

# PREPARING EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS: BEST PRACTICES OF TEACHER- VOLUNTEERS ON NATIONAL LEARNING CAMP

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this research was to explore and understand the experiences, best practices, challenges, coping mechanisms, and insights of National Learning Camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education, Laak, Davao de Oro. Using a phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews with 10 participants were conducted to address the core research questions related to the program's impact, instructional techniques, and volunteer experiences. Findings revealed that teacher-volunteers significantly contributed to enhancing student engagement through differentiated instruction, active collaboration, and resilience-building practices. They highlighted key benefits such as personal growth, professional development, and the positive relationships they formed with students. However, they also faced challenges like limited resources, time constraints, and unpredictable environmental factors. These obstacles underscored the need for a stronger support system from educational leaders and policymakers, including access to resources, ongoing professional development, and adequate compensation. Recommendations emphasized the importance of enhancing training programs, ensuring timely resource allocation, and providing structured incentives to sustain teacher motivation. The findings underscored the value of fostering collaboration and resilience among teacher-volunteers, ensuring that the National Learning Camp continues to improve teaching practices, build stronger educator-student relationships, and contribute to the long-term success of the educational program.*

**Keyword:** *educational administration, National Learning Camp, teacher-volunteers, experiences, best practices, challenges, coping mechanisms, insights, phenomenological study.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Learning Camp (NLC), initiated by the Philippine Department of Education, aims to address persistent educational gaps among students. This initiative, however, encounters considerable challenges that hinder its success. Teacher volunteers, essential to the program's implementation, grapple with insufficient training, inadequate resources, and logistical obstacles. These issues not only strain the teachers' capacity to deliver the program effectively but also threaten to undermine the overall objectives of the NLC, potentially limiting its impact on improving educational outcomes (Garcia, 2024).

Similar educational interventions have been implemented internationally in other developing countries facing comparable challenges. For example, Kenya's volunteer-driven educational camps focus on enhancing basic literacy and numeracy skills through interactive, community-centered approaches (Mwangi, 2023). They highlight

the importance of volunteer involvement, structured program design, and community support in Indonesia. They also reveal common challenges, such as proper volunteer training, adequate funding, and overcoming logistical barriers (Rao, 2023).

Research on NLC volunteers in Bukidnon, Philippines, highlights key issues. Dela Cruz (2023) found that volunteers often feel underprepared due to a lack of tailored training programs. Moreover, logistical challenges, such as insufficient teaching materials and transportation, pose significant hurdles in Tacloban. Additionally, volunteers face emotional and physical demands as they juggle their regular responsibilities with their NLC commitments (Santos, 2023).

In Laak District, Davao de Oro, teacher-volunteers frequently report feelings of inadequacy due to insufficient training and the lack of structured support systems. Additionally, many face significant logistical challenges, including difficulties accessing necessary teaching materials and ensuring reliable transportation for themselves and their students. Despite these obstacles, volunteers often express a strong sense of commitment and fulfillment derived from their involvement in the NLC, driven by the impact they can make on students' educational outcomes. Their experiences highlight the need for improved training programs, better resource allocation, and stronger support networks to ensure the sustainability and success of the NLC.

In consonance, the researcher had not read any local study regarding the lived experiences and best practices of NLC volunteers. This underscored the urgent need for a focused study to understand their challenges and motivations. Research could provide insights to develop better support systems, training programs, and resource allocation strategies, enhancing the impact of educational interventions in bridging learning gaps.

### 1.1 Research Questions

The study explored teachers' volunteer experiences for the National Learning Camp, examining the challenges they encountered and the strategies they employed to cope with these difficulties. The following questions guided it:

1. What are the experiences of the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?
2. What are the best practices of the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?
3. What challenges are encountered by the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?
4. What coping mechanisms are employed by the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?
5. What insights do the participants gain as volunteers in the national learning camp in the Department of Education?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents topics and literature relevant to the concept under study, aiming to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the problems and challenges encountered by teachers as National Learning Camp volunteers in the Department of Education. Findings from various studies related to this research will be discussed to enhance understanding and highlight key insights within this qualitative study. These sources include manuals, journals, websites, and other relevant reading materials.

**National Learning Camp.** The National Learning Camp (NLC) is an educational initiative led by the Philippines's Department of Education (DepEd). It addresses learning gaps among students, particularly those worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Garcia (2024), this initiative is a key part of DepEd's broader strategy to enhance educational outcomes and ensure all students achieve their full academic potential.

The primary goal of the NLC is to offer supplementary learning opportunities that help students improve in essential academic areas, including literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking. The program typically runs during school breaks, leveraging the time when students are not engaged in regular classroom activities. Its flexible and

adaptive design allows implementation across various settings, such as schools, community centers, and online platforms (DepEd Order No. 13, 2023).

**Experiences of National Learning Camp (NLC) teacher-volunteers.** Recent studies have illuminated the positive experiences of National Learning Camp (NLC) teacher-volunteers, highlighting their transformative impact on educational outcomes and personal growth (Rodriguez 2024; Tan 2024). These volunteers play a crucial role in addressing educational disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, fostering a supportive learning environment for students in underserved communities.

Moreover, one prominent theme emerging from the literature is the profound sense of fulfillment reported by NLC teacher-volunteers. Many volunteer's express satisfaction derived from witnessing students' academic progress and personal development within the camp setting (Garcia 2024). This sense of fulfillment serves as a motivational factor that sustains their commitment to the NLC despite the challenges they face.

