reflect on teaching practices: SLAC as an opportunity for collaborative learning: and lastly, SLAC as a way of promoting professional development.

Engagement of Teachers in the School Learning Action Cell through various activities.

The level of engagement of teachers coming from eight (8) schools in Calabanga West District was measured along the following activities in the School Learning Action Cell, Stimuli, Group discussion and Individual and Group Action planning. The SLAC Engagement Assessment tool was used to determine the level of engagement of teachers. Results were presented in the succeeding tables.

Table 1 presents the teachers' engagement in SLAC along Lectures. Mean score obtained from teachers' level of engagement in SLAC along lectures was rated 3.57. Data revealed that the teachers remunerated highest mean score of (3.73) in attentively listening to the speakers during the Lectures. Active participation in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the lectures obtained a mean score of 3.54. The same rating, 3.54 was given to teachers in preparation of the materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the lectures A rating of 3.49 was given to their demonstration of work to others during the

lectures.

Table 1. Teachers Level of Engagement in SLAC along Lectures

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Attentively listens to the speaker during the lectures	3.73	Very High
Comfortably demonstrates work to others during the lectures	3.49	Very High
Actively participates in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving feedback on what colleagues shared during the lectures	3.54	Very High
Prepares the materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the lectures	3.54	Very High
Mean	3.57	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

The data suggest that teachers are highly engaged in sessions that are best taught through lectures. Lectures provided them information and improved their understanding of terms that are new to them. Understanding and listening to lectures enabled them to participate and share their views and opinions. Feedback is discussed and inputted in their teaching-learning process.

Lectures give them a tried-and-true method or strategy for opportunities to learn new things. Pascua cited that every teacher should be properly guided and equipped with the knowledge of the teaching and learning process. [9] This carried through revisiting and reviewing some areas, or concerns in performing the duties and responsibilities of an effective and efficient teacher, according to a school-based continuing professional development strategy for the improvement of teaching and learning.

Table 2. Teachers Level of Engagement in SLAC along Orientation

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Attentively listens to the speaker during the orientation	3.73	Very High
Comfortably demonstrates work to others during the orientation	3.44	Very High
Actively participates in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the orientation	3.56	Very High
Prepares the materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the orientation	3.51	Very High
Mean	3.56	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

Table 2 presents the very high ratings for teachers engagement in SLAC along Orientation. Among the four

indicators, the highest rating was 3.37 for attentively listening to the speaker. Active participation in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the orientation got a mean score of 3.56. A rating of 3.51 was given to the teachers in their preparation of materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the orientation. The lowest score, 3.44, was along the teachers' demonstration of work to others. The mean score of teachers' engagements in SLAC along orientation was 3.56, categorically a very high rating for the engagement of teachers.

Findings indicate that teachers are highly engaged in orientation while serving in educational sessions where participants are introduced to a new area or circumstance. This provides teachers with objective information that makes them feel more secured in their responsibilities. It also boosts their confidence and helps them rapidly adjust to new ideas.

The result of the study showed that teachers are highly involved in orientation since it provides them with a preview of the information they need during a session. It is also crucial to practice orientation habits when applying SLAC learnings to real classroom settings, especially given the time demands associated with dealing with 21st century learners, This is supported by the study of Karthikeyan which emphasized that the teachers are not an exception to the rule when it comes to dealing with the constant changes that affect their outlook on life, especially with today's young adolescents and pupils who are in various stages of life.[10]

Table 3. Teachers Level of Engagement in SLAC along Coaching

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Attentively listens to the speaker during the coaching	3.66	Very High
Comfortably demonstrates work to others during the coaching	3.51	Very High
Actively participates in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the coaching	3.56	Very High
Prepares the materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the coaching	3.51	Very High
Mean	3.56	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

Table 3 presents the teachers engagement in SLAC along Coaching. Data revealed that teachers got a very high rating of 3.66 in attentively listening to the speakers during the Coaching. Active participation in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the coaching ranked second, with a mean of 3.56. Teachers were rated 3.51 for their preparation of materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the coaching and their continuous demonstration of work to others. All ratings were, however, categorically very high.

The data imply that teachers are highly engaged in coaching. Coaching enables teachers to use their knowledge more thoroughly, frequently, and consistently. Through coaching, teachers can strengthen their ability to reflect on and apply what they have learned to their work with students and with one another. Coaching provides space and structure for the reflection that is necessary for learning and growth.

