

## A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TAGUMPAY NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS INVOLVED IN ONLINE LEARNING ACTION CELL SESSION

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Received: July 2022

Accepted: August 2022

Published: September 2022

### ABSTRACT

*A qualitative phenomenological approach was used in this study to describe the lived experiences of Tagumpay National High School (TNHS) teachers on Online Learning Action Cell (LAC) session. LAC is a school-based professional development for teachers implemented by the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd). Due to teacher's lack of participation on classroom LAC, a fully-online mode option is explored by offering TNHS teachers Online LAC session using Facebook as a Learning Management System (LMS). To capture the lived experience of teachers, an in-depth interview with a purposive sample of one TNHS teacher is done in the process. The data gathered went through "Hycner's Explicitation Process" (1999, in Groenewald, 2004) which includes bracketing, delineating, clustering, summarizing and extracting unique themes. Validity and Credibility were accomplished through an intercoder agreement between researchers, Facebook chat records, bracketing, and member checking. Results identified three themes in relation to teacher's experience of Online LAC session including usefulness, barriers, and preference. Findings revealed the major role of TNHS teacher's context on how Online LAC is utilized. Recommendations include administrator and expert teacher working with classroom teachers and the inclusion of teachers' voices as input in the program design, implementation and evaluation stages of Online LAC to better address curriculum needs and facilitate the delivery of high-quality professional development for teachers' professional growth.*

**Keywords:** online learning action cell session, Tagumpay National High School Teachers, professional development

### Suggested citation:

Medina, A. M., Camposagrado, A. E., & Lim, M. C. (2022). A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Tagumpay National High School Teachers Involved in Online Learning Action Cell Session. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 1(3), 142-154.

## INTRODUCTION

The 1987 Constitution underscores the importance of education as a basic right for every Filipino, responding to protect and promote this right, the Department of Education (DepEd) invest its resources for an equitable, culture-based and complete education that allows everyone to realize their full potential and contribute to nation building. Priority investment in education is on the development of human capital through its learners and teachers as quality learning equates quality teaching. Hence, it supports the continuing professional development (CPD) of teaching personnel based on the principle of lifelong learning through the institutionalization of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or Learning Action Cell (LAC). LAC is a bottom-up professional development where teachers plan together (collaborative learning) to further enhance curriculum and answer challenges through research (DepEd Order No. 35 s. 2016).

The Tagumpay National High School (TNHS) a junior public high school in Rodriguez, Rizal is one of the schools committed to the full development and strengthening of its CPD program through its In-service Training for Teachers (INSET), localized and initiated school seminars, trainings and workshops including LACs. Through the school-based management (SBM), the school administrator ensures the inclusion of these instances in the school improvement plan (SIP) including the monitoring and evaluation of its implementation. TNHS along with its eight (8) departments and eighty-two (82) teachers regularly conducts classroom-based LACs since the inception of issued order on LAC in 2016. Despite TNHS' commitment to CPD, the school encounters several challenges in crafting and implementing mechanisms of LAC, one is the non-participation of some teachers as affected by teaching commitment, workload, and other reporting tasks.

### *Background and Context*

The feasibility of Online LAC is explored to offer more flexibility and options for the study where ten (10) Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teachers are identified to participate in the piloting of Online LAC through TNHS School Memo No. 15 s. 2019 dated February 22, 2019, issued by the school principal. The Online LAC Session Conceptual Framework was drawn from DepEd Order No. 35 s. 2016, Simonson's Equivalency Theory and Anderson's Community of Inquiry (COI). LAC ensures accessibility of CPD at the school level. Thus, DepEd invests its resources by guiding the schools on how to effectively craft the school-based LAC as reflected in the different department orders, these are (1) DepEd Order No. 42 s. 2016 titled 'Policy Guidelines on Daily Lesson Preparation for the K to 12 Basic Education Program', for the promotion of a transformative learning environment by innovating using different resources including (2) the use of modern ICTs (DepEd Order No. 78 s. 2010), and the (3) orchestration of activities should consider the 2C-2I-1R approach as stipulated in DepEd IV-A CALABARZON's Regional Memorandum Order No. 11 s. 2015 dated July 9, 2015, and RMO No. 233 s. 2016 dated July 18, 2016, on K-12 titled 'Pedagogical Approaches: Constructivism, Collaborative, Inquiry-based, Integrative and Reflective'.

