



Navigating the Learning Landscape: Teachers' and Students' Experiences in the National Learning Camp Implementation

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Elaine S. Napalla¹, EdD, ORCID No. 0009-0005-0759-5945

Cecilia O Ares², PhD, ORCID No. 0000-0002-7851-631X

¹Senior High School Teacher II, Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School, Bagacay, Talibon, Bohol, Philippines

²Instructor, College of Education, University of Cebu-Main Campus, Sanciango Street, Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines

Abstract

This study explored the experiences of students and teachers in the implementation of the National Learning Camp (NLC) – a remedial and enrichment initiative of the Department of Education designed to address learning gaps and strengthen foundational skills at Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School in Talibon, Bohol. It focused on identifying the involvement of students and teachers in the program, the benefits they gained, the challenges they encountered, and their recommendations for improving the National Learning Camp implementation. Using a transcendental phenomenological design, fifteen informants were purposively selected, and data were gathered through one-on-one interviews, field notes, and audio recordings. Colaizzi's method guided the analysis. Results revealed key experiences in the NLC, highlighting active involvement through clear roles and engaging activities, benefits such as personal and professional growth and improved collaboration, and challenges related to limited resources and insufficient differentiation. Informants also expressed the need for improved support and learning resources. It is recommended that the NLC strengthen professional development initiatives and provide adequate resources and technological support to enhance engagement and program implementation. Future studies may consider larger samples, varied school contexts, or mixed method approaches to broaden insights into the program's effectiveness.

Keywords: National Learning Camp; teacher and student involvement; participation; professional development; collaboration; resource limitations; differentiated instruction



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INTRODUCTION

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine education system faced significant challenges, including learning loss, low academic engagement, and unequal access to quality instruction. These challenges were largely attributed to disruptions in instructional time, reduced opportunities for teacher-student interaction, and limitations in assessing and monitoring learners' academic progress. Long school closures and the shift to modular learning widened gaps in students' understanding of key subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and English. To address these problems, the Department of Education launched the National Learning Camp (NLC) as a program to bridge learning gaps and support academic recovery. The NLC is an academic

intervention program implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) to support learners' mastery of essential skills in key subject areas. It is designed to address learning gaps, strengthen foundational competencies, and enhance students' confidence through engaging and structured learning sessions conducted during the break period. The program also provides opportunities for teachers to apply differentiated instruction, collaborate with peers, and participate in capacity-building activities. Overall, the NLC aims to improve learning outcomes by providing additional support to both learners and teachers in a flexible, supportive, and activity-based environment.

The National Learning Camp (NLC), guided by DepEd Memorandum No. 340, s. 2024, is more

than a structured program; it is a dynamic space designed to bridge learning gaps while nurturing both students and teachers. The memorandum outlines the schedule, learner placement procedures, learning resources, and volunteer engagement, while also emphasizing the professional benefits teachers gain, including practical teaching experience, professional development, and support mechanisms that enhance instructional practice (Department of Education, 2024). Beyond these guidelines, Delmonte (2025) highlights how the NLC provides students with a supportive and focused environment where they gain confidence, strengthen foundational skills, and participate actively in interactive, teacher-guided learning. Teachers, in turn, reported improved instructional strategies, stronger collaboration with colleagues, and alignment with DepEd policies, although they also faced challenges such as declining attendance, limited resources, and the need for differentiated instruction. Similarly, Soria (2024) found that teachers consider the NLC an effective intervention for addressing post-pandemic learning gaps, employing a variety of teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs, despite resource constraints.

Research shows that the National Learning Camp (NLC) effectively supports both academic and socio-emotional growth among students. According to Lynch, Lanteri, An, Mancenido, & Richardson (2025), the program increased learners' curiosity, confidence, resilience, and interpersonal skills while strengthening character traits such as honesty and responsibility. Nevertheless, the study also identified challenges, including irregular student attendance, limited parental involvement, and increased teacher workload. In a related study, Visca and Pelayo (2024) reported that the NLC fostered highly engaging, collaborative, and student-centered learning environments, which enhanced student participation and promoted professional growth among teachers, who adopted more interactive and reflective teaching methods. However, some teachers raised concerns about effectively managing resources.

In mathematics instruction, the NLC produced both encouraging outcomes and notable challenges. Insorio and Manalo (2025) reported that students and teachers generally rated learning activities positively, with students benefiting from group discussions and hands-on exercises. Despite these gains, teachers struggled with errors in printed materials, lessons that were overly broad or difficult to contextualize, and time-consuming preparation. Similarly, Vale & Barbosa, 2023 (2024) found that the most effective teaching methods included group discussions and hands-on activities that promoted engagement and motivation. However, "fun-filled" activities received mixed feedback, practical challenges arose, and perceptions of critical thinking gains varied among students.

Quantitative studies have further demonstrated the NLC's impact on student achievement. Batacan (2025) found that performance in the San Emilio District's NLC was positively correlated with resource availability, although achievement varied depending on student profile, highlighting equity considerations. Olaivar and Pabalan (2025) also confirmed that the NLC enhanced literacy and numeracy skills, citing differentiated instruction, activity-based learning, and community support as key success factors. Despite these positive outcomes, challenges persisted, including limited materials, increased teacher workload, inconsistent student attendance, and budgetary constraints.

Internationally, similar summer programs have produced comparable results. Pyne, Messner, and Dee (2021) found that a US-based summer learning program for low-income middle school students reduced chronic absenteeism, unexcused absences, and suspensions, while modestly improving English Language Arts performance. Moreover, Muir, Orlando, and Newton (2024) reported that summer programs for disadvantaged youth improved GPA, engagement, and socio-emotional competencies. Additionally, Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse (2000) emphasized that remedial summer

interventions were most effective when they included individualized or small-group instruction, maintained high instructional intensity, and actively engaged students. However, all three studies noted that program effectiveness depended on careful design, consistent attendance, and sufficient resources.