The very high ratings also suggest that teacher's engagement in coaching enhanced their skill and capacity through coaching. This is supported by the study of Filsinger that emphasized that coaching is widely used as a strategy of organizations to enhance workforce diversity. Coaching programs, which are usually integrated in education and other activities to foster professional advancement, is an example of widespread initiatives to increase the representation of women in leadership positions. Coaching for diversity refers to a coaching objective that is particularly stated to assist the organization's diversity target. [11]

The teachers' engagement in SLAC along Development and Usage of Instructional materials are presented in Table 4. Data showed that teachers got a mean score of 3.66 in attentively listening to the speakers during the development and usage of instructional materials. Rank 2, with a mean rating of 3.63 was noted in the indicator: where they comfortably demonstrate work to others and their active participation in SLAC session by sharing assignment and insight, asking question and feed backing. Preparation of needed materials for the attainment of SLAC targets had the lowest rating of 3.56, although still a very high rating. Mean score obtained was 3.62 of teachers' level of engagement in SLAC along development and usage of instructional materials.

Table 4. Teachers Level of Engagement in SLAC along Development and Usage of Instructional materials

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Attentively listens to the speaker during the development and usage of instructional materials.	3.66	Very High
Comfortably demonstrates work to others during the development and usage of instructional materials.	3.63	Very High
Actively participates in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the development and usage of instructional materials.	3.63	Very High
Prepares the materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the development and usage of instructional materials.	3.56	Very High
Mean	3.62	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

The result clearly showed that the teachers are serious in their attendance and listening to speaker. This implies the very good attitude of teachers particularly to topics that they

need in improving their craft. They can discuss their views and insight to others and interact with their co-participants anything that can be used to their betterment was highly interesting to them.

The high mean rating obtained for usage of instructional materials suggests that the teachers are interested and have invested in the development and utilization of instructional materials to enhance their teaching competency. This agrees with the study of Dizon et al. which found that the adequacy of instructional materials and resources of the Social Studies Department should be prioritized in light of the study's findings and recommendations in order to ensure that the content in the 21st Century Skills and ICT Integration and Contextualization, Localization, and Indigenization are highly utilized. [12] To be effective in the area of curriculum contextualization, localization, and indigenization, social studies teachers may improvise authentic and indigenous educational resources.

Table 5. Teachers Level of Engagement in SLAC along Workshop

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Attentively listens to the speaker during the workshop.	3.59	Very High
Comfortably demonstrates work to others during the workshop.	3.54	Very High
Actively participates in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving Feedback on what colleagues shared during the workshop.	3.61	Very High
Prepares the materials needed to achieve the SLAC targets during the workshop.	3.51	Very High
Mean	3.56	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

Shown in Table 5 are the ratings obtained in the teachers engagement in SLAC along workshop. The teachers got the highest rating of 3.61 in their attentively participating in the Lac sessions through their sharing of insights and other form of interaction Rank 2 with a mean rating of 3.59 was their attentively listening to speaker and rank3 with the mean rating of 3.54 was their demonstration of work to other. The lowest score although with a very high rating was 3.51 in the preparation of materials needed to achieve SLAC targets. Mean rating of all 4 indicators was 3.56, a very high one.

The data showed that the teachers are attentive and serious in their engagement in the SLAC along workshop. Workshop is a very interactive type of activity and teachers express that they attain the purpose of the workshop. It is a manifestation that teachers are interacting with the other and each of them supports the attainment of the objective of the activity.

The findings conform with the study of Villanueva where it was noted that implementation of the Learning Action Cell

in the school offers teachers the chance to grow professionally and personally, especially for those who are unable to pursue graduate studies. With the help of this intervention, teachers' skills and competencies can be strengthened. Aiming for quality education, putting learning into practice in the relevant area, and updating current trends in teaching and learning can be explored for relevance and responsiveness to the changing environment. [13]

Table 6 presents the summary of teachers' engagement in SLAC in terms of Stimuli. It can be noted that teachers got the highest rating, 3.62 in the development and usage of instructional materials. Attendance to lectures ranked second with the rating of 3.57, and a rating of 3.56 was given to orientation coaching and workshop. Mean rating obtained for the teachers' level of engagement in SLAC in terms of stimuli was 3.58, a very high rating.

Table 6. Teachers Level of Engagement in SLAC in terms of Stimuli.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Lectures	3.57	Very High
Orientation	3.56	Very High
Coaching	3.56	Very High
Development and Usage of Instructional Materials	3.62	Very High
Workshop	3.56	Very High
Over-all Mean	3.58	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

The result also highlighted the qualitative implications of this study, demonstrating that teachers' understanding of LAC sessions plays a significant role in engaging them to actively participate in various stimuli of LAC sessions. They view SLACs as opportunities to reflect on their teaching approaches, evaluate student progress, and pinpoint areas for enhancement.

These mean that the stimuli require participants to listen attentively to the resource speaker, comprehend what they are saying, respond to and consider what is being said, and retain the information in all the different kinds of stimuli. The inclusive approach of the active participation process has several advantages for an individual's development and wellbeing. A person who actively engages in his own development and wellbeing may feel empowered to make wise decisions that will promote recovery and enhance/maintain overall development and wellbeing. He becomes more motivated, their learning is supported, and their communication is enhanced and encouraged through active participation. These keep both participants and speaker actively engaged in the SLAC sessions.