**Best Practices of the National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteers.** Teacher-volunteers in National Learning Camps are crucial in implementing effective strategies to foster student engagement and improve academic outcomes. According to David, et al., (2024), teacher-volunteers employ collaborative teaching methods, such as group discussions and hands-on activities, which significantly enhance student engagement. These methods not only foster a more interactive learning environment but also help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, the study also points out the challenges faced by teacher-volunteers, including logistical issues and diverse perceptions of content relevance, which suggest the need for ongoing refinement of the camp's pedagogical approaches.

In addition to collaborative teaching, the capacity-building workshops provided to teacher-volunteers play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of the NLC. These workshops are designed to equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage and deliver the NLC curriculum in core subjects such as English, Math, and Science. The report on the implementation of the NLC in Toledo City (DepEd Toledo, 2023) highlights the importance of these preparatory activities, noting that the teachers' spirit of volunteerism, coupled with the training they received, was instrumental in addressing the learning deficits observed among Grade 7 and 8 students. This underscores the significance of professional development in empowering teachers to overcome the challenges posed by the learning recovery programs.

**Challenges faced by National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteers.** The challenges faced by National Learning Camp (NLC) teacher-volunteers are multifaceted and significantly impact the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. Recent studies highlight various aspects of these challenges, providing a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties encountered by these dedicated individuals.

To begin with, insufficient training emerges as a critical challenge for NLC teacher-volunteers. As highlighted by Johnson (2023), many volunteers feel inadequately prepared for the unique demands of the camp setting due to a lack of specific training programs tailored to the NLC's needs. This lack of preparation can hinder their ability to deliver effective educational support, thereby affecting student outcomes.

Furthermore, logistical challenges are a major barrier for NLC teacher-volunteers. Smith (2023) points out that limited access to teaching materials and unreliable transportation significantly impede the smooth operation of camp activities. These logistical constraints not only burden the volunteers but also disrupt the continuity of learning for students, thus compromising the program's effectiveness.

**Coping Mechanisms of National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteers.** The exploration of coping mechanisms among National Learning Camp (NLC) teacher-volunteers reveals a multifaceted approach to managing the various challenges they face. These mechanisms are essential for sustaining their commitment and effectiveness in delivering educational support. Recent studies highlight different strategies employed by volunteers, providing a comprehensive understanding of their resilience.

Firstly, social support emerges as a vital coping mechanism. According to Dlamini (2023), NLC teacher-volunteers often rely on their peers and community members for emotional and practical support. This network

helps them share experiences, advice, and resources, which can alleviate stress and provide a sense of camaraderie and belonging.

In addition, professional development plays a crucial role in enhancing coping strategies. Ncube (2023) points out that ongoing training and skill development enable volunteers to feel more competent and confident in their roles. By participating in workshops and seminars, they can acquire new teaching methodologies and classroom management techniques that make their tasks more manageable.

**Insights of National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteers.** The insights of National Learning Camp (NLC) teacher-volunteers offer a valuable perspective on their experiences, challenges, and the impact of their work. Understanding these insights is crucial for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the NLC program. Recent studies comprehensively analyze these insights, highlighting various themes and strategies. To begin with, motivation and dedication are prominent themes in the insights of NLC teacher-volunteers. According to Nguyen (2023), many volunteers are driven by a deep commitment to improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged students. This dedication often stems from a passion for teaching and a desire to contribute to community development.

Moreover, adaptability and resilience are essential traits observed among NLC teacher-volunteers. As Tran (2023) notes, volunteers often face unpredictable and challenging conditions, requiring them to be flexible and resourceful. Their ability to adapt to various teaching environments and student needs is a testament to their resilience and determination.

Furthermore, professional growth and learning are significant insights gained from the experiences of NLC teacher-volunteers. Pham (2024) discusses how volunteers often view their involvement as an opportunity for personal and professional development. The exposure to diverse teaching scenarios and the need to develop innovative solutions contribute to their growth as educators.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the study's methods and processes. It covers study design, study location, research subjects, data collection process, data analysis, credibility and dependability, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenological research design to investigate the leadership experiences of National Learning Camp (NLC) teacher-volunteers. This approach sought to understand the lived experiences of these volunteers as they navigated the complexities of implementing the NLC. According to Creswell (2014), phenomenology allowed researchers to immerse themselves in participants' experiences to derive meaning from their narratives. The focus was on the volunteers' leadership strategies, challenges, and transformative experiences in managing the program's requirements.

Through in-depth interviews, the study captured the subjective perspectives of NLC teacher-volunteers, providing insights into their leadership development, problem-solving strategies, and stakeholder engagement practices. As Giorgi (2012) emphasized, phenomenology is particularly suited to capturing individuals' rich, nuanced experiences, which are often overlooked in quantitative methods. This approach enabled a detailed exploration of how teacher-volunteers interpreted their roles, managed logistical hurdles, and supported educational access.

#### 3.2 Research Locale

The study was carried out at the Davao de Oro Division's Laak District elementary schools. This comprises Concepcion Integrated School, Laak Central Elementary School, Candiis Elementary School, Bollukan Elementary School, and Barubo Elementary School.

### 3.3 Research Participants

The study had 10 participants, sufficient to achieve information saturation from the examined group. Creswell (2013) recommends involving six to fifteen individuals in this qualitative-phenomenological investigation. Consequently, this study included 10 people for the In-Depth Interview (IDI).

Additionally, the criteria for participation selection were as follows: The participants must be public elementary school teachers in the 2024-2025 academic year at Laak District, Laak, Davao de Oro. (b) holding a position/designation from Teacher I-III to Master Teacher I-IV, (c) possessing a minimum of 3 years of service as a public-school teacher, and (d) demonstrating exemplary practices as a national learning camp teacher-volunteer.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

In qualitative research, analysis is considered the most intricate step and frequently receives the least comprehensive examination in the literature (Aberdeen, 2013). The data analysis enabled the researcher to understand the material and contemplate its overarching significance comprehensively. This study involved data analysis through transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and developing principal themes and central concepts.