Targeted summer interventions also demonstrated strong effects on cognitive and motivational outcomes. Lynch, An, and Mancenido (2022) found that students in summer mathematics programs significantly outperformed control groups, with additional gains in motivation, self-efficacy, and engagement. Bradford, Beier, and Oswald (2021) reported that STEM bridge programs improved first-year college GPA and retention, particularly for underrepresented students. Meanwhile, Seung and Park (2025) found that a week-long science camp enhanced elementary students' science identity, intrinsic interest, and perceptions of scientists, with many expressing greater interest in STEM careers. Collectively, these studies highlight that well-structured programs combining academic and hands-on experiences support both learning and engagement.

Despite these successes, challenges remain in the NLC's implementation. Delmonte (2025) observed that while students gained academic confidence and engagement, teachers faced issues such as declining attendance, limited resources, and the need for differentiated instruction. Similarly, Soria (2024) highlighted that although teachers viewed the NLC as an effective intervention for addressing post-pandemic learning gaps, resource limitations constrained program delivery. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that while the NLC and similar summer programs can significantly enhance student learning and teacher development, their success depends on thoughtful program design, equitable access, and adequate resourcing, and further studies are still needed to explore the full impact, influence and potential improvements of the NLC program.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study used a transcendental phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of teachers and students in implementing the National Learning Camp (NLC) at Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School in Bohol. This approach allowed the researcher to capture authentic perceptions, emotions, and meanings while minimizing bias. Data were gathered through interviews, field notes, and audio recordings to document participants' genuine experiences during the program.

The research was conducted at Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School, a well-established institution with complete facilities and active NLC implementation. A total of nine teachers and six students participated, selected through criterion-based purposive sampling. Nine teachers were chosen based on their prior involvement in NLC implementation, completion of related training, and willingness to share their insights. Six students were selected for their consistent attendance, active participation, and observable academic progress during the program. All participants were assigned coded identifiers to ensure confidentiality and organized data handling.

A validated interview guide with open-ended questions served as the primary research instrument, focusing on involvement, benefits, challenges, and suggested improvements. Interviews lasted 20–30 minutes and were conducted in a quiet setting, supported by field notes and audio recordings. Data saturation was reached when no new insights emerged. Transcribed interviews were returned to participants for validation, ensuring accuracy and credibility.

Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) method, which involved extracting significant statements, formulating meanings, clustering themes, and developing an exhaustive description of participants' experiences. Ethical protocols were strictly observed, beginning with the submission of research permits and

the securing of formal approval from the school head of Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained through coded identifiers following the provisions of the Data Privacy Act. Trustworthiness was strengthened through credibility checks, triangulation of data sources, an audit trail of research procedures, and researcher reflexivity, ensuring an accurate and unbiased representation of teachers' and students' experiences in the NLC program.

RESULTS

The experiences of the informants provide a comprehensive understanding of how the National Learning Camp (NLC) is implemented in a public-school setting. Through the shared narratives of teachers and students, the researcher systematically analyzed the data using Colaizzi's method, which involved extracting significant statements, formulating meanings, and clustering related ideas. From this rigorous process, eight significant themes emerged, revealing both the strengths and gaps of the program. These themes capture the informants' levels of involvement, the benefits they gained, the challenges they encountered, and their aspirations for improving the overall implementation of the NLC.

The themes identified from the experiences of the students and teachers in the implementation of NLC are as follows:

1. Active Participation and Sense of Ownership
2. Clearly Defined Roles and Engaging Activities
3. Personal and Professional Development
4. Collaboration and Communication
5. Resources Limitations
6. Lack of Differentiation and Limited Student Engagement
7. Enhanced Professional Development and Support
8. Resources and Technology Improvements

Theme 1. Active Participation and Sense of Ownership. This theme reflects the shared

responsibility demonstrated by both teachers and students throughout the NLC. Students actively engaged in learning tasks, contributed to class activities, and displayed accountability for their progress, which was evident in their willingness to participate, ask questions, and support peers during sessions. Teachers likewise showed ownership by carefully planning lessons, adjusting strategies based on learners' needs, and closely monitoring student performance to ensure that learning goals were met. This strong sense of involvement from both sides indicates that the NLC was not merely a mandated program but an experience they personally valued and invested in. Its implications are noteworthy: active participation enhances engagement and confidence among students, while teacher ownership leads to more responsive and effective instruction. Together, these behaviors promote a more meaningful and sustainable implementation of the NLC, contributing to improved learning outcomes and a stronger collaborative learning environment.

The responses from teachers and students reveal a shared sense of active participation and ownership in the NLC. Students engaged in learning by listening, participating, and taking responsibility for their progress, reflecting Zimmerman's (2002) view on self-regulated learning and Deci and Ryan's (2000) emphasis on autonomy and competence. Teachers demonstrated their commitment by creating supportive classrooms, monitoring student progress, providing constructive feedback, and adapting instructional strategies, thereby showing ownership through innovation and reflection. Informants 1 and 3 have both shared that:

"Aktibo akong nagpaminaw sa akong mga maestra, muapil kon naai aktibidad, ug ginasisiguro ko nga mafeel naku ang responsibilidad sa akong kaugalingon nga dapat makat-on jud ko sa akong kaugalingong pamaagi (IDI 1-1-SS 1). (I actively listen to my teachers, participate in activities when available, and make sure that I feel the responsibility to learn in my own way)."

