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## TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES AND READINESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL LEARNING CAMP (NLC): BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

**MONALISA P. GENTIZON**

**Teacher I**

Nueva Valencia National High School

monalisa.gentizon@deped.gov.ph

### ABSTRACT

This research study aimed to determine teachers' experiences, challenges and readiness in the implementation of National Learning Camp (NLC) as bases for policy recommendation program using the phenomenological approach under qualitative method. The participants of the study were twenty (20) volunteer teachers to undertake in the study. Semi-structured interviews were selected to carry out the study. The study adopted a purposive sampling strategy and sought voluntary participation. The aim was to come up with a policy recommendation to enhance the implementation of National Learning Camp (NLC) in the secondary schools in the District of Nueva Valencia North, Guimaras. The data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire through in-depth interviews. The results revealed that the implementation of National Learning Camp helps the students to develop academically and encourage academic advancement and mastery of core subjects. The camp also serves as an avenue for the teachers to gain experiences from each other by sharing their best practices.

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**Keywords:** *National Learning Camp, Teachers' Challenges & Experiences, Policy Recommendation*

## INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English, a key driver of the Philippines' economy, stands in contrast to the challenges many learners face in mathematics. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering a positive attitude towards mathematics, while learners' perception of difficulty is influenced by their comprehension skills (Subia et al., 2018). A study in Africa suggests a strong correlation between English proficiency and success in mathematics (Howie, 2013).

Understanding content across academic courses requires reading comprehension and numeracy skills (Langoban, 2020). To thrive in a globally networked society, students need to learn how to use ICTs to find, understand, and respond to text (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2003; International Reading Association [IRA], 2009; National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2007). Literacy, encompassing access, management, understanding, and creation of information, and numeracy, involving number knowledge and problem-solving, are foundational to English and mathematics skills.

Applying these skills to real-life situations demonstrates comprehension, and proficiency in literacy and numeracy is crucial for navigating today's culture and making informed decisions. The Department of Education's (DepEd) MATATAG: Bansang Makabata, Batang Makabansa agenda, through DepEd Order No. 014, s. 2023, emphasizes learning

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recovery through the National Learning Camp (NLC), a voluntary program focusing on all subject areas, including Fundamental Mathematics and Fundamental English.

The NLC aims to address learning losses caused by the pandemic, offering enhancement, consolidation, and intervention programs for learners from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The researcher, a public school teacher, observes a need for enhancement in the NLC implementation. School heads should ensure readiness, teacher preparation, and stakeholder awareness through thorough information dissemination. This study's findings may serve as a basis for policy recommendations, highlighting the importance of regular assessment of program readiness and addressing challenges to ensure effective implementation (DO No. 14, s. 2023).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Methodology

The research methodology, research design, study participants, data collection process, research tools, and data analytics will all be covered in this chapter. The purpose of the study was to determine Teachers' experiences, Challenges and readiness in the implementation of the national learning camp: bases for policy recommendation.

### Research Method

The study used qualitative research with in-depth interviews as its research methodology.

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The interviewee and the interviewer had the opportunity to sit down in person and go over the set of questions during the interview. The interviewer asked few questions about teachers' experiences, challenges and readiness in the implementation of National Learning Camp.

The objective was to acquire their insights and undertakings through their responses to gain their opinions in a particular issue within a social context (Wallace Foundation, 2022).

## Research Design

The study gathered information on the teachers' experiences, challenges and readiness in the implementation of National Learning Camp as basis for Policy Recommendation. Phenomenology research approach was employed in the study (Creswell, 2013; Jordan, 2023).

Creswell (quoted by Jordan, 2023) defines phenomenology as a qualitative research methodology that emphasizes the shared experiences of the group members. Reaching a description of the phenomenon's nature is the approach's main objective.

## Participants of the Study

The participants in this study consist of twenty (20) secondary teachers from various schools within the Nueva Valencia North District of the Schools Division of Guimaras. Specifically, the group includes thirteen teachers from Nueva Valencia National High School, four from Calaya National High School, and three from Simeon J. Jabasa National High School.