Bandalaria, M. (2007) identified factors necessary for the success of any ICT learning endeavor, these are: 1) access and 2) cost of access. She further identified two (2) sub-factors, namely: 1) physical access to the technology and 2) pre-requisite skills one needs to use the technology effectively. In reference to access, TNHS is one of the DCP recipients with 49 computer units at Computer Laboratory No. 2, more than enough workstations for TLE teachers. The school is also subscribed to PLDT's 20mbps internet service. Moreover, the school's ICT program in teaching and learning certifies capacity building on teachers' technical skills. Thus, completing teachers' resources (Bandalaria, 2007). Through these provisions, the TLE teachers' have experienced a One-week Online LAC with Facebook (FB) as a Learning Management System (LMS) that transcribed from February 26 to March 6, 2019.

The online LAC was put in place to:

1. provide teachers with a learning space for knowledge and skills acquisition at their convenient time.

2. address teachers' curriculum needs through collaboration on content and pedagogy, learning environment and diversity of learners, curriculum planning, and assessment and reporting.
3. support teachers' professional progress through continuous learning in a lifelong and life-wide perspective.
4. help teachers develop their full potential through coaching and mentoring.
5. serve as teachers' support team on classroom management and best practices.
6. positively promote the usefulness of technology products and services such as applications, database, freeware, open educational resources (OERs) and productivity tools among others so as to equip and address its adverse effect through projects and initiatives.

The LAC session lesson was designed by three Master of Distance Education students who served as course designers, online facilitators, and technical support. The Online LAC capitalizes on the affordances of Facebook as a Learning Management System (LMS) accessible to teachers through this link: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/OnlineLAC/learning\\_content/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/OnlineLAC/learning_content/). Different LMS employs different interface but Morgan, 2003; Coats, James, & Baldwin (2005) as cited by Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, & Pieterse, (2012) identified three functions of LMS these are (1) Content Management for creation or uploading of content items including texts, presentations, scanned articles (open educational resources), and audio-visual materials (2) Tools for Managing Interactions where it allows instructors to open and initiate interaction through discussion forums, and (3) Tools for Managing and Assessing the Learners.

Once tagged as the text capital of the world, the Philippines is now known as the second largest Facebook market in the Southeast Asian region with 44 million users in 2019 (Statistica.com). Facebook is a social networking application, but its features later adapt to education, one remarkable change was in Facebook's group interface. The change has been beneficial to educators and researchers alike, as for this study it served as an online classroom for TNHS' LAC session. The FB application has adapted to the needs of the teachers, providing them with a course plan that employs interactive activities, collaborative tools, and course management to track progress and give feedbacks on achievements. Moreover, it allows space for participants to study independently with content, fellow student and facilitator (Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, & Pieterse, 2012). Prior to the conduct of Online LAC Session, TLE teachers were briefed by one of the researchers at TNHS' Computer Laboratory No. 2 to let them know how the session will go. Teachers were able to join the classroom after the validation and confirmation of their FB account which also served as their social presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). The Online LAC using FB as LMS contains a total of 10 units with 2 as optional as shown in Table 1.

The first unit briefs learners about the online classroom interface and what to expect in the session. Briefers in the form of a portable document format (PDF) and Microsoft PowerPoint (PPT) files were uploaded. The second unit reiterates the importance of LAC session using video format. The third unit introduces the online facilitators/tutors for the session presented in pictures. The fourth unit is concerned about the lesson proper utilizing an open education resource titled 'Access the Internet' using FB as a platform. Unit five is a discussion forum facilitated by the resource persons through the FB platform. Unit six is meant for a collaborative task using Google Slide. Unit seven is a wrap up of the activities participated by the teachers in FB platform. Unit eight contains the digital badges of performing teachers in Google Slides. While units nine and ten are the optional units meant for announcements and free chat using a local dialect.