The findings are congruent with the findings of Nguyen et al. which found out that in elaborated learning groups, participants can learn with and from other colleagues with the aim at solving problems and challenges, as well as, conflict during their professional practices. [14] They lively discuss curriculum, teaching method and other educational issues. To

some extent, learning communities have shifted from individual-oriented to group-oriented. The most crucial point made so far is that policy makers, educational leaders and managers should pay much attention to connect and control these groups effectively. It is important for school and educational managers to consider and support teachers in terms of taking part in professional development activities.

Subsequently, the development and utilization of instructional materials got the highest rating among all the indicators. This suggests that the best approach in enhancing receptive abilities from the teachers is through exposure, whether it comes from a fun activity like, development of instructional materials. Lectures give more focus on imparting knowledge than merely dispensing facts and expecting that their listeners will comprehend them. Excellent teachers want their students to complete the assignment and truly grasp how to do it, rather than just checking the boxes on the SLAC plan. The highest rating was 3.56 but still workshop, coaching and orientation, indicates very high engagement from the teachers, It was noted that during a workshop, a new concept is introduced encouraging participants to explore it further by demonstrating and promoting in their real process. It is an excellent way to teach practical skills since it allows teachers to experiment in a secure setting. Coaching encourages two-way dialogue between participants and their coach in order to pinpoint areas that participants need to improve upon, accentuate their strengths, and advance their performance. This means focusing on specific performance targets, abilities, and goals. Also, during orientation, instead of beginning with the strict rules of the school or the policies, the orientation starts with a happy tone, introducing the vision and mission statement, the SLAC goals, the culture, and a quick description of the Action plans for growth.

The result showed that active participation is an acknowledgment of everyone's right to engage in interactions and pursuits. The data suggest that teachers comfortably engage in the activity in the SLAC sessions. Everyone has the right to take part in interactions and activities that are part of daily life, as seen in their active participation. Every participant was encouraged and supported to take an active role in SLAC sessions rather than just acting as a passive recipient of its Fronda further elaborated the need to increase and intensify in-service training utilizing the Learning Action Cell (LAC) approach to concentrate on teaching techniques and activities in order to improve the instructional abilities of teachers. [7]

The mean score of 358 for al indicators indicated a very high engagement of teachers. This means that almost all respondents engaged and actively participated in various activities such as stimuli. This meant that they had paid close attention, demonstrated their work in a manner that made others feel at ease, actively participated in the LAC session by sharing assignment and insights, asking questions, and giving feedback on what their colleagues had shared, and had fully prepared the materials required to meet the SLAC

targets. These results are supported by the study of Gumban and Pelones which noted that teachers are actively participating in SLAC activities to assure professional development, high standards of instruction, teamwork and problem-solving and school improvement initiatives.[3] The results also showed that teachers' work performance improved when they participated in SLAC activities. One needs to have a flexible set of learning abilities in order to thrive as a teacher in the age of change. These skills can aid in their adaptation to a professional environment that is always changing. One must adopt a mindset of perpetual learning, a paradigm change with important ramifications.

Table 7 presents the seven (7) indicators for teacher's engagement in Group Discussion. Among the 8 indicators, collaboration with their co-participants to achieve SLAC goals posted the highest mean rating of is 3.68. Rank 2, with a mean rating of 3.61, was given to active listening to understand the SLA goals and good collaboration of the teachers. The lowest mean rating was 3.54 and this was given to 3 indicators: (1) contribution of important work in goal attainment, (2) Interacting in group discussion, and (3) Maximizing time in gathering needed information for the group discussion. Mean rating was 3.5, a very high rating for teachers engagement in SLAC in terms of Group Discussion.

The highest rating for collaboration implies that teamwork and focus are needed when working with a group, According to Bajar et al. SLAC sessions help teachers feel more positive about their jobs because they reduced their tasks and promoted workplace collaboration. [18]

Table 7. Teachers Engagement in SLAC in terms of Group Discussion.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Collaborates with co-participants to achieve the SLAC goals	3.68	Very High
Actively listens to understand the SLAC goals during the group discussion.	3.61	Very High
Established good collaboration with the LAC leaders	3.61	Very High
Actively contributes to the group discussion by sharing work and observations, posing inquiries, and comments on the information that colleagues have shared.	3.56	Very high
Contributes important work in achieving the SLAC goals.	3.54	Very high
Interacts well in the Group Discussion.	3.54	Very high
Maximizes time in gathering much information needed for the group discussion.	3.54	Very high
Over-all Mean	3.58	Very high