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The selection of participants was based on specific inclusion criteria to ensure a focused and relevant sample for the study:

All participants are secondary teachers employed by the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Guimaras, ensuring a consistent understanding of the local educational context.

The teachers volunteered as facilitators for the National Learning Camp (NLC) during the designated implementation period, ensuring direct experience with the program and its objectives.

Participants specialize in key subject areas, namely English, Science, and Mathematics, providing a diverse perspective on the NLC's impact across different disciplines.

The study focused on the experiences of these secondary teachers during the school years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, providing valuable insights into their roles and contributions within the context of the NLC.

## Sampling Design

The study employed a purposive sampling design, which is also known as subjective, judgmental, or selective sampling. This sampling technique involves the researcher using their judgment to select the participants of the study from the population.

The researcher gained some insights into the world of his or her participants and to describe their perceptions and reactions.

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## Research Instrument

An interview guide created by the researcher served as the study's research tool. The interview guide created by the researcher was validated by a group of professionals. The researcher took into consideration all feedback and recommendations pertaining to the tool's validation.

A written transcription of the answers of the participants during the in-depth interview was used. With the participants' consent, it was also used for recordkeeping and data collection.

Thematic analysis was employed to condense the study's findings.

## Validity of the Research Instrument

A researcher-made interview guide that was subjected to expert validation using Good and Scates' Eight-Point Scale Criteria for Content Validation served as the study's research tool.

People from the domains of research, testing and measurement, and evaluation made up the panel of experts.

Every recommendation and comment pertaining to the tool's validation was taken into account and incorporated.

The validation ensured that the questions would gather the needed information to answer the research questions.

Validation criteria, such as alignment with research objectives and question clarity, were assessed by three experts within the field. According to Carmines and Zeller (2021)

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content validity was established by evaluating the degree to which the measurement accurately reflected the particular content domain.

## Data Gathering Procedures

Once the selection of the participants was done, the researcher secured a consent form from the volunteers.

After collecting the participants' written consent letters for the study, an interview was scheduled for every participant. Face –to-face interviews were conducted according to the convenience of each participant. The interview commenced using three different formats: open-ended, semi-structured, and structured interviews centering on the questions.

An in-depth interview was conducted primarily to learn the respondent's standpoint on the study. Obtaining the way of thinking of every respondent is vital. To fully apprehend the interviewee's words, a recording device was utilized for the whole conversation. A thematic approach was used by the researcher to compile all of the information that was collected through a series of interviews.

Once the interview was complete, videos were recorded. The original and translated transcripts were categorized into meaning units Ratner (2015) and were thematically analyzed.

A meaning unit should always include the participant's commentaries as well as any clarifying queries that may be required. Ratner (2015) emphasizes that the meaning unit should maintain the psychological integrity of the idea being conveyed. It should not confuse

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the idea with other ideas that express different themes or fragment it into meaningless, truncated segments. Therefore, logical and related comments were coded as one meaning unit.

## Data Analyses

A thematic approach was used to analyze the gathered information in the study.

In order to find common themes—topics, concepts, and meaning patterns that recur—the researcher carefully analyzed the data.

Through in-depth interviews with multiple people who have experienced the event, the researcher conducted a phenomenological investigation to identify the fundamental structure of a single occurrence. The researcher took out comments that he thought were relevant. He then integrated these elements into a narrative description of the phenomenon and grouped them into themes. Then, using Fraenkel and Wallen's narrative account of the phenomena as given by Jordan (2023), he or she incorporates this matter.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was conducted to find out teachers' experiences, challenges, and readiness in the implementation of National Learning Camp (NLC) as bases for policy recommendation in the district of Nueva Valencia North Schools Division of Guimaras during the school year 2023-2024.

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The study used the phenomenological approach under the qualitative research. This approach was appropriate because the researcher studied a group of people to gain a larger understanding of their lives or specific aspects of their lives focusing on the study of practices.

The respondents of this study were twenty (20) secondary teachers in the District of Nueva Valencia North during the school year 2023- 2024 and 2024-2025.