Table 1. Online LAC Session Title and Units

Unit	Title and Description	Type of Files/Apps
I	<b>The LAC Session Guide</b> This has the soft copy of this guide and a briefing kit about the classroom structure.	PDF and PowerPoint
II	<b>Why Online LAC?</b> A run through about the many benefits of LAC session in improving teacher's performance.	Video
III	<b>Meet your Resource Persons</b> Meet and greet your Online Tutors	Pictures
IV	<b>Lesson Proper: Access the Internet</b> Accessing interactive multimedia under a creative commons license	Multimedia
V	<b>Express your Thoughts</b> An exchange of thoughts through two (2) Discussion Forums led by the resource persons	Facebook platform
VI	<b>Team 4.0 – Group Activity</b> Each department will work as a team to carry out an assigned task.	Online or offline electronic presentation application
VII	<b>Your Exit Ticket</b> A wrap of activities.	Facebook platform
VIII	<b>Announcements</b> Section for announcing updates or addressing class concerns.	Facebook platform
IX	<b>Check Your Badges</b> (Optional) Bulletin Board for the Star Performers	Google Slides
X	<b>Relax. Relax. Kape Tayo.</b> (Optional) Space for discussion using 'Tagalog' or native dialect	Facebook platform

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate the lived experience of a TNHS teacher during the 1-week Online LAC session using Facebook as a learning management system. Further, this study will examine the extent whether the Online LAC session provides the participant with experience equivalent to the LAC implemented by DepEd.

According to Holmes, Signer, & MacLeod (2011), the online professional development experience had a positive impact on the teachers' knowledge of the course topic and related instructional practices. In addition, the social presence and teacher presence served as the greatest factors related to the participants' learning and satisfaction in their online professional development experience. Based on this finding, the researchers are interested in investigating how the TNHS teachers experience and describe the full-online mode option of LAC using FB as a learning management system.

This study may pave the way for future innovations and development of DepEd's LAC by qualitatively acknowledging the Online LAC session experience as described by a TNHS teacher. For the purpose of this study, the following questions help establish the research agenda and further enrich the investigation:

1. How would TNHS teachers describe online LAC session?
2. What aspect of an online LAC session using FB as LMS did the teachers find most challenging/rewarding and why?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper attempts to surface teachers' experiences of online PD. While study about teachers' experience in online LAC at DepEd's context is limited, this paper aims to analyze and classify teachers' online experience through their voices. Thus, mirroring the essence of DepEd Order No. 35 s. 2016 where



LAC is eyed as an instance of bottom-up professional development where teachers collaborate to study curriculum enhancements and other educational challenges. Several papers were used as bases to hear teachers' voices about online PD.

A research study made by Baran and Cagiltay (2006) explores teachers' experiences in an online PD course. The study was done using scientific research method as an in-depth analysis of teachers' ideas and experiences of teachers in a private school which is equipped with a computer laboratory. Ten teachers in various disciplines were made part of the research where data collection involved a combination of focus group discussion and individual interviews. Data collected were coded and analyzed for themes. The study revealed different opinions of teachers about online PD such as content, delivery, design as to include occasional face to face synchronous communication, usability, preference and technical difficulties in accessing the platform. Despite the advantages of online PD like easy access to materials, time and convenience, teachers noted that PD programs should be designed by both academician and expert teacher.

Holmes, Signer, & MacLeod, (2011) worked on the factors that promote interaction and satisfaction in an online PD with practical classroom application to check teachers' progress in integrating the acquired techniques. Researchers made an exploratory analysis using varimax solution to derive the emerging factors such as social presence, teacher presence, cognitive and satisfaction/effectiveness. Data were collected using mixed-method techniques, survey with Likert-scale and open-ended responses, through qualitative analytical process of categorizing (Denzin, 1989; Wolcott, 1994). The survey indicates a 50% acceptance rate from the 205 surveyed teachers. Qualitative findings revealed the high impact of the course design of the online PD in teachers' perception, classroom instruction and strategies, and application of new insights. Teachers' voices were also amplified through feedback of online PD indicating its positive impact in their professional growth and ability to apply new concepts in their classrooms. However, teachers emphasized the importance of interaction with real-time chat (synchronous) for faster response and feedback.