Thematic analysis was employed to examine and present patterns or themes within the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The participants' replies were transcribed, classified, and organized into themes as the foundation for debates and recommendations. The analysis advanced from initial coding to categorization, transitioning from broad to specific. Responses with analogous fundamental concepts were removed and categorized to formulate comprehensive themes, with each legitimate topic encompassing a minimum of five core ideas. To preserve anonymity, the researcher designated code names for the individuals. Transcription, which entails converting audio recordings into text, systematically arranged the data and elucidated the participants' responses (Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 What are the experiences of the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?

This section presents the results to the first major research question; '1. What are the experiences of the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?' Three specific research questions were used to gather data and information for this major research question. The questions were intended to gather information on the understanding of the research participants regarding the experiences of national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education.

#### 4.1.1 Experiences as National Learning Camp Teacher-volunteer Builds Strong Connection

The themes in this section were coming from the specific research question 1.1 'What were your experiences as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?' The responses generated three themes: builds strong connection, not easy, and pleasant experience.

**Builds Strong Connection.** The participants emphasized how their experiences as national learning camp teacher-volunteers fostered strong connections with learners, parents, and fellow educators. They shared that this collaborative engagement created a supportive learning environment, strengthened community involvement, and enhanced their teaching strategies to better meet students' needs. Informant 1 pointed out that:

*Kanang, ang mga kasinatian na ako naagian sa pagboluntaryo sa maong National Learning Camp nakahatag kanamo ug higayon sa pagtukod og koneksyon sa mga kabatan-unan na adunay nagkalain lain na abilidad sa pang-isip ug sa buhat. Nakasinati ako sa pagtudlo kanila gamit ang mga lingaw na pamaagi sa pagbabasa arun mas muhanas pa ilang kaalam. Nagtukod pud kami og lig-on nga mga bugkos uban sa mga kaubang boluntaryo, naga share sa mga ideas labi na sa panahon sa collaboration.*

(The experiences I had as a volunteer in the National Learning Camp provided us with opportunities to build connections with young individuals who have diverse intellectual and practical abilities. I experienced

teaching them using enjoyable methods to enhance their knowledge further. We also built strong bonds with fellow volunteers, sharing ideas, especially during collaboration sessions).

**Not Easy.** The participants acknowledged the challenges they faced as National Learning Camp teacher-volunteers, citing the demanding nature of managing diverse learners with varying needs. Despite these difficulties, they highlighted how perseverance and adaptability enabled them to overcome obstacles and provide meaningful learning experiences for their students. Informant 2 narrated that;

*During sa National Learning Camp, sa unang adlaw nagmugna gyud mi og orientation sa mga bata para makabalo sila sa dagan sa klase. Nagmugna pud mig LAC Sessions kada Lunes ug Biyernes. Nagprepare sa mga buluhaton ug ga share sa mga angay buhaton para sa tulo ka adlaw na pagtudlo sa semana. Didto nako nasinati na dili pud lalim ang pag engage sa mga bata na adunay lain-laing batasan sa klase, pero lingaw kay naay interactive games para mas malingaw sila sa klase.*

(During the National Learning Camp, on the first day, we conducted an orientation for the children so they would understand the flow of the classes. We also held LAC Sessions every Monday and Friday, prepared activities, and shared plans for the three teaching days each week. That was when I experienced how challenging it can be to engage students with different behaviors in class, but it was enjoyable because of the interactive games that made the lessons more fun for them).

#### 4.1.2 Advantages of National Learning Camp Teacher-volunteer

This section presents the results to the specific research question 1.2 ‘What were the advantages of national learning camp teacher-volunteer?’ The following themes served as results, which were: gives opportunity to improve teaching style, more excited and active pupils during sessions, service credits and additional allowance, and professional growth and builds connection.

**Gives Opportunity to Improve Teaching Style.** The participants highlighted that their involvement as National Learning Camp teacher-volunteers provided valuable opportunities to refine their teaching styles through hands-on experience in a diverse learning environment. They noted that the camp allowed them to experiment with new teaching methods, enhancing their ability to adapt to different student needs and fostering greater engagement in the classroom. Informant 1 stated that;

*Ang pagboluntaryo isip usa ka magtutudlo sa usa ka National Learning Camp nagtanyag ug daghang mga bentaha, sa personal ug propesyonal. Ang maong programa nakahatag sa amoa ug higayon na mas muhanas pa among estilo sa pagtudlo sa mga nagkalain lain na abilidad na mga bata. Nagtukod kini og kalig-on, pagkamapasiboon, ug mga kahanas sa pagsulbad sa problema lakip na sa pagpabasa ug pagsulbad sa maong problema sa matematika.*

(Volunteering as a teacher in a National Learning Camp offers many benefits, both personally and professionally. This program provided us with the opportunity to improve our teaching styles for children with different abilities. It helped build resilience, creativity, and problem-solving skills, including in reading and solving math problems).

