

Lived Experiences of Non-Education Graduates Teachers Teaching Araling Panlipunan Related Subjects

Krista Monica E. Laguna; Harold O. Tongco; Jomar G. Pepe; Cristina A. Matin; Earl John C. Cotayan; Erlinda D. Tibus

Southern Leyte State University - Tomas Oppus Campus, Maasin City, Southern Leyte, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of non-education graduate teachers who handle Araling Panlipunan (AP) and related subjects in Southern Leyte, Philippines. Using Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, the research sought to understand how these teachers make sense of their work and the challenges they face. Fifteen participants were purposively selected and interviewed using a semi-structured approach. The data, analyzed using Moustakas' phenomenological steps, revealed five key themes: (1) transferable skills but gaps in pedagogical knowledge, (2) struggles in mastering content and classroom methods, (3) coping through mentorship, training, and digital resources, (4) motivations for pursuing educational units, and (5) the positive impact of these units on teaching practice. This research contributes to the literature on the professionalization of teachers by explaining how systematic development can enable unit earners to cross disciplinary expertise with pedagogy. They respond with resilience, seeking support from peers, joining training, and using online tools. Their decision to pursue educational units was driven by job stability, passion for teaching, and personal inspirations, and this training greatly enhanced their confidence, strategies, and understanding of learners. The essence of their experience lies in negotiating competence- transforming initial vulnerability into professional growth through persistence and learning. The study suggests that non-education graduates can play a meaningful role in AP education when provided with structured professional development. It recommends institutionalized training programs that focus on subject mastery and pedagogy to help them deliver more effective and engaging instruction.

Keywords: Araling Panlipunan, Coping mechanisms, Lived experiences, non-education graduate teachers, Phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a vital role in shaping children's growth and development within structured learning environments. The quality of education students receive is closely tied to their teachers' competence, making teacher preparation a central concern for the Philippine education system. While teaching has traditionally been the domain of education graduates, increasing demand for qualified teachers has opened the profession to non-education graduates, commonly referred to as "unit earners." These individuals, often professionals in other fields, pursue the required 18 education units or programs, such as the Professional Teaching Certification (PTC) and Diploma in Basic Education Teaching (DBET), to qualify for classroom practice, as provided under Republic Act 7836 or the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994.

However, entering the profession without formal pedagogical grounding presents unique challenges. Non-education graduate teachers often grapple with heavy teaching loads, diverse classrooms, and a lack of instructional resources (Somosot et al., 2023). Lopez (2022) noted that their limited familiarity with teaching strategies, assessments, and classroom management can hinder effectiveness, particularly when handling content-heavy subjects like Araling Panlipunan (AP). This subject demands not only content knowledge of history, culture, and current events but also strong pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Without confidence or training, teachers may rely heavily on textbooks, which can limit student engagement and critical thinking.

Although several quantitative studies explored the competence, performance, and job satisfaction of non-education graduates (Ching, 2022; Ortega et al., 2022; Wong, 2020; Pacana et al., 2019; Alcontin et al., 2022), none have investigated how these teachers navigate the unique pedagogical demands of teaching Araling Panlipunan—a subject deeply critical to shaping civic identity.

This remains a gap in understanding their lived experiences, particularly when assigned to teach AP or AP-related subjects. Given the subject's significance in promoting civic awareness and cultural identity, it is crucial to understand how these teachers navigate the profession—their struggles, coping mechanisms, motivations, and growth as educators.

Building on this gap, the present study explores the lived experiences of non-education graduate teachers who handle Araling Panlipunan in Southern Leyte. Using Husserl's descriptive phenomenology, it seeks to capture the essence of their experiences by examining how their baccalaureate degrees both support and complicate their teaching, the challenges they encounter, the coping mechanisms they employ, and the motivations that drive them to pursue additional educational units.

Specifically, the study aims to: (1) identify the demographic profile of unit earner teachers in terms of age, gender, baccalaureate degree, and years of teaching; (2) describe their experiences in terms of baccalaureate degree interference, challenges in teaching AP, and coping mechanisms; and (3) understand the significance of earning educational units on their teaching practice, particularly their motivation to pursue these units and the impact of such training on their professional growth.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While existing studies on non-education graduate teachers primarily measure competence and performance quantitatively, this study addresses a critical gap by qualitatively exploring their lived experiences. However, this approach introduces several limitations that should be considered. First, because the study focuses on gathering deep personal narratives, the findings are based on a small group of 15 participants from a single province, Southern Leyte. Consequently, these results may not represent the experiences of teachers in other regions. Second, the data relies entirely on personal interviews.

This means the information is based on individual memory and personal perspective, which may naturally differ from objective observation. Third, the study lacks a comparison group of traditional education graduates teaching Araling Panlipunan. Without this comparison, it is difficult to determine whether the challenges and coping strategies discussed are unique to non-education graduates or common among all teachers in that subject. Finally, the research only includes individuals currently working in the field. This excludes the perspectives of teachers who may have already left the profession because of these exact struggles, so the findings primarily reflect the experiences of those who were able to adapt.