“Ang akong papel sa pagpahigayon sa NLC kay isip usa ka estudyante, nga magpaminaw ug aktibo nga magkat-on sa mga topiko nga hisgutan sa NLC. Isip estudyante, akong responsibilidad nga magtuon ug makat-on sa mga butang nga angay nakong mahibal-an sa implementasyon sa NLC. Ako nagpasalig nga tinuod nga pagatumanon ang akong papel isip estudyante-volunteer sa pagpahigayon sa NLC ug akong responsibilidad nga makat-on sa akong kaugalingong pamaagi (IDI 3-1-SS 17). (My role in the implementation of the NLC was as a student, the one that will listen and actively learn from the topics tackle in the NLC. As a student, it is my role to study and learn the things that i should learn in the NLC implementation. A am fully committed to fulfill my role as student-volunteer in the implementation of NLC and my responsibility to learn on my own ways).”

Furthermore, informant 8 added:

“Ako usa ka boluntaryong magtutudlo, ug nag-check ko sa attendance sa mga estudyante, nag-monitor sa ilang progreso, ug nag-facilitate sa proseso sa pagtudlo ug pagkat-on. Nakigkomit ko sa akoang papel sa pagpatuman sa NLC. Nakigkomit ko sa akong responsibilidad sumala sa akong gimbuhaton (IDI 8 -1-SS 60). (I am a teacher volunteer, and I do check the student's attendance, check learners progress, facilitates in teaching-learning process and I am devoted to do my role in the NLC implementation. I am committed to do my responsibility in line with my role).”

Theme 2. Clearly Defined Roles and Engaging Activities. This theme highlights how structured responsibilities and stimulating tasks contributed to a more organized and meaningful NLC experience. For teachers, clearly assigned roles such as lesson facilitator, activity coordinator, or learning progress monitor allowed them to execute their duties with confidence and consistency. Students likewise understood their roles as active learners, group collaborators, and participants in skill-building tasks, which helped them stay focused and motivated. Engaging activities, such as interactive discussions, hands-on exercises,

group tasks, and skill-based challenges, further strengthened participation by making learning enjoyable and relevant. These elements ensured that both teachers and students knew what was expected of them, reducing confusion and promoting smoother program flow. The implications of this theme are significant: when roles are well-defined and activities are engaging, students become more motivated and responsive, while teachers can manage classroom dynamics more effectively. This alignment fosters a supportive and productive environment that enhances learning outcomes and strengthens the overall implementation of the NLC.

Based on the informants' responses, “Clearly Defined Roles and Engaging Activities” surfaced, highlighting how clarity in responsibilities and active participation shaped the learning experience. Students reported that knowing their roles, listening attentively, joining discussions, completing tasks, and taking initiative kept them focused and accountable, reflecting Bandura's (1997) link between self-efficacy and clear expectations. Teachers also demonstrated role awareness by preparing lessons, providing feedback, and designing interactive activities to sustain engagement, aligning with Hattie's (2012) emphasis on instructional clarity and active strategies. This theme is evident when Informant 4 mentioned:

“Sa kada adlaw namati ako sa leksyon sa maestra, musuwat ug pasuwaton, muapil sa mga grupo, muhatag sa tubag, mangutana if dle makasabot, manggilabot labe na anang kalihukan nga daghan unya nanginahanglan nga mulihok ug magkat-on sa akong kaugalingon (IDI-4-2-SS-25). (Every day, I listen to the teacher's lesson, write and follow instructions, participate in group activities, provide answers, ask questions if I don't understand, and get involved, especially in activities that require cooperation from many people and learning on my own).”

In another interview, Informants 12 and 14 highlighted clearly defined roles and a sense of ownership when they said:

“Pagtuon sa leksyon ug sa hangtod sa mahimo, himoa nga yano ug masabtan ang paghisgot sa topic, ug mag-andam og mga abot-kayang meryenda para sa mga estudyante. Gahemu usab ug mga aktibidad diin ang nga estudyante makalihok gayud ug makigtambayayong sa uban (IDI 12 -2-SS 105). (Study the lesson and as much as possible make the lesson simple and understandable way of discussion towards the topic and prepare affordable snacks for the students. I prepare activities which calls students to be interactive and collaborate with others).”

“Ang akong adlaw-adlaw nga mga kalihokan naglakip sa pag-andam sa mga leksyon ug kalihokan para sa mga estudyante ug pagmatuod sa progreso sa mga estudyante. Naga-andam ko og mga kalihokan nga interaktibo ug nagtugot sa mga estudyante nga makig-kooperar sa uban pang mga boluntaryo (IDI 14-2-SS-127). (My daily activities include preparing lessons and activities for the students and observe students' progress. I do prepare activities which are interactive and let the students collaborate with co-volunteers).”

Theme 3. Personal and Professional Development. The theme highlights how involvement in the NLC contributed to the growth of both teachers and students. For students, the program strengthened essential academic skills, boosted confidence, and helped them develop better study habits and learning attitudes. Many became more independent, responsible, and motivated as they experienced progress through the camp's structured activities. For teachers, participation served as a venue for professional growth, allowing them to refine instructional strategies, apply differentiated approaches, and deepen their understanding of learner needs. The NLC also encouraged teachers to collaborate, reflect on their practices, and enhance their competence in delivering remedial and enrichment lessons. The implications of this theme are considerable: as students gain foundational skills and confidence, their overall academic performance improves, while teachers who grow professionally are better equipped to provide

responsive and high-quality instruction. Ultimately, the development experienced by both groups contributes to a more effective and sustainable implementation of the NLC.

The responses of both teachers and students highlight the NLC's impact on personal and professional growth. Students gained confidence, responsibility, teamwork, and resilience through experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), while teachers refined their instructional strategies, classroom management, and collaboration skills (Guskey, 2002). This is highlighted when informants 2 and 5 stated:

“Nakahimo ako og pag-uswag ug pagpalambo sa akong mga kahanas sa pagsulbad sa mga problema sa matematika. Nakakuha ko og mga ideya kung unsaon pagpalambo sa akong pagkat-on sa akong kaugalingong ritmo ug mahimong responsable sa akong pagkat-on. Oo, ang mga magtutudlo nagtudlo kanamo sa pagsabot sa topiko, apan responsibilidad usab sa mga estudyante ang pagpangita og mga paagi aron makakat-on. Malipayon kaayo ako nga volunteer sa NLC kay sa akong tan-aw, pinaagi sa NLC, nakabati ko nga mas responsable ko, dili lang isip estudyante kundi isip tawo usab (IDI 2-3-SS 11). (I develop and enhanced my skills in problem solving math questions. I have gained insights on how to enhance my learning also at my pace and be responsible with my learning. Yes, the teachers helped us understand the topic, but it is the responsibility of the students to find ways to learned. I am happy that I volunteer in the NLC because I would say that through NLC I feel I am more responsible not just as a student but as a person as well).”