Informant 2 also added the benefits he gained from the camp by saying that;

*Sa akong pagboluntaryo sa maong National Learning Camp, aduna pud mga benepisyo na makuha, dili lang sa kahanas sa pagtudlo sa mga bata, nakahatag pud kini ug kaalam sa kaugalingon tungod matun-an nimo ang mga lingaw nga mga estrahiya sa pagtudlo arun mas magparticipate sila sa klase ug naa silay matun-an. Nakakutlo ako og mga maayong estilo sa pagtudlo.*

(In my volunteering at the National Learning Camp, there are also benefits gained, not only in teaching skills for the children but also in self-awareness. I learned fun teaching strategies to make them participate more in class and help them learn. I was able to adopt good teaching styles)

**More Excited and Active Pupils During Sessions.** The participants observed that National Learning Camp sessions significantly increased student enthusiasm and engagement, as pupils became more excited to participate in interactive and hands-on learning activities. They emphasized that this heightened energy led to more active involvement, fostering a positive and dynamic classroom environment that enhanced overall learning outcomes, informant 5 emphasized that;

The advantages are that pupils are more excited and active during the sessions.

#### **4.2 What are the best practices of the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?**

This section presents the results to the second major research question ‘What are the best practices of the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?’ Three specific research questions were used to collect data for this question highlighting the best practices of the participants as national learning camp teacher-volunteers.

##### **4.2.1 Best Practices in the National Learning Camp**

The themes derived from the responses of the research informants to the specific research question 2.1 ‘What were the best practices in the National Learning Camp?’ are presented in this section. The themes were: address learning gaps and improve students’ performance, students are given more time on doing activities, and prioritize strong community participation and professional development.

**Address Learning Gaps and Improve Students’ Performance.** The participants emphasized the significance of identifying and addressing learning gaps during the National Learning Camp, which helped improve students' academic performance. They noted that through targeted interventions and personalized support, they were able to effectively enhance students' understanding of key concepts and foster their overall educational growth. Informant 1 had this to say that;

*Ang National Learning Camp (NLC) usa ka programa nga gi-design aron matubag ang mga gaps sa pagkat-on ug mapaayo ang pasundayag sa estudyante. Kini nagsiguro nga ang matag estudyante makadawat og targeted support bahin sa ilang kahuyang.*

(The National Learning Camp (NLC) is a program designed to address learning gaps and improve student performance. It ensures that every student receives targeted support for their weaknesses).

This was also affirmed by informant 2 highlighting the program's purpose, stating that;

*Ang maong programa maoy gimugna alang sa mga kabataan na adunay nagkalain-lain na abilidad sa mental ug physical arun mas muhanas pa ang ilang mga kakayahan sa klase ug matugunan ang mga panginahanglan sa mga bata labi na sa learning competencies.*

(The program was created for children with diverse mental and physical abilities to further develop their skills in class and address the needs of the students, especially in learning competencies).

**Students Given More Time on Doing Activities.** The participants highlighted the benefit of providing students with more time to engage in hands-on activities during the National Learning Camp, which facilitated deeper learning and skill development. They observed that extended activity time allowed students to better grasp concepts, practice problem-solving, and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. Informant 5 had this to say that;

*Kuan naga integrate meh og mga dula na makalingaw sa amoang lesson sa reading ug Mathematics para mas eager sila mutuon, maningkamot ug dili boring ang camp, tapos nagahatag pod meh og gamay na reward pareha anang makaon sa mga pupils namo na naay improvement magamay man o madako.*

(We integrate fun games into our lessons in reading and Mathematics to make the camp more engaging, so the students are more eager to learn, strive, and not find the camp boring. We also give small rewards, such as treats, to the students who show improvement, whether big or small).

This was also affirmed by informant 6 who stated that the activities are aligned with the learning needs of the students;

*Okay, based on my experience I have been the LAC the best practice in the NLC is that students given more time on doing activities at ang mga aktibidad ay naayon sa pagkatuto ng kabataan na bumasa at umintindi sa kanyang binasa.*

(The best practice in the NLC is that students are given more time to do activities, and the activities are aligned with the learning needs of the students to read and understand what they have read).

#### 4.2.2 Teacher-volunteer ways in Planning and Structure Lessons

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.2 ‘How did teacher-volunteers plan and structure lessons for the national learning camp?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, the themes generated were participate in LAC sessions, plan and structure the lesson collaboratively, and plan lesson ahead of time.

**Participate in LAC Sessions.** The participants highlighted their active participation in Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions as a vital strategy for planning and structuring lessons during the National Learning Camp. They shared that these sessions provided a platform for collaborative discussions, enabling them to exchange effective teaching strategies and align lesson plans with students' learning needs. Moreover, informant 1 noted that;

*Kami na mga boluntaryong magtutudlo miapil sa mga sesyon sa LAC, diin nakigtambayayong kami sa mga kauban aron hisgutan ang pag-uswag sa estudyante, ipaambit ang labing maayo nga mga gawi, ug magplano sa mga leksyon nga magkauban. Nagdumala kami og mga pagsusi aron mailhan ang mga kakulangan ug kusog sa pagkat-on sa indibidwal nga estudyante arun mabutang sila sa camp kung asa sila haom.*

(We, the volunteer teachers, participated in LAC sessions, where we collaborated with colleagues to discuss student progress, share best practices, and plan lessons together. We conducted assessments to identify individual students' learning gaps and strengths to place them in the camp best suited to their needs).