The research instrument utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview schedule.

A mobile phone with audio and video recorder was used for data gathering and documentation depending upon the permission of the respondents.

A panel of experts validated the interview guide. All comments and suggestions relative to the validation of the tool were considered.

All permits especially from the individual respondents were obtained to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher personally went to the schools/community/place convenient on the part of the respondents to conduct the interview.

Using the in-depth interview, a mobile phone with audio and video recorder was provided to completely capture the interviewee's words. The respondents were asked individually to get the responses to the questions. The object was to get the respondents' view about the study. The researcher consolidated all of the collected data after series of interviews.

The information gathered was analyzed using thematic approach.

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The following are the findings of this study:

The implementation of National Learning Camp helps the students to develop academically and encourage academic advancement and mastery of core subjects such as English, science and mathematics. This camp presented not only academic improvement but also offers, students' opportunities to further develop their personal growth through social skills.

The camp also serves also as an avenue for the teachers to gain experiences from each other by sharing their best practices. By this, they apply various strategies taken from their fellow teachers during the collaborative expertise.

The collaboration of the teacher volunteers, school administrators, department heads, LGUs and other stakeholders played a very important role in managing the different challenges encountered in the implementation in terms of preparation of instructional materials and specifically in the finances.

Based on the results of the in-depth interview, it was found out that the following are the impact of the implementation of NLC to the teachers of the Department. First, the provision of service credit, and meal allowance promotes professional growth for teachers. Seminars and workshops are offered before the start of the implementation which will help them learn new teaching strategies in the delivery of their lessons.

Second, it promotes collaboration among teacher volunteers, school administrators, department heads, LGUs and other stakeholders. In an interview to the respondents they said that even though the school is not yet ready in terms of instructional materials they find the

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work less difficult because they have this collaborative expertise where they share their experiences, challenges, and together find best solution to address the concerns.

Third, it offers an avenue for professional advancement. In an interview to the respondents they said, they felt challenged especially in the class that belongs to enhancement and consolidation which students are considered intellectually gifted and that some topics in their lesson are somewhat advance, they have to study as to keep themselves updated and academically ahead of their students. Lastly, teachers gain realizations in the conduct of this activity. For instance, parents should have a proper orientation of the NLC program to gather support. Students should be identified and categorized based on their needs (intervention, enhancement or consolidation) prior to the camp, so that teacher volunteers could provide contextualize learning materials suited to the needs of the students under the specific category. Additionally, teachers also acknowledge the importance of incorporating games in their lesson as a new trend in education that would fit in the current generation.

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

Teachers perceived that in order for the program to serve its actual purpose. The school shall provide their teachers an avenue to improve their selves and a proper orientation about the NLC program should be intensified for awareness, specifically to the parents and other stakeholders. Teachers believed that NLC is a great opportunity for the learners to continue learning even in summer vacation. Readiness in terms of preparing students learning materials is a key element in the implementation, it attributes to the teaching and learning opportunities they have every day on school grounds. Since NLC is offered during summer

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vacation, the school must establish a plan of actions for the whole duration of the program as well as look for financial support to augment in the activities. The teachers came up with varied approaches as result of collaborative expertise which promotes learners' inclusivity, subject components, and competencies, curriculum and assessment, 21st century skills, and ICT integration, as well as curriculum contextualization and gamefication. These play-based activities played an important role for students learning which encourages them to learn more and develop self-confidence, resilience and independence. This also help students to engage and perform better in their class. Given the parameters of topic understanding and pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting. Teachers were able to create community linkages to support the activities in the learning program. All this contributed to personal growth, and professional development, the district's teacher performs exceptionally well.

Given that in the current practice of the implementation of NLC on school grounds, it simply demonstrates that the teachers are very capable and ready both physically and mentally in managing the challenges and even observed to do well in school in multiple areas of their performance assessment. Outstanding work performances can be achieved by teachers with the support of an efficient and well-run NLC.