“Ang abilidad sa pagsabot, pag-analisar ug sa pagsulbad sa problema ang akong nakat-onan sa NLC. Nakat-on usab ako sa pagpalambo sa akong pakigsandurot sa uban, pagpalambo sa akong kahanas sa pakipagtrabaho sa uban, nakat-on pagcheck sa akong kaugalingon ug nakamao ko mo adjust sa akong response sa lain-lain sitwasyon (IDI-5-3-SS-35). (The ability to understand, analyze, and solve problems is what I learned in the NLC. I also

learned to improve my interaction with others, enhance my teamwork skills, learn to check myself, and how to adjust my responses to different situations).”

Additionally, Informant 11 narrated:

“Nakahatag kini kanako og pagbati nga ang akong panan-aw naglapad ug ang akong pagkat-on nag-uswag. Ang pakig-uban sa mga junior nga estudyante naghatag kanako og mga kasinatian nga akong matun-an unsang paagi ang pag-atubang kanila, unsang paagi ang pag-angay sa akong estilo sa pagtudlo, ug unsang paagi ang pagkamahimong flexible ug propesyonal. Nakabati ko nga daghan kaayo ko nga nahibal-an. Nakamatikod ko nga isip usa ka magtutudlo, responsibilidad usab nako ang pagtudlo kanila nga mahimong responsable sa ilang pagkat-on (IDI 11-3-SS 95). (It makes me feel that my horizon is widen and my learning is improving. Dealing with junior students gives me experiences whom I can learn to learn how to deal with them, learn to fit my teaching style to them, learn to be more flexible and professional I feel I learn a lot. I noticed that as a teacher, it is also my responsibility to teach them to be responsible with their learning as well).”

Theme 4. Collaboration and Communication. The theme underscores how the NLC fostered stronger teamwork and improved communication among both students and teachers. For students, working in groups allowed them to practice cooperation, share ideas, and support one another in completing tasks, which in turn strengthened their confidence and sense of responsibility. They learned to listen actively, express their thoughts more clearly, and rely on peer assistance when needed. For teachers, the NLC created opportunities for professional collaboration as they shared strategies, exchanged resources, and coordinated activities to address students’ learning gaps more effectively. This open communication among teachers helped build a supportive professional community and enhanced consistency in instructional approaches. The

implications of this theme are meaningful: improved collaboration and communication lead to a more positive learning environment, increased student engagement, and more unified and efficient teaching practices. Together, these interactions contribute to a smoother and more effective implementation of the NLC.

Responses indicate that collaboration and communication are key in the NLC program. Students improved teamwork and responsibility, while teachers shared strategies and supported one another. Informants noted that group discussions enhanced problem-solving and interaction skills, supporting Delmonte’s (2025) claim that programs like NLC foster a collaborative and communicative learning community. This was exemplified when informant 1 said:

“Nakapadako kini sa akong mga pagkat-on sa pagtrabaho kauban sa uban nga estudyante, nakahimu ko pagpaambit sa akong ideya, nakahemu pod ko ug solbad sa problema kauban sa ubang volunteers. Nakapauswag usab sa akong komunikasyon ug mga kahanas sa interaksyon, nakamao ko maminaw sa ideya sa uban ug nakat-on ko nga magkainteres sa mahinungdanun nga diskusyon (IDI 1-4-SS4). (This has greatly contributed to my learning in working with other students. I was able to share my ideas and also collaborate in solving problems with other volunteers. It also improved my communication and interaction skills. I learned how to listen to others’ ideas and became interested in engaging in meaningful discussions).”

Furthermore, informants 10 and 15 stated that: *“Ang NLC program nagpunting sa kahinungdanon sa pakigtambayayong ug komunikasyon sa mga edukador, nga nagdala sa pag-uswag sa usa ka mas kooperatibo ug supportive nga komunidad sa pagtudlo. Kini nagresulta sa pagbahinbahin sa mga labing maayo nga praktis ug mga inobatibong estratehiya sa pagtudlo sa mga partisipant. (IDI 10-4-SS 85). (The NLC program emphasized the importance of collaboration and communication*

among educators, which has led to the development of a more cooperative and supportive teaching community. This has resulted in the sharing of best practices and innovative teaching strategies among participants.)”

“Nakat-on ko sa pagpangandam sa akong kaugalingon gamit ang mga bag-ong estratehiya bahin sa proseso sa pagtudlo-pagkat-on. Napalapad nako ang akong kasinatian sa pagtudlo pinaagi sa kolaborasyon ug proseso sa mentoring isip kabahin sa mga kalihokan sa NLC, ug nakat-on ko usab bahin sa akong kaugalingon, sama sa kung giunsa nako pag-angay ang akong mga kalihokan ug pedagogiya alang sa lain-laing klase sa estudyante (IDI 15-6-SS-142). (I learned to equipped myself on new strategies as far as teaching-learning process is concern, I expand my teaching experiences by collaborating as well as mentoring process as part of the NLC activities and I learned more about myself like how I will fit my activities and pedagogies as far as the variety of students are concern).”