**Plan and Structure the Lesson Collaboratively.** The participants emphasized the importance of collaboratively planning and structuring lessons with fellow teacher-volunteers to ensure effective delivery during the National Learning Camp. They noted that this approach allowed them to share insights, align teaching methods, and create cohesive lesson plans tailored to address students' specific learning gaps. Also, informant 3 noted that;

*Ang mga leksyon gibase sa mga tema o modules nga progressive, diin gikan sa pinakasimple hangtod sa komplikado nga mga konsepto. Kami mga teacher-volunteer gisigurado nga ang mga estudyante nakakuha ug pagsabot sa usa ka lebel sa leksyon bag-o pa mopadayon sa mas taas nga lebel. Para sa mga estudyante nga luyohan ang performance, ang mga magtutudlo nagtutok sa pagtul-id sa ilang mga kalisdanan sa mga basic skills, sama sa Matematika ug Iningles. Alang sa mga maayo na ang performance, gitutokan ang paghatag og mas labaw nga enhancement lessons. Ang mga magtutudlo gigamit ang interactive nga mga pamaagi sa pagkat-on, nga adunay mga dula, aktibidad, ug group discussions aron mas makapaengganyo sa estudyante sa ilang pagtuon. Ang kolaborasyon taliwala sa mga estudyante ug sa mga magtutudlo nakapalig-on sa mas maayo nga koneksyon para sa pagkat-on.*

(The lessons were based on progressive themes or modules, starting from the simplest to more complex concepts. We, as teacher-volunteers, ensured that students fully understood one level of the lesson before progressing to a higher level. For students with lower performance, teachers focused on addressing their difficulties with basic skills, such as Mathematics and English. For those already performing well, the focus was on providing advanced enhancement lessons. Teachers utilized interactive learning approaches, incorporating games, activities,



and group discussions to make learning more engaging for the students. The collaboration between students and teachers fostered stronger connections that supported more effective learning).

#### 4.2.3 Instructional Techniques Employed to Engage Students during the Learning Camp

This section presents the results to the specific question 2.3 ‘What instructional techniques did teacher-volunteers employ to engage students during the learning camp?’ After subjecting the responses to content analysis, these themes were drawn: differentiated instructions for learners and making experience more fun and practical.

**Differentiated Instructions for Learners.** The participants emphasized the importance of using differentiated instruction to cater to the diverse learning needs of students during the National Learning Camp. They noted that by adjusting teaching strategies and materials, they were able to provide personalized support, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their ability levels, could actively engage and succeed. Informant 1 highlighted the varied approaches used by teacher-volunteers to keep students engaged, sharing that;

*Ang mga magtutudlo-boluntaryo sa National Learning Camp migamit ug lain-laing mga pamaagi sa pagtutudlo aron mapadayon ang mga estudyante nga moapil ug madasig pareha sa, mga fun and interactive activities na giapply sa reading ug sa mathematics sa elementary. We applied differentiated instructions for learners needs.*

(The teacher-volunteers in the National Learning Camp used various teaching methods to keep students engaged and motivated, such as fun and interactive activities applied in reading and mathematics in elementary. We applied differentiated instructions for learners' needs).

**Making Experience More Fun and Practical.** The participants highlighted the value of incorporating enjoyable and practical activities to make the learning camp sessions more engaging for students. They noted that hands-on experiences and real-world applications fostered a deeper understanding of the lessons, making learning both meaningful and memorable. Informant 4 shared the effectiveness of game-based approaches combined with structured teaching methods, stating;

(We are using the game-based approaches aside from the “I do, we do and you do” techniques, which help learners feel alive and alert).

Adding to this, Informant 5 highlighted the role of interactive games in maintaining student focus and motivation, saying that;

*Teacher-volunteers do an interactive game that is related to the topics for them to be more attentive and active then reward system like makaon.*

(Teacher-volunteers conduct interactive games related to the topics to make the students more attentive and active, then implement a reward system, such as giving snacks).

#### 4.3 What are the challenges encountered by the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of the challenges employed by the teachers as national learning camp teacher-volunteers. This was the gist of the third major research question, ‘What are the challenges encountered by the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?’ Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

##### 4.3.1 Challenges Encountered as National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteer

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 3.1, ‘What challenges have you encountered as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?’ The themes were need to be flexible, creative and lot of patience, limited time, and lack printing materials and expenses.

**Need to be Flexible, Creative and Lot of Patience.** The participants emphasized the necessity of being flexible, creative, and patient to address the diverse needs of students during the learning camp. They shared that these qualities helped them adapt to unexpected challenges, ensuring effective delivery of lessons and maintaining a positive learning environment. Informant 1 shared that the challenges encountered in the program required flexibility, creativity, and a great deal of patience, particularly in the intervention camp. They noted that;

*Nakabatun kami og mga hagit sa amo nasinatian sa maong programa sama sa nanginahanglan na ikaw flexible, creative sa maong pagtudlo ug dakong pasensya sa mga bata labi na sa intervention camp. I learned to rely on my fellow volunteers, labi na sa teaching strategies para mas mudasig ug magpadayun sa klase ang mga bata. Ang kasinatian nagtudlo kanako nga ang pagtudlo dili lamang mahitungod sa paghatag og kahibalo; mahitungod kini sa pagtukod og mga relasyon, pagpalambo sa gugma sa pagkat-on, ug pagmugna og usa ka mapaluyohon nga palibot diin ang mga bata mahimong molambo.*

(We faced challenges in the program, such as the need to be flexible, creative in teaching, and have great patience with the children, especially in the intervention camp. I learned to rely on my fellow volunteers, especially for teaching strategies, to motivate and keep the children engaged in the class. The experience taught me that teaching is not just about providing knowledge; it is about building relationships, fostering a love for learning, and creating a supportive environment where children can thrive).

#### 4.3.2 Most Difficult Part as National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteer

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.2, ‘What do you think is the most difficult part as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?’ The themes created were heavy rain and lightning, short period of time, preparation due to limited resources, and handling diverse learners.