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

Among all the indicators, Contributing important work in achieving the SLAC goals, Interacting well in the group discussion, and Maximizing time in gathering much information needed for the group discussion posted the lowest mean rating of 3.54. This suggests still a very high

level of engagement among teachers. This is worth noting because this implies good interaction and time management within the SLAC sessions. According to Jackson, realistic time management and organization plans can improve productivity and the quality of life. However, these skills can be difficult to develop and maintain. [19]

The result also shed light on the qualitative implications of this study indicating that teachers' understanding of LAC sessions plays a crucial role in their engagement. Their understanding of SLAC, as an opportunity for collaborative learning, influences their perception of how participation in SLAC positively influences their teaching effectiveness and professional contentment. This understanding encompasses the recognition of the significance of collaborative learning, sharing knowledge, and reflective practices during SLAC sessions.

The data suggest that the way a school works together and solve problems is improved by teacher's collaboration. More creativity, effective procedures, greater success, and enhanced communication result from this. Teachers also support one another in achieving SLAC goals and pay attention to and learning from their fellow participants. When presenting ideas, participants are sure and gentle. These indicates that teachers ensure not to repeat remarks and speak directly to the point, Teachers pay attention to what others have to say because doing so will help actual participation in the group discussion.

The mean score suggests a very high level of engagement of the teachers in SLAC. The Findings imply that almost all respondents actively listen in order to comprehend the SLAC aims, provide significant work, and establish positive collaboration during group discussions. Being receptive to everyone's comments, criticisms, and ideas throughout the collaboration is essential, even if it means altering the original plan.

The result also agree with the findings of Binauhan, who stated that Learning action cells, also known as quality learning circles for teachers, play an important part in the lives of teachers by encouraging professional growth. [17] These cells help increase teachers' teaching abilities and students' performance in the classroom. Teachers are active developers of their own knowledge as they facilitate and share ideas with the group, and this project gives them the power to become change agents who can address both local and national agendas.

The teachers' engagement in individual and group action planning are shown in Table 8. It can be noted that the teachers got the mean score of 3.49 in sharing work and observations, posing inquiries, and comments on the information that colleagues have shared, A mean of 3.44 was attain for their in collaborating ideas and insights with other participants and a mean rating of 3.41 was obtained for their active contribution during action planning and Sharing work and observations, posing inquiries, and comments on the information that colleagues have shared. The mean rating obtained for all four (4) indicators was 3.44, a very high

rating.

Table 8. Teachers engagement in SLAC in terms of Individual and Group Action Planning.

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Sharing of work and observations, posing inquiries, and comments on the information that colleagues have shared.	3.49	Very High
Collaborating ideas and insights with other participants.	3.44	Very High
Giving of suggestions which are helpful in the Individual and group Action Planning.	3.41	Very High
Actively Contributing during action planning.	3.41	Very High
Over-all Mean	3.44	Very High

Legend: Very Low (1.00-1.75), Low (1.76-2.50), High (2.51-3.25), Very High (3.26-4.00)

The result implies that the Teachers were engaged in terms of Individual and Group Action Planning. Teachers are guided in the implementation action plan and identification of the next right steps in implementing SLAC program. It can be noted that teachers also are more accountable for accomplishing SLAC targets within a specified timeline.

Teachers' understanding of LAC sessions played a significant role in their active participation. SLACs offered various avenues for collaborative learning, such as facilitating data-driven decision-making, fostering a professional learning community and improving instructional methods. These sessions are vital in empowering teachers, fostering a culture of continuous professional development, and propelling overall school improvement. Ultimately, SLACs enhanced teaching and learning, leading to improved student outcomes. These conform with the findings of Magan which stated that creating an action cell for learning and developing a learning action plan among science teachers, increases collaboration among science teachers (LAC), stimulates professional development and improves science education for students.[20]

Challenges Encountered and Strategies Employed affecting the Engagement of Teachers in School Learning Action Cell

The challenges encountered were noted during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) of teachers in small schools in Calabanga West District. In addition, Thematic Analysis and Identification of Core Ideas were identified from the different interviews.

Challenges Encountered by the Teachers in School Learning Action Cell

Along the Challenges encountered, the teachers were asked to describe the difficulties they faced in the conduct of the School Learning Action Cell. The following information were gathered:

Time constraints

The first theme under the challenges encountered in the conduct of SLAC was time constraints in scheduling SLAC sessions. Here are some sample comments given by the teacher's respondents:

- *One of the difficulties in School Learning Action cell and crafting of action plan due to teaching load and other activity. (BES/P1/2023)*
- *Yes, there are challenges related to classroom workload and extracurricular activities. (SBES/P2/2023)*

The statements highlight the difficulties faced by teachers when planning their School Learning Action Cells, taking into account their busy schedules, staying on track with the lesson, and making sure not to sacrifice students' lessons or other school-related activities. Since there are limited teachers in small schools where the respondents come from, there is conflict in the tasks and responsibilities of the teachers. The performance of the teachers and each LAC is affected by the overlap of activities.