Theme 5. Resources Limitations. This theme reflects the significant challenges encountered by both teachers and students during the NLC. Participants described constraints such as insufficient learning materials, inadequate classroom supplies, limited instructional tools, and in some cases, lack of access to technology. These limitations made it difficult for teachers to prepare varied activities or implement differentiated instruction tailored to diverse learner needs. As a result, some students struggled to stay engaged, particularly when lessons became repetitive or when materials were insufficient to support hands-on or interactive tasks. The lack of differentiation further affected learners who required additional support or alternative learning approaches. The implications of this theme are important: limited resources hinder teaching effectiveness, reduce student motivation, and create inconsistencies in program delivery. Addressing these gaps is essential to improving the overall quality and equity of future NLC implementation.

The theme “Resource Limitations” emerged from informants’ responses as a key challenge in implementing the NLC. Students reported shortages of textbooks, notebooks, digital devices, and multimedia resources, while teachers faced insufficient teaching aids and technology, often having to improvise at their own expense. These constraints hindered participation, hands-on learning, and instructional efficiency, reflecting Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs and Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Theory. The theme is exemplified when informants 2 and 4 narrated:

“Base sa akong naagian, ang kalisod nga akong natagamtaman ky kanang kuwang ug mga magamit sa lekson, usa ra ang gigamit nga resources, photocopied, walay laing magamit nga makatabang unta para mas makasabot me. sa Science, imbes mag experiment, peru wala may magamit, sa Math usab mas maayu unta naai magamit na calculator (IDI-2-6-SS-6). (Based on my experience, the difficulty I encountered was the lack of lesson materials. Only one resource was used, which was photocopied, and there were no other materials that could have helped us understand better. In Science, instead of doing experiments, we couldn’t because there were no materials available. In Math, it would have been better if we had calculators to use.)”

“Nabati naku ang kakulangan sa mga materyales. Mas maayu unta nga daghan ug materyales para daghan kame ug tun-an. Wala usab kame na expose ug mga digital nga materyales. Mas maayu gayud unta ug daghan pa, para mas makasabot me (IDI-4-7-SS-31). (I felt the lack of materials. It would have been better if there were more materials so that we could learn more. We were also not exposed to digital materials. It would have been much better if there were more, so we could understand better.)”

Informant 8 added:

“Walay mga materyales nga dali makuha ug oo, usa ra ang gihatag sa amoang magtutudlo, ug kinahanglan pa namo kini i-print para sa mga

estudyante. Wala pud kami gihatagan og mga digital nga materyales ingon nga dugang nga mga kahimtang. Mas dako unta ang kahimtang namo kung adunay lain-laing mga materyales nga gihatag, parehong printed ug digital (IDI-8-7-SS-66). (No ready materials are available and yes there is only one given to us teacher, and we still have to print it for our students. We are not given also any digital materials as supplementary resources. It would have been very advantageous on our end if there are given variety of materials both the printed one and the digital one)."

Theme 6. Lack of Differentiation and Limited Student Engagement. This theme highlights how the absence of varied instructional approaches affected learners' participation and progress in the NLC. Without adjustments to match students' abilities, learning styles, or pacing needs, some struggled to keep up while others felt under-challenged, resulting in uneven learning experiences. This instructional gap was further compounded by activities that were not sufficiently interactive or stimulating, causing students to lose interest and reducing their willingness to participate. Teachers found it harder to sustain attention, manage classroom dynamics, and address individual needs when lessons lacked variety or adaptability. The implications of this theme are significant: insufficient differentiation can widen learning gaps, discourage student motivation, and diminish the overall effectiveness of the program. Ensuring responsive instruction and engaging activities is therefore essential to improving student participation and maximizing the impact of the NLC.

This theme highlights significant challenges in addressing diverse learning needs: a lack of differentiation and limited engagement can leave students unchallenged or disconnected, making it difficult for teachers to deliver effective instruction. Teachers often report that limited time, heavy teaching loads, and insufficient training make it hard for them to adapt lessons for varied learners—an issue echoed by Smale-Jacobse et al. (2019), whose systematic review shows that teachers

frequently struggle to implement differentiated instruction consistently because of systemic and classroom constraints. Likewise, when differentiation is insufficient or inconsistently applied, students' motivation, participation, and overall involvement tend to decrease. This aligns with the findings of Skinner and Belmont (1993), who demonstrated that supportive, adaptive, and responsive instruction significantly enhances student engagement, while less flexible approaches contribute to disengagement. Together, these studies underscore that personalization and instructional flexibility are essential for supporting diverse learners, but these are achievable only when teachers receive adequate time, training, and resources.

The theme is exemplified when informant 5 narrated that:

"Ang uban sa mga pulong dili masabtan, ug ang uban sa mga pangutana lisod usab sabton ky ako dle man kamao kaayu anang language. Usahay dle ko interesado sa mga leksyon ky dile ko ganahan, peru naa man pod hinuon nga topic nga interesado ko mao nga mo apil-apil ko. Mas maayu unya daghang klase ang mga ipabuhar para usab makapili me mga estudyante sa ganahan namu (IDI-5-7-SS-39). (Some of the words are hard to understand, and some of the questions are also difficult because I'm not very familiar with that language. Sometimes, I'm not interested in the lessons because I don't like them, but there are also topics that I'm interested in, so I participate. It would be better if there were different types of tasks to choose from so that we, the students, could pick what we like)."

Additionally, informants 9 and 15 added:

"Usa sa mga problema nga nakapukaw sa akong atensyon mao kung unsaon nako pag-motivate sa mga estudyante aron mahimong interesado sila sa mga kalihokan nga ilang buhaton. Daghan kaayong mga boluntaryo sa usa ka klase, apan mubo ra ang oras nga gihatag ug lisod kaayo para sa amoang mga magtutudlo ang magbago-bago sa mga

kalihokan tungod kay kinahanglan namo subayon ang oras (IDI-9-7-SS-77). (One of the problems that really strike me is how am I going to motivate students to be interested on the activities they ought to do. There are so many volunteers in 1 classroom, yet the time given is quite short and it is very impossible for us teachers to vary our activities since we need to keep track of the time)."