Marrero, Riccio, Woodruff, & Schuster, (2010) studied a series of live, online, interactive short-courses underpinning social constructivism where participants construct meaning at their context. A mixed-method analysis revealed that educators from different classroom contexts find the short-course as useful for professional growth and classroom application. Data were sourced from online mixed-questionnaires with Likert scale and open-ended questions exported to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, reflective essays, personal communications and field notes for analysis, chunking and coding to draw themes. There were three themes emerged from the study, these are: (1) interaction with other educators, (2) immediate feedback from instructors and scientists, and (3) flexibility of course structure. Findings revealed the effectiveness of the course in curriculum implementation. However, considering teachers' point of view regarding course benefits on a personal capacity it is suggested that a further analysis must be performed.

Raising the bar on teacher quality is the primary priority of every learning institution. As DepEd embark on a new endeavor in improving the quality of teachers, LAC whether CB or online, as a school-based professional strategy, should be subjected for further examination to include teachers' voices, with teachers supported by administrators as primary education players.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used in this study. Qualitative research is an effort to understand the nature of a setting and the experiences others have in this context (Merriam, 1998) and a phenomenology is one kind of qualitative methodology which "explicate the meaning, structure, essence of the lived experiences of a person, or a group of people, around a specific phenomenon." (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2010; Núñez, 2021). This method is chosen to encapsulate the lived experience of TNHS teachers with Online LAC session.

To understand the wholeness and the essences of experience of TNHS teachers with Online LAC session, purposive sampling was used choosing one TNHS teacher who joined in the session to participate in an in-depth interview via FB messenger asynchronous/synchronous chat. The data gathered is then analyzed using Hycner's Explication Process (1999; in Groenewald, 2004) to purely describe Online LAC

session experience from the viewpoint of TNHS teachers. The sample, data gathering methods, data analysis, how validity is ensured, including the limitations of this study is further explained in detail below.

### **Sampling and Participants**

The researchers use a non-probability sampling technique known as purposive sampling in selecting the participant of the phenomenological study. The participant is selected based on the subjective judgment of the researcher, rather than random selection. Purposive sampling is “based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insights; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (Merriam, 1988, p. 48). The sample is selected based on the availability, the number of years in the teaching profession, experience on classroom LAC session, and most importantly, participated in Online LAC session.

For the present study, the researchers purposely select one participant from the ten (10) Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teachers of Tagumpay National High School (TNHS) who participated during the 1-week Online LAC session using Facebook as learning management system. The chosen participant in this study is a 50-year old female with a Teacher I position. She is a Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education graduate with 10 years of teaching experience, 6 years teaching in private school and 4 years teaching in public school. Prior to public service, she had been a school administrator of a private institute for computer studies. She has two children and a husband working overseas. To ensure the confidentiality of the participant’s identity, the researchers use “Jen” as her pseudonym in the study.

The study conducted involve a human subject thus the informed consent (Appendix A) was obtained from the participant. As recommended by Bailey (1996), an informed consent agreement should be developed to gain the participant’s consent. The informed consent explains to the participant the agreement form, the voluntary nature of participation, and the purpose of the research study. The potential risks and benefits of the study are also presented to the participant. The procedures involved in the confidentiality of the research data are also highlighted in the consent form. The participant has the right to continue or stop the participation anytime in the research process.

### **Data Gathering Methods**

This qualitative study used phenomenological inquiry through an in-depth interview to obtain the lived experiences of a TNHS teacher during the 1-week online LAC session using Facebook as a learning management system. The phenomenological approach was used to find meaning in TNHS teacher’s online LAC session experience. “Researchers in the phenomenological mode attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 23). The researchers captured personal experiences and drew out rich descriptions and deep meaning from the participant as she described her 1-week online LAC experience.

The in-depth phenomenological interview was conducted to obtain data about the participant’s experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions towards online LAC session. The researchers and the participant are engaged in the dialogue and a language where the interviewee is more comfortable with is used (Filipino) to encourage her to express feelings, emotions, and beliefs more conveniently. Bracketing was done during the interview to set aside the preconceived attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of the researchers as they investigate the phenomenon (Husserl, 1964). The researchers, in this case, enter the participant’s world and become the experiencing interpreter (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Due to geographical constraint, the interview was done using Facebook messenger. The synchronous and asynchronous interviews were conducted from March 4, 2019 to March 8, 2019.