The profound understanding among teachers regarding SLAC, as a way of promoting professional development leading to high engagement in activities, is evident. However, despite its positive impact, time limitations present significant challenges. Overcoming these time constraints becomes imperative to fully harness the potential of SLAC, enabling teachers to continually enhance their skills and foster a culture of active and effective professional growth in educational settings.

The participants of the research emphasized that their schedules prevented them from carrying out the duties as specified in the SLAC. They have more obligations than they can reasonably handle in a given capability, they have a heavy workload. They also stressed that the workload of the teachers was a real challenge.

Reazo suggested that enhancing the LAC session in every school to increase the advantages of the learning action cells is addressing issues and activities in schools., The difficulties in implementing the LAC sessions are related to the difficulty in scheduling because of the overlapping of school activities. [21].

Heavy workload

The second theme under the challenges encountered in the conduct of SLAC was the heavy workload of teachers. Here are some sample comments that were specifically given by the teachers' respondents:

Considering that the respondents of this study are teachers from small schools respondents are handling multi grade students who are struggling in their schedules ad workloads. Some statements attesting to these were:

- *We encounter difficulties in crafting action plan because it is hard especially we re handling many pupils that s a multi grade class. The time and other responsibilities is so hard that conflict to the activity. (PES/P2/2023)*
- *I find difficulties in conducting the SLAC, due to the fact that I handle multi grade class as well a having a a lot of multiple coordinator ship (LGES/P4/2023)*

The statements noted the challenges faced by teachers in multi-grade schools when organizing their School Learning Action Cells they take into consideration their hectic schedules, staying on task with the lesson for their student in different grade levels, and being careful not to sacrifice educational activities.

Teachers perceive SLAC as a valuable opportunity for collaborative learning, which subsequently leads to heightened engagement in various activities. This positive perception highlights the potential of SLAC in enhancing professional development and enriching educational practices. Nevertheless, challenges arise due to the heavy workload faced by teachers. Addressing these workload challenges becomes crucial to fully harness the benefits of SLAC, ensuring a conducive environment for collaborative learning and fostering sustainable growth and improvement in teaching practices.

Some respondents brought out concerns on conflict in the tasks and obligations of the teachers since they teach two or more grade levels in one class or more as multigrade teachers in small schools. The teachers' function and inclusion of affect by overlap. The participants of the research emphasized that their workloads and schedules prevented them to undertake the School Learning Action Cell from carrying out its duties.

Multigrade teachers have a heavy workload when they have more responsibilities than they can reasonably manage in a particular capacity. In addition, they emphasized how difficult it was for teachers to manage multiple grade levels of students in their classes and conducting SLAC at the same time. The teacher needs to employ an alternate approach.

Their observations are supported by the findings of Jomuad et al. workload provided a significant impact on the level of burnout experienced by teachers. It has an impact on teachers' performance as well. Teachers experienced burnout because of work overload. Nevertheless, they still performed in their respective jobs. No matter how they felt tired, they always gave their very best to fulfill their duty; thus, their performance is very satisfactory. [22] To avoid stress and burnout, it was recommended that every school administrator adheres to proper workload assignment. Teaching is a rewarding but demanding profession. Teachers are prone to burnout due to long hours of teaching and a heavy workload.

The study of Khanal also found that in small schools where there is a shortage of teachers, the teacher has to adopt an alternative method. Classroom size and sufficient number of students can be considered for multi-grade teaching in primary schools. [23]

Naparan et.al. also revealed that there are intrinsic, extrinsic, and system challenges experienced by these teachers. These challenges involve unpreparedness in teaching multigrade, low multigrade allowances, the experience of stress, language barrier, classroom management struggles, lack of resources, danger in going to

stations, workload, absenteeism, lack of stakeholders support, and lack of trainings. However, they showed positivity in their work and applied the right coping strategies to lessen their burden. [24]

Lack of ICT knowledge among teachers

Some of the teachers have limited exposure to the use of ICT and integrating them into SLAC sessions. These are some of their statements:

- *Some of the teachers are struggling in using the Gadgets and other ICT related materials. (SBES/P3/2023)*
- *I just learn about some uses of ICT during pandemic, and that little knowledge is helping me to cope with the SLAC sessions that involves technology (LGES/P3/2023)*

Teachers, based on their statement, find lack of ICT knowledge a hindrance to the conduct of SLAC sessions. Some are hesitant to alter their teaching strategies since they are accustomed to the traditional method of teaching. Others simply learn and fully understand the importance of technology in times of pandemic.