**Heavy Rain and Lightning.** The participants highlighted the challenges posed by heavy rain and lightning during the National Learning Camp, which often disrupted sessions and created safety concerns. They noted that these weather conditions not only delayed activities but also made it difficult to maintain a consistent learning environment for the students. Informant 2 said that:

*Isip usa ka boluntaryong magtutudlo sa maong programa, ang pinaka lisod nga parte para kanako, sa dihang makasinati kami og pagkusog nga pag-ulan ug pagkidlat, kay wala gayoy mutungha sa akong klase ug kini sakit kaayo sa parte isip usa ka dasig nga magtutudlo. Gawas sa gimingawan ako sa mga bata, ang akoang mga printed material usab dili mapuslan.*

(As a volunteer teacher in this program, the hardest part for me is when we experience heavy rain and lightning, because none of the students show up for my class, and it is very disheartening as an enthusiastic teacher. Aside from missing the students, my printed materials are also rendered useless).

**Short Period of Time.** The participants expressed difficulty with the short period of time allocated for the National Learning Camp, which limited their ability to cover all planned lessons effectively. They noted that the time constraints made it challenging to address individual student needs and fully explore the topics, leaving them with a sense of unfinished goals.

Also, informant 4 cited that;

The most difficult part is the short period of time in every learning competency.

Furthermore, informant 9 shared that;

*The most difficult is ang kagamay sa span sa time, daghan dapat ang matun-an sa estudyante kung taas ang span sa time.*

(The most difficult part is the short span of time; students should be able to learn a lot if the time span were longer).

#### 4.3.3 Disadvantages as National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteer

Presented in this section are the themes drawn from the responses to the specific question 3.3, ‘What are the disadvantages as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?’ the themes generated were delayed compensation, sacrificing family time, and limited resources and tiredness.

**Delayed Compensation.** The delay in compensation became a challenging reality for teacher-volunteers, casting a shadow on their enthusiasm despite their commitment. This financial uncertainty, though temporary, often diverted their attention from the joy of teaching, leaving them with the constant reminder of pending rewards for their hard work.

Informant 1 cited that;

*Para sa amoa, ang mga boluntaryo mahimong dili dayun makadawat og bayad alang sa ilang oras ug paningkamot. Kinahanglan ka mahimong resourceful kung gutomon ka sa imo klase.*

(For us, the volunteers may not immediately receive payment for their time and effort. You need to be resourceful if you are hungry in your class).

Moreover, informant 2 said that;

*Isip usa ka boluntaryong magtutudlo, dinhi gyud masukod amoang taas nga pasensya, pagpailob ug pagkamangihatagon labi na sa mga kabataan kay tungod wala kami aktwal nga budget nga magamit sa maong programa. Mao dili gayud malikayan nga makakoot sa kaugalingong bulsa arun makapadayon sa maong misyon alang sa mga kabataan.*

(As a volunteer teacher, this is where our high patience, perseverance, and generosity are truly tested, especially with the children, because we do not have an actual budget to use for the program. That is why it is inevitable to dip into our own pockets to continue this mission for the children).

**Sacrificing Family Time.** Teacher-volunteers found themselves torn between their commitment to the National Learning Camp and the need to be present for their families, often missing important moments at home. While their passion for teaching was unwavering, the sacrifices made in family time were a constant reminder of the personal costs involved in their service. To begin with, Informant 3 shared that one of the disadvantages of volunteering in the National Learning Camp is the necessity of sacrificing personal responsibilities. They stated that;

*Usab, ang pagbiya sa personal nga mga responsibilidad dili malikayan. Aron makapokus sa boluntaryong serbisyo, tungod kay natunong kini sa bakasyon kinahanglan mabiyaan sa ang mga personal nga buluhaton ug pamilya. Kini mahimong magdala og tensyon sa mga relasyon ug personal nga kinabuhi, tungod kay ang pagbalanse sa boluntaryong serbisyo ug mga responsibilidad sa pamilya mahimong maglisod. Bisan pa man niana, ang pagtabang sa mga estudyante sa ilang pag-uswag ug pagkat-on naghatag og kahulugan sa akoo isip usa ka magtutudlo.*

(Also, leaving personal responsibilities is unavoidable. To focus on volunteer service, especially since it coincides with the vacation period, personal tasks and family obligations must be put aside. This can lead to tension in relationships and personal life, as balancing volunteer service with family responsibilities can be challenging. Despite this, helping students in their development and learning gives meaning to me as a teacher).

#### **4.4 What are the coping mechanisms employed by the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?**

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their insights gained of the participants as national learning camp teacher-volunteers. This was the gist of the fourth major research question, ‘What are the coping mechanisms employed by the national learning camp teacher-volunteers in the Department of Education?’ Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

##### **4.4.1 Strategies Used in Dealing with the Challenges**

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 4.1, ‘What strategies did you use in dealing with the challenges as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?’ The generated themes were- embrace collaboration, apply learnings and self-confidence, and do adjustment and apply flexibility.

**Embrace Collaboration.** Teacher-volunteers highlighted the importance of embracing collaboration as a powerful tool in overcoming challenges during the National Learning Camp. By working closely with fellow volunteers, they shared resources, strategies, and emotional support, creating a united front that enhanced the overall learning experience for students. Moreover, informant 1 stated that;

*Kinahanglan gyud namo e embrace ang collaboration, nakaamgo ko nga dili nako mahimo ang tanan nga ako ra. Kinahanglan nako ang pagsalig sa akong mga kauban nga mga boluntaryo, nagpaambit kami sa mga ideya, nag-brainstorming og mga solusyon, ug nagsuporta sa usag usa. Naghimo kami og usa ka lig-on nga mga boluntaryo. Nahimo ming resourceful labi na sa pagprepare sa mga learning materials.*

(We really need to embrace collaboration. I realized that I can't do everything on my own. I need to trust my fellow volunteers, we share ideas, brainstorm solutions, and support each other. We built a strong volunteer team, and we became resourceful, especially in preparing the learning materials).