With the permission of the interviewee, the dialogue derived from Facebook messenger were stored using Google Docs, an online word processor that allows the user to create and format documents and work with other people (<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>). The researchers coded the dialogue according to interview times and date. Observational notes during the research process were also done and stored in Google Docs for data analysis.

### Explicitation of Data

The explicitation of data is done using Hycner's (1999) explicitation process. According to Hycner (1999), this process focuses more on the investigation of the constituents of an experience while keeping the context of the whole. The researchers convey the data as explicitly stated by the participant rather than analyzing or interpreting what the data intend to show. The following are the steps of Hycner's (1999) explicitation process as cited by Groenewald (2004) in his mode of inquiry in data analysis.

1. *Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.* The researchers' personal views or preconceptions are set aside to avoid biases, "in a sense that in its regard no position is taken either for or against" (Lauer, 1958, p. 49). The researchers read the interview data several times to familiarize themselves with the information.
2. *Delineating units of meaning.* The researchers extract and scrutinize the statements that will illuminate the phenomenon under examination and eliminate redundancy (Moustakas, 1994). The researchers consider the literal content, the frequency of words mentioned, and the manner of which it was stated (Groenewald, 2004).
3. *Clustering units of meaning.* The researchers identify the list of non-redundant units while bracketing their personal views or preconceptions to remain true to the phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). The researchers examine the list of units and elicit the essential meaning within a holistic context. The units of meaning are grouped together and form clusters of themes. By interrogating the meaning of the various clusters, the researchers identify the central themes, "which expresses the essence of these clusters" (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).
4. *Summarizing the interview.* The researchers summarize the interview data and highlight relevant quotations. The summary is shared to the participant to check the accuracy of the statements including the translations and make necessary modifications as a result of the validity check (Hycner, 1999).
5. *Composite summary.* The researchers identify "the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations" (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). The researchers generate a conclusion that reflects the context from where the themes emerged.

### Validity and Credibility

Throughout the process, the researchers bracket themselves consciously as they understand the phenomenon, focusing on the participant's perspective (Mouton & Marais, 1990). The interview data in Filipino language is translated in English and shared to the participant for review and validation. The gathered data is stored in Facebook messenger and Google docs for transparency and perusal. In the explicitation process, an intercoder agreement (Lavrakas, 2008) between researchers are done wherein they study the data independently and share their notes on the said schedule to discuss codes. There are no significant discrepancies and the small differences were discussed and resolved to create a set of themes.

### Limitations

This study was limited by several factors. First, the in-depth interview is limited to one person. With limited variation in age, department, and gender, there is less chance for generalizability and may not represent the whole TNHS teachers experience of Online LAC session. Second, the in-depth interview was done one week after the Online LAC session, this may mean that the exact feelings/perception of the participant may have already been influenced by external factors. A third limitation of this study may be attributed to the asynchronous interview done through FB Messenger. The slow/late feedback may affect the participant's answer. These limitations are likely to impact the results and therefore, any application of these findings should be done cautiously.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Three themes emerged from a teacher’s experience of Online LAC session in this study, including: usefulness, barriers, and preference (Table 2).

Table 2. Results: themes, key concepts and supporting quotes.