Teachers are aware of the importance of SLAC as an opportunity for collaborative learning that encourages increased participation in a variety of activities and professional growth. It is clear that SLAC has a good effect on improving instructional methods. However, difficulties occur from teachers' limited ICT understanding, which prevents them from fully realizing the potential advantages of technologically supported collaborative learning. The need for training and seminars in ICT became more evident in the teachers statements. Teachers understand the importance of ICT in training seminars nowadays to continually upgrade their skills and make sure they are equipped with necessary knowledge regarding the use of ICT in their SLAC sessions.

Teachers' willingness to employ technology in teaching and learning, influenced by their attitudes in using them, was one of the issues in the implementation of SLAC. The successful use of new technology in the classroom is heavily reliant on the teacher's views about these tools, which have been found to be the main predictors of the usage of new technologies in instructional contexts. Numerous studies however, on the issues with ICT integration in education, have indicated the teachers' resistance to new technology as a major issue.

These results are supported by the finding of Javier where he noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers' practices in using digital teaching and learning technologies, teachers are willing to practice their use, benefiting from their usage, and radiating best practices in the workplace. [25] Having an Internet connection at home necessitates the teacher's role to increase teaching and learning while utilizing the potential of many technologies, despite some technological concerns that are out of the teacher's control and the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DepEd has in fact required instructors to be innovative in the classroom in order to fulfill its vision and goal by incorporating the use of digital teaching

and learning tools into the curriculum and instruction. With the implementation of the suggested learning action cell sessions, DepEd is advised to offer opportunities for its teachers to continuously advance their technical proficiency. For school administrators to implement training sessions for teachers to be technologically pandemic-responsive, the pertinent research findings provided insights. The study's findings gave teachers information they might use to be able to use digital technologies for instruction outside of pandemic situations.

The findings of Kubiatko support the statements that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is thought to assist individuals to better understand the curriculum and improve their attitudes about every topic taught in the educational setting.[26] Although there is a very high likelihood that it is true, this depends on a number of other factors that are frequently ignored. Even today, some educators believe that having a computer and creating a PowerPoint presentation is adequate. When ICT is first being used in classrooms, it may be appropriate. The situation has changed in modern times. Numerous software programs, applications, and other ICT-related items exist in the digital world and this could lead to issues for both students and teachers.

Limited Resources

The limited financial resources of the school has also been is the next theme identified. The challenge of the lack of funding encountered in the SLAC sessions are indicated in the following:

- *One of the main issues is the funding for the materials. (BES/P4/2023)*
- *One of the issues is finding funds for the SLAC session because school MOOEs cannot suffice. (LGES/P3/2023)*

The MOOE of the school's fund, according to the respondents, isn't sufficient to support the SLAC session until the end of the school year.

Teachers also believed that one of the difficulties they encountered was the lack of funding. These small schools are frequently found in remote locations, and they have limited access to the funding, as well as, the resources required for SLAC sessions. These places also incur higher travel costs. For SLAC sessions, this school only has a small budget allocation.

Teachers' recognition of SLAC as a way of promoting professional development, resulting in high engagement in various activities, is a testament to its effectiveness in fostering continuous growth among teachers. SLAC's collaborative nature facilitates knowledge sharing, reflection, and the exchange of best practices, empowering teachers to enhance their instructional techniques and cultivate a culture of ongoing improvement. The positive impact of SLAC on teaching practices is evident in the improved outcomes for both teachers and students. However, despite its proven benefits, challenges persist due to limited financial and human resources. The availability of funds and human

resources play crucial roles in sustaining and expanding SLAC initiatives, as they determine the scope and effectiveness of collaborative learning opportunities for teachers.

Every LAC session should have funds set out for planning activities, such as inviting speakers to discuss various trends in raising teachers' proficiency. LAC's discussion topics are based on a current problem. Additional printing costs are needed for things like programs, visual aids, and other printed items. As stated in DO no. 35 s. 2016, the budget shall come from the school's respective MOOE and other external grants, provided, that only expenses allowed under the school MOOE may be included, subject to existing accounting rules and regulations.

According to Vega, lack of funding is common to all schools, it was revealed in his study that not all schools receive financial support to fund the LAC session However the fund might be taken from MOOE of school, but, due to its lengthy process, the heads result to coming up with funding for the snacks only. [27]

Furthermore, it is difficult for the respondents of this study, who are teachers from small schools to find resource speakers who can assist them in SLAC sessions. Their schools are situated in areas with few transportation options. The needs for funding for SLAC resource speakers are evident in the following statements;

- *Finding knowledgeable speakers on a certain topic is one of the difficulties. (BES/P3/2023)*

"Seeking resource speakers willing to take a chance by traveling to our school given the distance and mode of transportation (Bangka) (PES/P3/2023)

According to the teachers, it is very important to invite resource speakers for the SLAC session. If the teachers inside the school are not experts in a given content included in the SLAC sessions, there is need for a resource person to ensure a good training output.