"Ingon usa ka magtutudlo, kinahanglan nako magbago-bago sa akong mga kalihokan aron matubag ang mga indibidwal nga kalainan sa akong mga estudyante. Kinahanglan nako mag-differentiate, apan lisod kini buhaton tungod sa kadaghan sa mga estudyante ug mga limitasyon sa oras. Busa, magresulta kini sa sitwasyon nga ang uban nga mga estudyante wala'y interes sa topiko. Mas maayo unta kung adunay lain-lain mga kalihokan aron mapukaw ang interes sa mga estudyant. (IDI-15-7-SS-143). (As a teacher I need to vary my activities to cater individual differences among my students. I need to differentiate but it was very hard to do because of the number of students and time constraints. Thus, it leads to scenario that some students are not interested to the topic. It would have been better, if there is variation of activities to stimulate the interest of students)."

Theme 7. Enhanced Professional Development and Support. It reflects the teachers' need for more sustained and structured guidance in implementing the NLC effectively. Participants expressed that while they were able to carry out their roles, they would benefit from more targeted training that focuses on practical strategies, updated instructional approaches, and clear expectations for NLC delivery. Beyond one-time orientations, teachers emphasized the value of ongoing mentorship, coaching, and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to refine their practices. They also noted that consistent administrative support such as accessible learning resources, timely communication, and recognition of their efforts would strengthen their confidence and motivation. The implication of this theme is that well-planned and continuous professional development not only improves teachers'

competence but also enhances the overall quality and sustainability of the NLC, ensuring that students receive more responsive and effective learning support.

This theme emphasizes continuous professional growth for NLC teacher-volunteers through targeted training, mentorship, and collaboration. Informants noted that structured development improves teaching strategies, confidence, and classroom management, while mentorship and team activities foster support, innovation, and professional camaraderie. These experiences align with Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which highlights scaffolding through social interaction, and Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasizes learning through reflection and application.

Informants 8 and 15 highlighted the importance of such training and team teaching when they said:

"Para kanako, ang labing maayo nga solusyon mao ang pagbansay. Ang mga guro nga boluntaryo kinahanglan mag-commit sa usa ka intensive nga pagbansay. Ang maong pagbansay maglakip sa preparasyon sa klase, presentasyon sa mga topiko o kompetensya, pagdumala sa classroom, pagdasig sa mga estudyante, unsaon paghatag og responsibilidad sa mga estudyante sa ilang kaugalingong pagkat-on, ug daghan pa. Ganahan usab ko sa scaffolding, busa ang mentoring para kanako importante usab. Ang mga kolaboratibong kalihokan angay hatagan og bili sa mga guro nga boluntaryo. Kini usa ka proseso nga duha ka dalan; ang matag magtutudlo makakat-on gikan sa usag usa, ug gawas sa camaraderie. Busa para kanako, ang pagbansay ug kolaborasyon kinahanglan kaayo (IDI 8 -8- SS 67). (For me, the best possible solutions are training. Teacher-volunteers should commit themselves for an intensive training. This training would include class preparation, class presentation of topics or competencies, classroom management, motivating students, how to make students responsible on their own learning and a lot

more. I am also fun of scaffolding thus mentoring for me is very essential also. Collaborative activities should be given importance among teacher's volunteers. This is a two-way process, each teacher learns from each other, and aside from fostering the value of cooperation, camaraderie as well is established, thus for me training and collaboration are much needed).

"Hugot ang akong pagtoo nga ang pagbansay-bansay importante kaayo alang sa mga guro nga boluntaryo aron mapunan sila sa dugang impormasyon ug kahibalo bahin sa ilang gipasan nga mga asignatura. Ang mga kolaboratibong kalihokan usa usab ka paagi nga ang mga magtutudlo makapadayon sa pagtudlo isip usa ka team, nga nagsuporta sa usag usa. Dili nato kalimtan nga ang matag magtutudlo adunay kaugalingon nga mga taktika, ug ang mga taktika nga kini mahimong maambit sa uban (IDI 15 -SS 144). (I believe that training is very essential among teacher-volunteers to equipped them with more information and knowledge regarding the subject matter they will handle. More collaborative activities as well sine this is one way that teachers could have team teaching a sort of scaffolding and let's not forget that every teacher has their tactics and that these tactics could be shared to others)."

Theme 8. Resource and Technology Improvements. This theme underscores the need for updated learning materials and modern digital tools to strengthen the delivery of the NLC. Informants noted that while the program was beneficial, its full potential could not be realized without adequate resources such as updated modules, visual aids, and functional classroom supplies. They emphasized that integrating technology such as laptops, projectors, interactive whiteboards, and multimedia platforms can make lessons more engaging, accessible, and aligned with students' varied learning styles. These tools help simplify complex concepts, sustain student interest, and support differentiated instruction. However, the limited availability of such resources constrained teachers' ability to innovate and provide more interactive learning

experiences. The implication of this theme is clear: improving both physical and technological resources is essential for creating a more dynamic, equitable, and effective learning environment, ultimately enhancing the overall implementation and impact of the NLC.

The integration of technology in the classroom is essential, according to Informants 12, 14, and 15.

"Ang mga interactive learning tools naghatag og access sa mga digital tools sama sa interactive whiteboards, tablets, o laptops. Ang mga himan makasuporta sa nagkalain-laing mga aktibidad sa pagkat-on, interactive nga mga leksyon aron mapadali ang assessment ug mapadayon ang pag-apil sa mga estudyante samtang ang mga magtutudlo nagpasintro sa mga inobatibong pamaagi sa pagtudlo (IDI 12 -11-SS 114). (Interactive learning tools, provide access to digital tools like interactive whiteboards, tablets or laptops. Tools could support variety of learning activities, interactive lessons to facilitate assessment keeping students engage while teachers are introducing innovative teaching methods)."