Theme	Key Concepts and Supporting Quotes
Usefulness	<p>LAC helps teachers improve “LAC session is good, it helps the teacher improve himself/herself, so the class does not become traditional.”</p> <p>Application of lesson from Online LAC session “I like the presentation of lecture in unit 4. I want to learn that and apply to my teaching.”</p> <p>FB account is accessible, useful in interaction and information “Online LAC is effective since everyone (almost everyone) has Facebook.” “FB is useful in interaction and giving information.” “An advantage is it’s not hard to communicate with each other since everywhere there is a means, it’s easier like this.” (referring to FB chat).</p>
Usefulness	<p>Interaction “It is rewarding when we are interacting with our thoughts/ideas with my classmates during the LAC session.” “I’m happy when our resource speakers interact with our statement, I’m pleased to know that our ideas are valuable to them.”</p> <p>Can study anytime and anywhere “One advantage is, I can study anytime even when traveling.”</p>
Barriers	<p>Schedule “... I was not able to join due to schedule.” “I can’t join all the time because I go home late already, and I am tired that’s why I can’t access online. Early this morning, at home, while printing my lesson, I answer the questions.” “My time is mismanaged already, because when I need to rush I work until 2AM, then sleep for only 2 hours because I need to prepare my kids for school in the morning. All the time I sleep late; one more, my husband is an overseas employee, so I chat with him night-long and I stay awake, I cannot talk to him, so often times I do PowerPoint in school for my class. Before, I can even wash clothes every Saturday, now I can’t because I need to prepare lessons, recording of students progress and other school-related work. Every Sunday, I don’t want to work anymore because I want to focus on my kids. I always do school work that are urgent and rush, those keeps me awake.</p> <p>Slow feedback “If I’m interacting with someone who is not online, I have to wait for his/her response before I can proceed. So, if he/she is not online, I forget my queries already.”</p> <p>No internet connection “Not all students will be able to interact on group chat because they don’t have cell phone with them or no internet connection.”</p>



<b>Preference</b>	<p>Schedule a LAC session                  “Early this morning, at home, while printing my lesson, I answered the questions. It is better if I can concentrate on LAC, when we are given 2-3 hours meetings where we can focus better.”                  “It’s best if this session is done during vacation, or no classes perhaps Saturday”</p> <p>Interaction and Collaboration                  “I’m happy when you, our resource speakers, interact with our statement”                  “It’s best if we do that altogether, with that we would [learn] new skills”</p> <p>Immediate response                  “Immediate response is more favorable for me, because, often, if it’s late feedback, I forget already, and when my mind focuses on the idea given, I can quickly give a follow-up question.”</p> <p>Discipline-based                  “For me, if it’s LAC session it is better if it’s based on the subject that I will teach and there is a plan what I will do and all of us will apply it and the results will show if it’s really effective. If it’s not, we can study again or find more improvement if there is a need.”</p> <p>More on content and allotted time                  “I feel there is a lack in lesson even in time. I think I/we still need to learn a lot of things especially with regards to computer usage, software, application which are appropriate for us.”</p>
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*On Usefulness*

The goal of Online LAC is based from DepEd memorandum (Order No. 35 s. 2016) which necessitates “the development of teacher’s potential aimed towards their success in the profession and will eventually help them improve practice and learner achievement”. Jen cited in an interview how she felt about Online LAC.

*“LAC session is good, it helps the teacher improve himself/herself, so the class does not become traditional.”*

In Unit 4 of Online LAC session, an OER entitled “Access to the Internet” is presented wherein participants explore the multimedia material about basic skills in accessing the internet such as knowing what browsers are, performing a search and recognizing hyperlinks.

*“I like the presentation of lecture in unit 4. I want to learn that and apply to my teaching.”*

Facebook as LMS is chosen for Online LAC session for two reasons: it’s free data and popularity. FB can be accessed using mobile data (with limited features) anywhere and anytime and almost all TNHS teachers have FB account (have TNHS FB group as proof). This platform was utilized in sharing lessons, interaction, posting links and graphics. The participant mentioned this platform in one of our conversations.

*“Online LAC is effective since everyone (almost everyone) has Facebook.”*

*“FB is useful in interaction and giving information.”*

*“An advantage is it’s not hard to communicate with each other since everywhere there is a means, it’s easier like this.” (referring to FB chat).*

Online LAC session conceptual framework is based on DO 35 s.2016, Simonson’s Equivalency theory and Anderson’s COI framework. The session occurred in an e-learning environment matching LAC’s classroom-based learning environment with equivalent learning experiences such as the interaction between learners, content and resource persons.