In addition, school administrators must place a high priority on parents and other stakeholders' awareness of the NLC program to gain more support and encourage maximum participation of community linkages. Furthermore, they should also create a core group committee to spearhead in planning, recognizing teacher volunteers and organizing the

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activities and reproduction of materials needed in the conduct of NLC and up scaling teachers teaching pedagogy and strategies through various seminars and workshops pertaining to their professional development. In order to determine what the requirements of their students are and how to improve the way they teach and learn, teachers might utilize self-efficacy, collaborative expertise session, and student feedback. Potential avenues for further research include developing professional development plans to close any gaps in teachers' professional development. The study may also be carried out at a different location and school.

## CONCLUSION

In the light of the findings and insights arrived to this study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

In order to realize the goal of NLC program, school administrators might nevertheless place a high priority on intensifying parent's awareness of the program to gather support and encourage more participants. They may student who need academic assistance at the end of the school year specifically under the intervention category to join the program for follow-up. They may be inviting provisions to encourage more teacher volunteers to participate in the program. Assessing the needs of their teachers in order to provide a better technical assistance to teachers. A core group committee should be created to spearhead in planning, recognizing teacher volunteers and organizing the activities and reproduction of materials needed in the conduct of NLC.

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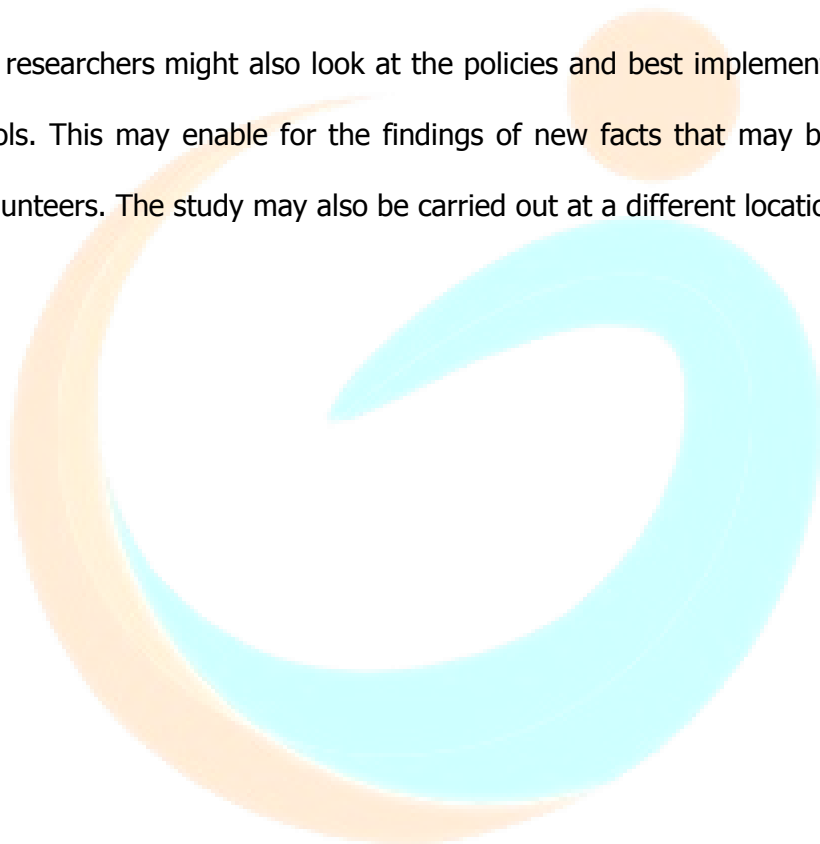
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Teachers can ascertain the needs of their students and how to enhance the way they give instruction and activities by utilizing learners' feedback and self-efficacy. Additionally, since the department's workers who perform in the field and have firsthand experience with it are the primary beneficiaries, it is advised that the Department allocate sufficient funds for this activity.

Future researchers might also look at the policies and best implementation practices of other schools. This may enable for the findings of new facts that may be beneficial for future NLC volunteers. The study may also be carried out at a different locations and school.



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