**Apply Learnings and Self-confidence.** Teacher-volunteers emphasized the value of applying their learnings and building self-confidence as essential strategies for navigating the challenges faced during the National Learning Camp. This approach not only helped them grow as educators but also empowered them to tackle obstacles with a sense of resilience, ultimately improving their effectiveness in the classroom. Informant 2 stated that;

*Kinahanglan gayud I-apply ang tanang nakat-unan sa National Learning Camp Orientation ug uban pang estratehiya arun masuloyunan ang nagkadaiyang pagsulay sa maong programa, pagsalig sa kaugalingon, sa mga kaubanan ug labaw sa tanan ang pagsalig sa atuang labaw nga makagagahom sa kahitas-an arun makab-ot ang maong tumong sa maong programa.*

(It is essential to apply all the lessons learned from the National Learning Camp Orientation and other strategies to address the various challenges of the program, including self-confidence, trust in colleagues, and most importantly, trust in our higher authority to achieve the goals of the program).

#### 4.4.2 Ways in Fostering Resilience as National Learning Camp Teacher-volunteer

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 4.2, 'How did you foster resilience as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?' The themes were- seek support and guidance from colleagues, be ready ahead of time, and focus on developing safe and supported environment.

**Seek Support and Guidance from Colleagues.** Teacher-volunteers highlighted the significance of seeking support and guidance from their colleagues to build resilience throughout the National Learning Camp experience. Collaborating with fellow educators allowed them to share insights, solve problems collectively, and maintain a sense of community that helped them navigate challenges more effectively. Informant 1 emphasized the importance of seeking support and guidance from colleagues to effectively fulfill their responsibilities as a volunteer teacher. She shared that:

*Pinaka una nako gibuhat ang pag seek support ug guidance gikan sa mga kaubanan para mabuhat nako ako buluhaton isip usa ka boluntaryong magtutudlo. Kung aduna pud koy kakulangon, ginadawat nako ug mas midasig pako sa pagtudlo kay aduna may nagsuporta ug mitabang na mga kaubanan.*

(The first thing I did was seek support and guidance from my colleagues to fulfill my duties as a volunteer teacher. Whenever I encountered shortcomings, I accepted them, and it motivated me more in teaching because there were colleagues who supported and helped me).

**Be Ready Ahead of Time.** Teacher-volunteers emphasized the importance of being prepared ahead of time to effectively manage the challenges encountered during the National Learning Camp. By planning and organizing lessons and materials in advance, they were able to reduce stress, stay adaptable, and focus more on student engagement and learning outcomes.

In addition, informant 4 said that;

Learning camp teacher-volunteer should be ready ahead of time with the materials needed so that teacher-volunteer is comfortable and no hassle and less stress.

#### 4.4.3 Solutions Employed on the Challenges Encountered

The results in this section were taken from the responses to the specific research question 4.3, 'What solutions did you employ on the challenges you encountered as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?' The themes drawn from the responses were embrace collaboration, sharing ideas and brainstorming and lot of patience.

**Embrace Collaboration, Sharing Ideas and Brainstorming.** In the face of challenges, teacher-volunteers found that embracing collaboration and brainstorming sessions sparked a wave of creativity and unity. By sharing diverse ideas and perspectives, they crafted adaptive solutions, turning obstacles into opportunities for growth and enhancing both their teaching strategies and the learning experience for their students.

Informant 1 shared that they embraced collaboration and idea-sharing, particularly when addressing challenges such as student absences. He said that;

*Ang ginabuhay namo ay nag embrace mig collaboration, sharing ideas ug brainstorming sa mga solutions, naga seek support mi sa among school head ug nangita mig pamaagi para mapadayun ang maayong pagtudlo sa Kabataan, labi na ang absences, para maiwasan na, nagahatag mig snacks sa mga bata.*

(What we are doing is embracing collaboration, sharing ideas, and brainstorming solutions. We seek support from our school head and find ways to continue good teaching for the children, especially regarding absences. To address this, we provide snacks to the students).

#### 4.5 What are the insights gained by the participants as volunteers in the national learning camp in the Department of Education?

This section presents the results on the viewpoints of the research participants of their insights gained as volunteers in the national learning camp. This was the gist of the fifth major research question, 'What are the insights gained by the participants as volunteers in the national learning camp in the Department of Education?' Three specific research questions were utilized to gather data and information.

##### 4.5.1 Things Learned as National Learning Camp Teacher-volunteer

In this section, the themes created were from the responses to specific research question 5.1, 'What are the things you have learned as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?' The generated themes were- great patience and building strong relationship, collaboration and sharing ideas provides effective solution, and importance of flexibility in teaching.

**Great Patience and Building Strong Relationship.** Through their experience as teacher-volunteers, they learned the importance of patience in building strong relationships with both students and colleagues. This approach not only enhanced their ability to connect with diverse learners but also fostered a supportive and collaborative learning environment throughout the camp. Further, informant 1 stated that;

*Isip usa ka boluntaryong magtutudlo, ang mga butang na nakahatag kanako ug dakong kutlo sa maong programa ay ang dakong pasensya sa mga hagit na naagian sa panahon sa klase. Ang pagtukod og tinuod nga relasyon uban sa mga estudyante mas importante kay sa akong gihunahuna. Dili igo ang paghatod lang og impormasyon; Kinahanglan nakong masabtan ang ilang mga kaagi, ilang mga interes, ug ilang talagsaon nga mga hagit.*

(As a volunteer teacher, the things that have given me great insight into this program are the immense patience required to face the challenges during class time. Building genuine relationships with the students turned

out to be more important than I initially thought. It's not enough to just deliver information; I need to understand their experiences, interests, and unique challenges).