*“It is rewarding when we are interacting with our thoughts/ideas with my classmates during the LAC session.” “I’m happy when our resource speakers interact with our statement, I’m pleased to know that our ideas are valuable to them.”*

Online LAC session encourages participants to view the lesson, participate in discussions and do a group activity within one week. Within this allotted time, they are given freedom regarding when and where they will accomplish the said requirements. Jen cited:

*“One advantage is, I can study anytime even when traveling.”*

### Summary and Analysis

Teachers perceived Online LAC as useful in the following: professional improvement, application of lesson, FB as accessible and useful in interaction/information, learning through interaction between students and teachers, and flexibility of studies (anytime and anywhere). LAC session is experienced to help teachers learn and improve as they handle their class. The participants do not learn just for themselves but as explained, true learning happens when they transform this into practice or output as is the goal of LAC policy. The FB platform used as LMS is an instrument that contributes to this learning, providing an avenue for sharing content and dialogues between members. Continuous learning also happens through student-content, student-teacher, and student-student interaction. Flexibility or studying anytime and anywhere is something that TNHS teachers finds useful as well. The description stated shows how teachers see Online LAC as something useful in their practice where they learn through interactions and information while enjoying the flexibility it offers (free data, accessible anytime and anywhere).

### On Barriers

TNHS teachers started their Online LAC session on February 25 until March 2. Within the time allotment, the participant has mentioned various barriers that restricted their ability to fully participate in Online LAC session. One of is the *schedule* where Jen who is also a canteen manager, a mother of two, and a wife of an OFW, mentioned in an interview:

*“... I was not able to join due to schedule.”*

*“My time is mismanaged already, because when I need to rush I work until 2AM, then sleep for only 2 hours because I need to prepare my kids for school in the morning. All the time I sleep late; one more, my husband is an overseas employee, so I chat with him night-long and I stay awake, I cannot talk to him, so often times I do PowerPoint in school for my class. Before, I can even wash clothes every Saturday, now I can't because I need to prepare lessons, recording of students' progress and other school-related work. Every Sunday, I don't want to work anymore because I want to focus on my kids. I always do school work that are urgent and rush, those keeps me awake.*

Online LAC session has two discussion forums and one group activity where teachers need to answer the question and interact with their classmates to accomplish the session requirements. With this, slow feedback has been mentioned:

*“If I'm interacting with someone who is not online, I have to wait for his/her response before I can proceed. So, if he/she is not online, I forget my queries already.”*

TNHS has provided their teachers free internet connection and use of computers which they can avail for their school work and Online LAC session. This is confined inside the computer laboratories of the school and can only be used once unoccupied by students. Although FB as LMS can be used for free data, participants of Online LAC often need to access the internet to browse and search for additional information related to lessons. Of this, the internet connection is also necessary:

*“Not all students will be able to interact on group chat because they don't have cell phone with them or no internet connection.”*

### Summary and Analysis

These three factors: schedule, slow feedback, and internet connection are the cited barriers that prevent teachers from fully participating and maximizing the benefits of Online LAC. The schedule of TNHS teachers is not only occupied by school works but other responsibilities as well such as sidelines and family. This shows how a teacher must attend to other things and slow feedback of fellow participants can also affect their participation, usually forgetting their queries because of waiting. Regarding the last factor, TNHS offers free internet connection but has limitations, hence it is provided, but not always and under necessary conditions. Overall, we can see how precious time is for teachers and how this affects their decision on going online and availing internet connection to learn from Online LAC.

### *On Preference*

Despite their busy schedules in preparing the lessons and accomplishing the school forms, the TNHS teachers still gave their consent and participate in the 1-week online LAC session. As one of the participants during the Online LAC session, Jen shared in her interview her preferred schedule for LAC sessions.

*“Early this morning, at home, while printing my lesson, I answered the questions. It is better if I can concentrate on LAC, when we are given 2-3 hours meetings where we can focus better.”*

*“It’s best if this session is done during vacation, or no classes perhaps Saturday.”*

During the Online LAC session, the resource speakers facilitate the discussion forum. Aside from providing feedback to the participants’ responses, they also encouraged the participants to discuss with each other the ideas that they have drawn out from the instructional materials provided. Jen expressed her feelings based on her Online LAC experience.