"Ang paghatag og laptops para sa mga magtutudlo ug estudyante makatabang sa pag-access sa mga digital resources nga mas sayon, ug ang pagbutang og mga projector o smart boards sa klasrum makapahimo sa leksyon nga mas makapadani ug visually interactive (IDI 14 -11-SS 136). (Providing laptops for teachers and students would help access digital resources more easily, and setting up projectors or smart boards in classroom could make lesson more engaging and visually interactive)."

"Mas maayo nga gamiton ang PowerPoint presentation ingon usa ka resource. Kini nga visual aid makatabang sa pag-organisar sa impormasyon sa mas epektibong paagi, nga nagpadali sa mga mag-aaral sa pagsunod ug pag-apil sa sulod, nga nagpauswag sa kinatibuk-ang kasinatian sa pagtudlo ug pagkat-on (IDI 15 -11-SS 147). (It is better to have a PowerPoint presentation as a resource. This

visual aid can help organize information more effectively, making it easier for learners to follow along and engage with the content, enhancing the overall teaching and learning experience).”

DISCUSSIONS

The study applied Colaizzi’s method (Colaizzi, 1978) within the transcendental phenomenological framework of Moustakas (1994) to analyze the lived experiences of teacher- and student-informants in the National Learning Camp (NLC). This systematic process enabled the extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, and the clustering of themes that reflect deeply rooted perceptions of the program’s implementation. Anchored on Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) and supported by Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1976) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), the findings demonstrate that learning within the NLC is shaped by meaningful experiences, social interactions, and the active involvement of both teachers and students.

The first major theme, Active Participation and Sense of Ownership, highlights the proactive engagement of both teachers and students in the NLC, reflecting their commitment to learning and teaching as a shared responsibility. For students, this meant not only attending sessions but actively setting personal learning goals, contributing to group tasks, asking questions, and taking accountability for their progress. Teachers, on the other hand, demonstrated ownership by tailoring instructional strategies, monitoring individual student performance, providing feedback, and supporting learners who struggled. This theme reflects meaningful involvement, where participants do not passively follow instructions but take initiative to maximize their learning or teaching impact. The implications of such engagement are significant: students who take ownership develop higher motivation, self-regulation, and confidence in their abilities, while teachers who invest in active facilitation can improve instructional effectiveness and

responsiveness to diverse learner needs. The theme aligns with Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism (1978), which emphasizes learning through meaningful social interactions, and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of engagement. Practically, fostering a sense of ownership encourages sustainable program participation, strengthens student-teacher collaboration, and promotes a culture of active learning that extends beyond the NLC sessions. The theme Clearly Defined Roles and Engaging Activities highlights the importance of structure and interaction in creating an effective and motivating learning environment within the National Learning Camp (NLC). When students and teachers understand their specific responsibilities, learning becomes more focused and purposeful, allowing students to actively participate, take ownership, and collaborate meaningfully. The clarity of roles reduces confusion and promotes accountability, while interactive, hands-on activities provide opportunities for experiential learning, reflection, and skill development. Theoretical frameworks such as Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) suggest that individuals perform optimally when expectations are clear, Constructivism (Bruner, 1996) emphasizes active knowledge construction through engagement, and Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory (1984) underscores the value of practical, cyclical learning experiences. Research supports that clearly defined roles and structured activities enhance participation, motivation, and learner satisfaction (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The implications are significant: students gain confidence, collaboration improves, teachers deliver instruction more effectively, and program success is reinforced through greater engagement and meaningful learning outcomes.

The experiences reported by both teachers and students in the NLC underscore the profound personal and professional growth facilitated by structured experiential learning. For teachers, the program offered opportunities to refine instructional strategies and deepen their

understanding of individual learner needs, fostering more responsive and effective teaching practices. Students, in turn, gained confidence, strengthened communication skills, and developed resilience traits essential not only for academic success but also for lifelong learning. These outcomes are aligned with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which emphasizes that learning is most impactful when individuals engage in concrete experiences followed by reflection, allowing knowledge and skills to be internalized. The implication is that well-designed experiential programs like the NLC do more than transmit content they shape learner attitudes, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability, promoting holistic development that extends beyond the classroom (Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Collaboration and communication emerged as central mechanisms for learning within the NLC, illustrating how social interactions enrich professional and academic growth. Teachers benefited from shared planning sessions and professional dialogues, which facilitated reflection on instructional practices and promoted collective problem-solving. Students, meanwhile, enhanced interpersonal skills, teamwork, and the ability to navigate diverse perspectives. These findings resonate with research on collaborative learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998) and Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which highlights that observation, interaction, and communication are integral to knowledge acquisition. The broader implication is that structured collaborative environments foster both social and cognitive development, equipping participants with critical communication and leadership skills that are transferable to other educational and professional contexts.

Despite these benefits, resource limitations posed a significant barrier to optimal program implementation. Shortages of materials, technological tools, and classroom resources hindered the delivery of fully engaging and interactive lessons. Theoretically, this aligns with Resource Dependency Theory (Pfeffer &

Salancik, 1978) and Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), which explain that organizational effectiveness depends on the availability and management of essential resources. Practically, inadequate resources constrain teachers' ability to implement innovative strategies and limit students' opportunities for enriched learning experiences. Studies have consistently shown that such limitations negatively affect instructional quality and student outcomes (UNESCO, 2020). The implication is that program success depends not only on pedagogical design but also on sufficient resource allocation and institutional support, highlighting the need for strategic investment in educational infrastructure.