Resource persons are experts who contribute information and opinions to participants in a learning situation. They frequently conduct educational activities, but are also helpful to a committee at the program planning stage. Resource persons do not just add expertise but also make the course more interesting and attractive for the participants, as they can integrate their own experiences. Proper preparation of the resource person and the participants can enhance achievement of intended SLAC goals.

This finding agrees with Roxas who found that the tiny schools have brought up a few of the challenges and problems that the Learning Action Cell (SLAC) in particular is confronting. Due to the SLAC's location within the school, the researcher has had comparable experiences and has noticed that the workplace that falls under the category of small schools struggles with obtaining a topical resource speaker and funding. [28].

Topic prioritization conflicts

The last theme noted for the challenges encountered was prioritizing topics for SLAC sessions. Concerns about Topic prioritization conflicts in SLAC are expressed by certain teachers. Some individuals simply focus on the Deped-mandated topics, while others wish to highlight topics that will truly contribute to their professional development. These are evident in the following statements shared:

- *Some of the difficulties encountered is choosing or prioritizing a topic since most topic is equally important. (SBES/P5/2023)*
- *In light of the fact that most topics are equally important for me and others, picking or ranking them can be challenging. (BES/P1/2023)*

Since there are numerous concerns that teachers wanted to prioritize and focus to the statement concerning the challenges they encounter in prioritizing there concerns is needed in School Learning Action Cells. These factors have an impact on each LAC and the teachers' engagement.

The participants have been highly engaged in topics mandated to them. However, the challenges that could be given more attention need to be reviewed in the prioritization process in the SLAC topics. This will give teachers a chance for more professional development opportunities in SLAC sessions. This is in accordance with the Deped Order no.35 s. 2016. The content of LAC sessions may be determined by the teachers themselves under the general guidance of the school head or LAC leader. This may be done through needs assessment, the results of which should assist the LAC in listing their priority areas of learning.

This also agrees with the finding of Silva on the need of teachers for training on a wide range of topics, including the inclusion and diversity of learners, content and pedagogy, assessment and reporting, 21st-century skills, ICT integration, and curricular contextualization. Prioritizing subjects and creating LAC materials were a few issues that came up when running SLAC. The suggested course of action is advised to be properly addressed to. [29]

Correos, et al. discussed that School heads and teachers' comprehension of the process will determine whether School Learning Action Cells (SLAC) LACs are successfully implemented. These LACs are thought to be the most affordable continuous professional development procedures that improve the teaching-learning process. When school administrators and teachers have a limited understanding of the procedures and framework of SLACs, it can be challenging to ensure consistency in its implementation and monitoring. [30]

Strategies Employed by the Teachers in the School Learning Action Cell

Under the Strategies employed, the teachers were asked to give a description of the strategies they used in the conduct the School Learning Action Cell. Teachers in SLAC employ various strategies such as Active participation in SLAC,

teacher performance accountability and commitment and Collaboration between teachers in support of SLAC to enhance their professional learning and collaborative practices.

Involving participation of all age groups

Teachers cited involving participation of all age groups as a crucial element of their strategy for running the School Learning Action Cell. Included in this are roles such as being proponent, LAC leader, speaker, or facilitator. These data were reflected statements of these respondents:

- *I work as a technical assistant, speaker and facilitator. (LGES./P5/2023)*
- *I participated actively in LAC session during lectures orientation and workshop. (BES/P2/2023)*
- *I took part in the initial needs analysis and the identification of potential and effective interventions. (LGES/P4/2023)*

According to the teachers' statements, SLAC fosters teamwork through active participation. They attend all SLAC sessions, whether they contribute much or little, and they enjoy the teaching-learning activities there. They are also open about any problems they encounter, which is a sign of a positive SLAC session atmosphere.

Teachers who can successfully engage and actively participate in problem-solving exercises, as well as those designed to develop better teaching and supervision strategies, both formally and informally, can aid students in learning more efficiently. Informal learning activities are frequently viewed as interaction with coworkers, sharing, and dialogues. This also holds true for interaction within networks and committees. In terms of pedagogical and curriculum-related issues, teachers generally have positive impressions of their involvement decision-making in SLAC sessions; however, they have less positive perceptions of their involvement in administrative decision-making.