*“I am indeed happy when you, our resource speakers, interact with our statement. I’m well pleased to know that our ideas are valuable to you.”*

*“The group activity, it is best if we do that altogether, with that we would [learn] new skills...”*

*“Immediate response is more favorable for me, because, often, if it’s late feedback, I forget already, and when my mind focuses on the idea given, I can quickly give a follow-up question.”*

The Online LAC session includes an interactive OER lesson entitled “Access to the Internet”. This session is suitable for the participants since it’s related to their subject area. Jen mentioned in her interview that the TNHS teachers can participate in any LAC sessions that are related to their subject area and/or may improve their teaching strategies in class. The interest of the participants in the LAC session depends on the content and depth of the topic.

*“For me, if it’s LAC session it is better if it’s based on the subject that I will teach and there is a plan on what I will do and all of us will apply it and the results will show if it’s really effective. If it’s not, we can study again or find more improvement if there is a need.”*

*“I feel there is a lack in lesson even in time. I think I/we still need to learn a lot of things especially with regards to computer usage, software, application which are appropriate for us.”*

### *Summary and Analysis*

The interview data shows that the participant prefers LAC sessions that promote interaction and collaboration. This claim is supported by Holmes, Signer, & MacLeod’s (2011) study which shows that social presence and teacher presence positively impact the participant’s learning and satisfaction to online professional development. The participant also prefers to schedule the LAC sessions during holidays and Saturday in order to participate actively on the assigned readings and discussions. Immediate responses and feedbacks are more favorable during LAC session. Also, the LAC session is more interesting if it’s discipline-based. In line with the aims of LAC session implemented by DepEd, the participant will be able to apply the learned knowledge and skills to improve her classroom instructions.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Synopsis of Research Findings**

Overall, for TNHS teachers, Online LAC session was experienced as a school-based professional development that is useful for professional improvement where learning takes place anytime and anywhere through student-content, student-teacher, and student-student interaction. But certain barriers are also encountered such as schedule, slow feedback and internet connection that hinders learners to fully

participate. Based from one-week experience of Online LAC, the participant expressed preference such as scheduling of the session for better accommodation, interaction and collaboration of all participants to reap the full benefits of learning more from one another, immediate response to enhance generation of ideas, disciplined-based to be more relatable, focus on content and allot more time to maximize learning.

TNHS teachers perceived their experience through a relationship between themselves, fellow teachers and their students. They believe that Online LAC session role should have an impact on them as teachers, their classroom and students. That as they learn with the time they have, they'll be able to apply it in their class. To be able to do this, addressing their needs and understanding their context not only as a teacher but as a personal human being is necessary to be able to utilize continuing professional development and lifelong learning. These findings reveal the major role of TNHS teacher's context on how Online LAC is utilized.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

LAC practice as implemented by DepEd shows the importance of allowing teachers to participate in the planning, implementing and evaluation process. Their professional learning needs are solicited so a LAC session program could be designed according to these needs (DepEd Order No. 35 s. 2016). This profiling of needs may have been confined to their professional work. Based from the findings, teachers express their professional and personal responsibilities as well as the role of the school in providing them with resources including internet connection and appropriation of workload as key factors affecting their decision to join LAC session. The fully-online mode nature may have given them more flexibility as also cited but may not be properly utilized due to the said factors.

Therefore, it is recommended to include administrator and expert teacher working with classroom teachers at the program design, implementation and evaluation stages of Online LAC to better address curriculum needs and facilitate the delivery of high-quality professional development for teachers' professional growth. This pertains not only to professional areas but to their time schedule, available technology, internet access and workload.

TNHS must, in all means, provide the resources needed to fully maximize Online LAC which includes internet access in the campus and not just inside the computer laboratory.

To motivate teachers to participate in Online LAC session, it is necessary for administrators, leaders, and stakeholders to give this initiative a priority by setting a schedule for Online LAC session where all teachers can focus and participate. Which could also mean balancing teachers' workload and seeking a more convenient time for them.

Lastly, it is encouraged that further quantitative and qualitative research should be conducted to determine whether the themes demonstrated in this study are present in TNHS teacher's population.

The study provided an in-depth, holistic understanding of the experience and perspectives of TNHS teachers with Online LAC session and although there are limitations on this study, it is hoped that the findings can contribute to other researchers, practitioners and policymakers who are planning an Online LAC session for teachers.

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