Another significant challenge identified was the difficulty in providing differentiated instruction and maintaining student engagement. Learners struggled when activities did not align with their readiness levels, interests, or learning styles, reflecting the importance of adaptive instructional approaches. This challenge is grounded in Tomlinson's Differentiation Framework (2001), Jensen's work on engagement (2005), and Hattie's research on learning effectiveness (2009), all of which underscore that actively engaging students through tailored instruction enhances comprehension, motivation, and retention. The implications are clear: without intentional differentiation, students risk falling behind, and learning gaps may widen. For programs like the NLC, this highlights the necessity of continuous assessment, flexible lesson design, and targeted interventions to meet diverse learner needs effectively.

Finally, the need for enhanced professional development, structured mentoring, and improved access to technology was highlighted as essential for sustaining program quality. Teachers emphasized the value of training grounded in Adult Learning Theory (Knowles, 1984) and Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991), which promote reflective, experience-based learning for professionals. Both teachers and students underscored the

importance of technological support aligned with the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), ensuring that pedagogical knowledge, content expertise, and technological proficiency work synergistically. The implications of these findings are twofold: first, effective professional development equips educators to design and deliver high-quality instruction, and second, well-resourced classrooms foster meaningful student engagement. Together, these elements strengthen the overall impact of educational programs, ensuring that both teachers and students can maximize learning outcomes.

Conclusion. The study concludes that the implementation of the National Learning Camp (NLC) at Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School created meaningful learning experiences for both teachers and students, shaped by active participation, clearly defined roles, and engaging instructional activities. While the program fostered personal and professional growth, strengthened collaboration, and improved communication, it was also challenged by resource limitations, lack of differentiation, and varying levels of student engagement. Despite these constraints, the insights of the informants highlight the NLC's potential to enhance teaching and learning when supported by adequate resources, targeted professional development, and improved technological integration. Overall, the lived experiences of teachers and students affirm that the NLC is a valuable educational initiative that can be further strengthened to maximize its benefits and effectiveness.

Recommendations. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the implementation of the National Learning Camp (NLC) at Zosimo A. Gulle Memorial National High School and similar educational settings.

1. **Targeted Teacher Training for Differentiated and Technology-Enhanced Instruction.** Implement continuous, structured training programs for NLC teachers focused on differentiated instruction, learner-centered strategies, and the integration of technology.

Provide specialized coaching and mentoring sessions to build teachers' confidence and competence, ensuring they can design interactive lessons, manage diverse classrooms, and effectively use innovative learning materials before and during NLC implementation.

2. **Provision of Adequate Learning Materials and ICT Resources.** Allocate sufficient learning materials and technological tools, including modules, visual aids, ICT equipment, and digital platforms, to support interactive NLC activities. Ensure all devices are functional and that stable internet connectivity is available to facilitate real-time learning, multimedia integration, and smooth execution of program activities.
3. **Implementation of Differentiated Instruction and Engaging Learning Strategies.** Adopt differentiated instructional methods tailored to students' readiness levels, learning styles, and abilities. Incorporate hands-on activities, collaborative group tasks, varied assessments, and gamified learning experiences to maintain interest, increase participation, and improve knowledge retention throughout the NLC.
4. **Structured Collaboration and Communication Among Teachers, Leaders, and Parents.** Establish regular coordination among teachers, school leaders, NLC coordinators, and parents through scheduled planning meetings, progress updates, and feedback-sharing sessions. Implement a dedicated communication platform or system to provide timely program updates, address concerns, and ensure consistent alignment of goals and responsibilities.
5. **Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation for Continuous NLC Improvement.** Institutionalize a structured monitoring and evaluation framework to assess NLC effectiveness. Collect and analyze feedback from teachers and students to refine lesson plans, activity scheduling, and resource

distribution. Identify and replicate successful practices while addressing recurring challenges to enhance the quality of subsequent NLC cycles.

- 6. *Structured Support for Student Well-being and Academic Confidence.*** Provide structured guidance sessions, confidence-building workshops, and peer-support programs to strengthen student resilience, motivation, and self-esteem. Recognize and celebrate student progress to reinforce a positive learning environment and support continuous academic growth.

Collaboration among school administrators, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders is essential to the successful implementation of the National Learning Camp. Strengthened coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), local government units (LGUs), and barangay officials can help ensure adequate support, resource allocation, and monitoring throughout the program. Establishing clear communication channels, structured planning sessions, and consistent feedback mechanisms would enable schools to address student needs more effectively, improve instructional delivery, and ensure smoother program operations.

Moreover, schools should enhance their partnership with parents, local youth groups, and community organizations by forming committees dedicated to learning support, enrichment activities, and student motivation. Regular meetings, parent engagement programs, and community-based academic support initiatives can reinforce positive learning environments and encourage active participation in the NLC. Such collaborative efforts may help strengthen academic performance, promote learner confidence, and improve overall program effectiveness.

Additionally, teachers and school leaders should continue to engage students and their families through responsive feedback systems that allow them to share concerns, suggestions, or challenges related to attendance, learning progress, and motivation. Complementing these

mechanisms with academic enrichment sessions, wellness activities, and teacher-student mentoring can foster stronger relationships, improve learner engagement, and cultivate a shared sense of responsibility in achieving NLC goals.

The support of local government units is also crucial in ensuring effective NLC implementation. LGUs can assist schools by providing essential resources such as temporary learning spaces, instructional materials, transportation, and financial assistance for program logistics. They may likewise strengthen awareness by organizing community information drives, supporting school-based initiatives, and coordinating with barangay officials to encourage student attendance and parental involvement.

In addition, future research should explore the long-term effects of NLC participation on student learning outcomes, teacher motivation, and instructional practices. Studies may also assess the effectiveness of various school-community partnerships, resource provisions, and program adaptations across different contexts. Furthermore, researchers are encouraged to examine how systemic support such as improved working conditions, instructional training, and community engagement can enhance both teacher and student experiences in the implementation of the National Learning Camp.

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meaningful understanding of the NLC's implementation and offer valuable recommendations for future program enhancement.

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