**Collaboration and Sharing Ideas Provides Effective Solution.** The teacher-volunteers discovered that collaboration and sharing ideas were powerful tools for overcoming challenges during the camp. By exchanging strategies and insights, they were able to develop more effective solutions that improved both their teaching approaches and student engagement. Informant 3 stated that;

*Ikaduha, ang pagtrabaho uban sa mga kauban nga magtutudlo ug mga volunteer usa ka dako nga oportunidad sa pagkat-on sa mga bag-ong pamaagi sa pagtudlo. Nakita nako nga ang kolaborasyon ug pagpaambit sa ideya mahimong makahatag og mas epektibo nga mga solusyon sa mga problema nga atong giatubang sa klase.*

(Secondly, working with fellow teachers and volunteers is a great opportunity to learn new teaching methods. I have realized that collaboration and sharing ideas can lead to more effective solutions to the challenges we face in the classroom).

#### 4.5.2 Suggestions to DepEd Officials Concerning the Responsibilities as National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteer

The theme created in this section was from the responses to the specific research question 5.2, 'What suggestions you can provide to DepEd officials concerning the responsibilities as national learning camp teacher-volunteer?' The themes were- provide learning materials, provides snacks to student during classes, and provide comprehensive training and orientation.

**Provide Learning Materials.** Teacher-volunteers emphasized the importance of providing adequate learning materials to ensure effective teaching and student engagement during the National Learning Camp. They suggested that these resources be made readily available to enhance instructional delivery and support diverse learning styles.

Moreover, informant 1 emphasized that;

*Ang akoang masulti, providan na gyud og printers ang mga school na adunay NLC Program para dili makaexperience og stress during the NLC Program.*

(What I can say is that schools with an NLC Program should really be provided with printers to avoid experiencing stress during the NLC Program).

#### 4.5.3 Hopes and Aspirations as National Learning Camp Teacher-Volunteer

The results in this section were taken from the responses to the specific research question 5.3, 'What are your hopes and aspirations as national learning camp teacher-volunteer in the Department of Education?' The themes drawn from the responses were- provide quality education and support to students and looking forward to enhance and continue the program.

**Provide Quality Education and Support to Students.** Teacher-volunteers expressed a strong desire to provide quality education and unwavering support to students, ensuring that every learner receives the attention and guidance needed for success. They hoped that their efforts would inspire students to reach their full potential and make a lasting impact on their academic journeys. Informant 1 expressed their desire to further improve the education system, particularly in helping children realize the significant impact of the National Learning Camp (NLC) in addressing their knowledge gaps. He emphasized that;

*Gusto nako nga mas mupalambo pa gyud ang sistema sa edukasyon labi na sa mga bata na makaamgo na aduna gyud dakong tabang ang NLC sa ilahang panginahanglan labi na sa kakulangan sa ilang kaalam.*

(I want to further improve the education system, especially for the children, so they can realize that the NLC truly provides great help in addressing their needs, particularly in the gaps in their knowledge).

**Looking Forward to Enhance and Continue the Program.** Teacher-volunteers expressed a strong aspiration to enhance and continue the National Learning Camp program, aiming to improve its structure and reach for future cohorts. They believed that through sustained efforts and reflection, the program could evolve to better meet the needs of students and volunteers alike, ensuring lasting educational impact. Informant 2 expressed their hope for the continued success of the National Learning Camp (NLC), noting that it plays a crucial role in preparing students for the school year. She highlighted that:

*Ang akong masulti bahin niini na unta magpadayun pa gyud ang NLC kay dako kaayo siyang tabang sa mga kabataan para mahimo silang ready sa pag abre sa klase ug nindot ang pamaagi sa paghatag og learning materials tungod naka base na kini sa nagkalain lain camp na haum gyud sa ilaha. Unta naa pa muabot na mga nindot na benepisyo para mas mudasig ang mga kabataan sa klase.*

(What I can say about this is that I hope the NLC program continues because it really helps the children to be prepared when school starts. The approach to providing learning materials is also great because it is based on various camps that are tailored to their needs. I hope more benefits come to further motivate the students in their classes).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The experiences of National Learning Camp teacher-volunteers demonstrated the significant impact such programs had on educators and students. Teacher volunteers enhanced their professional growth by adopting diverse teaching strategies and building meaningful, supportive connections with students, creating a positive and engaging learning environment. Their challenges, including limited resources and unpredictable weather, highlighted the importance of adaptability, collaboration, and resilience in overcoming obstacles. These findings emphasized the need for continued support from educational leaders and policymakers to maintain and enhance the program's effectiveness.

Moreover, the advantages of participating in the National Learning Camp, such as service credits, allowances, and professional development, were evident. Teacher volunteers actively engaged in reflective teaching practices and collaborative planning, improving their instructional methods and increasing student engagement. To ensure the program's continued success, it was essential for the Department of Education (DepEd) to provide the necessary resources and incentives, such as timely compensation and comprehensive training, to keep teachers motivated and supported. These elements were key to sustaining the program's success and impact.

Further, the findings highlighted areas where systemic improvements were needed, particularly in addressing resource scarcity and time constraints. Future research should focus on examining the long-term effects of the National Learning Camp on teacher development and student outcomes and exploring ways to optimize the program structure. Strengthening support mechanisms and providing adequate training would ensure that the program continues benefiting educators and students and plays a transformative role in the educational landscape.

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