This result amplifies the study of Silva his findings assert that the inclusion of a variety of learners, content and pedagogy, assessment and reporting, 21st-century skills, ICT integration, and curricular contextualization are just a few of the many areas in which teachers need training. Running SLAC have certain challenges, like prioritizing topics and producing LAC materials. It is advised that the specified course of action be appropriately carried out. [29]

Promoting Teachers' Accountability and Commitment

Teachers stated that when there is a lack of accountability, it is impossible to develop a high-performing school. Every employee must take responsibility for their actions, behavior, output and decisions in the workplace. This is associated with better levels of commitment to work and teamwork, both of which boost performance. Some statements attesting to this:

"*As a school head, I should lead in organizing the LAC and ensuring that the practice of holding regular LAC sessions in stablished, maintained and sustained. I also*

monitored the school LAC activities, evaluating the impact on the school improvement and sometimes I am one of the speakers. (SBES/P1/2023)

- *I give my best whenever there is SLAC. I participate, I cooperate, I share, and accept other ideas to make me a better teacher and help the school in addressing the challenges it s been facing. (BES/P3/2023)*

It is highlighted in the statements that accountability on the part of the teacher is very important. It is a measure of the teacher s dedication to his job. Although teachers are primarily responsible for delivering high-quality instruction, they are also required to do a wide range of other duties.

Teachers can become appropriately equipped in their professional roles as a result of increased accountability. Because of this, holding teachers accountable may be a useful strategy for enhancing their professional conduct. This follows the statement of Rosenblatt & Wubbels which stated that both teachers and principals, as any employee in any working context, are expected to be externally accountable. Principals' accountability is targeted not only to school stakeholders, where more internal accountability is expected, but also to bodies outside the school grounds, where external accountability is more likely to be anticipated. [31] This finding also agrees with Albano, who noted that The LAC session has to put more of emphasis on practical activities, group projects, demonstrations, and problem-solving strategies to encourage high teacher engagement. [16] Requesting routine reports on their work, gaining feedback from immediate supervisors and other stakeholders, and conducting spot checks or visits to look into work related factors are all equally important.

The study of Floreno cited that teachers conducting SLACs adhere to the minimum health standards established by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), while sessions occasionally took place via Google Meet or Zoom when the COVID-19 situation in the region was urgent. SLAC training is conducted in schools despite the unpredictability of the circumstances since they support instructors and fulfill a Department of Education requirement (DepEd). [32]

Increasing collaboration between teachers in support of SLAC.

The last theme identified is collaboration between teachers in support of SLAC. Here are the sample perceptions.

- *I did not encounter any difficulties since our school teachers are very much cooperative and willing to work collaboratively together with our school head. We support each others needs. (BES/P4/2023)*
- *It was successful to conduct SLAC with other teachers since we shared our knowledge and skills regarding the particular topic they were aware about. (BES/P2/2023)*

Teachers emphasized that their strategy to perform well in SLAC is through Collaboration. For some, SLAC sessions foster a collaborative environment. The ability to collaborate

depends on teachers sharing responsibilities for participation and decision-making.

Teacher collaboration entails cooperating with one another to guide, educate, and mentor students with the intention of enhancing learning and achievement for those students. This finding agrees with Cabañero, who cited that effective leadership requires changing to sharing LAC best practices with each other and other schools to foster a collaborative environment and ongoing development, Facilitators should put a strong emphasis on checking and monitoring member attendance and material submission, as well as making sure that team meetings begin and end on time and that the agenda are covered. [33]

Based on the study's findings, it was suggested that a needs analysis be done prior to any LAC session in order to address the difficulties in prioritizing topics, schedule LAC sessions that will not interfere with any teaching-related activities, integrate topics into basic ICT, and properly plan the funding for each LAC session. It is emphasized that teachers can continually strengthen their teaching skills, learn fresh knowledge, and develop new skills through LAC activities, all of which benefit student learning.

Verbo, cited that LACs become the school-based communities of practice that are positive, caring, and safe spaces. This policy provides the framework and enabling mechanisms for the conduct and implementation of LAC in schools. It is directed towards improving teacher knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on established competencies linked to the K to 12 Curriculum. [34]

Figure 2 is the concept map illustrating the qualitative information along the challenges and strategies employed by teachers in the Conduct of School Learning Action Cell.

The themes that emerged were the following: The challenges in Conduct of SLAC include SLAC schedule and Teachers Workload; the Lack of ICT knowledge among teachers; Limited Funding and Human Resources; Prioritizing Topic; The Strategies employed in the Conduct of SLAC include Active Participation in the SLAC; Teacher's accountability and commitment; and lastly a theme about Collaboration between teachers in support of SLAC.

This concept map and its components need the support of concerned authorities, the teachers cannot do these by themselves with the heavy teaching loads they have plus the large sample size of students/pupils. There will always be challenges that will affect the teachers' disposition of their duties and responsibilities. There is a need to study further the integration of the program to the existing curriculum to ensure attainment of its goal.

Fig 2. Challenges and Strategies of Teachers in School Learning Action Cell

CONCLUSION

The major conclusions indicated that despite challenges, integrating LAC with regular teaching responsibilities can foster collaborative learning and exemplify best practices in the educational workplace. The study underscores active teacher participation, accountability, and fostering collaboration as effective strategies for successful LAC implementation.

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