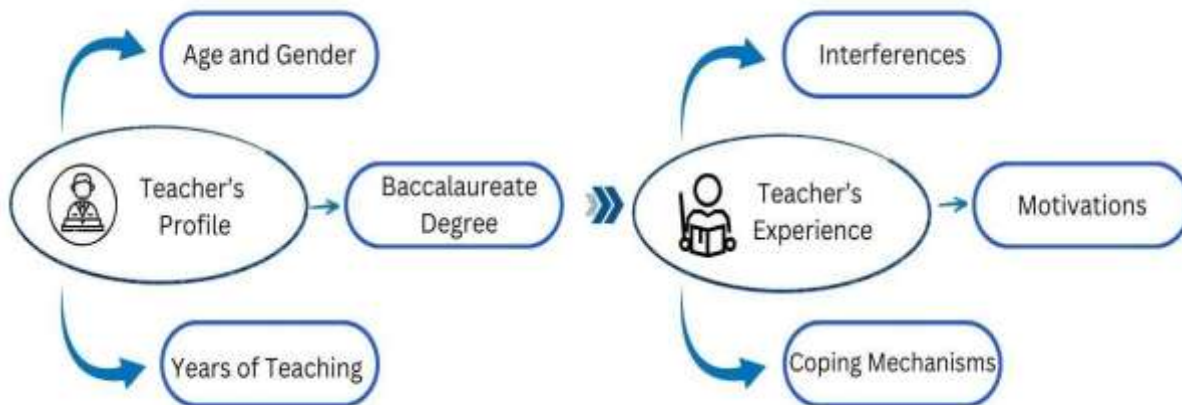
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Lee Shulman's (1986) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) model by Watt and Richardson (2007). Recent global literature on out-of-field teaching emphasizes that possessing strong subject-matter expertise (Content Knowledge) does not automatically equate to teaching efficacy. Teachers must develop PCK—the ability to translate complex discipline knowledge into accessible formats for learners (Hobbs, 2013). Furthermore, recent studies on alternative certification (Somosot & Relox, 2023) highlight that, while non-education graduates enter the field for practical job security (as explained by the FIT-Choice model), their primary struggle is navigating systemic pedagogical demands.

Despite growing international literature on out-of-field teaching, there remains a distinct methodological gap in the Philippine context. Most local studies rely on quantitative deficit models to measure the competence of non-education graduates (Wong, 2020). There is a critical lack of qualitative, phenomenological research that captures the lived transition of these teachers—how they actively negotiate the dissonance between their baccalaureate expertise and secondary-level pedagogy. This study addresses that gap by using Husserlian

transcendental phenomenology to explore not only whether unit-earners struggle, but also how they experience and overcome these challenges.

Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the study.



METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach using Husserl's transcendental phenomenological design, which describes lived experiences by setting aside researcher bias and foregrounding participants' accounts (Moustakas, 1994). This approach allowed the researchers to capture the voices of non-education graduate teachers—or 18-unit earners—as they described their experiences of teaching Araling Panlipunan. By bracketing the researcher's assumptions and foregrounding participants' accounts, the study sought to achieve a rich and systematic understanding of the phenomenon.

The research was conducted in Southern Leyte, a province in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines. Bordered by Leyte Province to the north, the Mindanao Sea to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the east, and the Visayas Sea to the west. Southern Leyte was selected for its relevance to the study's objectives and for representing a rural-urban mixed community with increasing job opportunities.

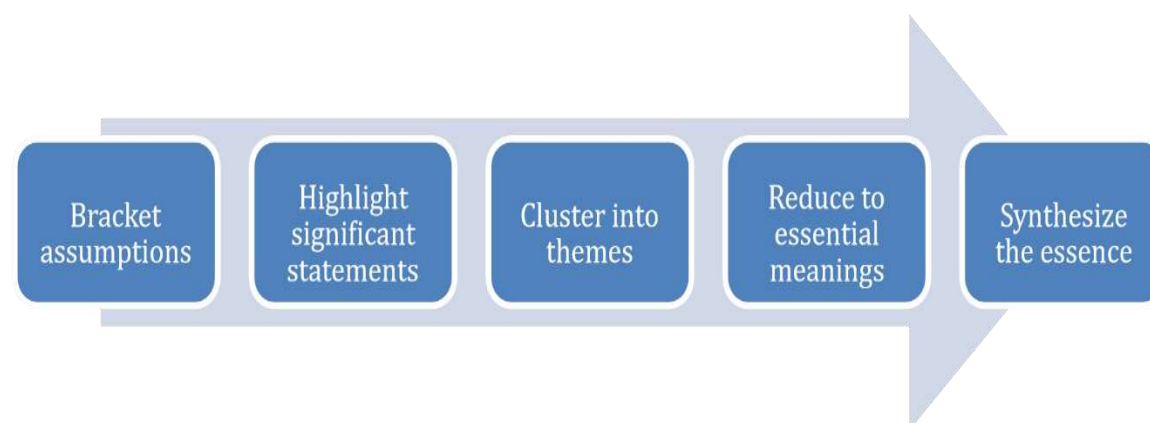
Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants. To be invited to the study, individuals had to meet the following explicit inclusion criteria: (1) they must be non-education graduates (often referred to as 18-unit earners), (2) they must be Licensed Professional Teachers (LPT), and (3) they must be currently teaching Araling Panlipunan or related subjects in Southern Leyte. These teachers were considered crucial informants because they held unique perspectives on teaching without formal pedagogical training. The study employs 15 participants, within Polkinghorne's (1989) recommended range of 5–25 for phenomenological research, to provide depth without losing focus. In line with this, the study recruited participants within this range to achieve data saturation. Purposive sampling, as Patton (2020) argues, allows researchers to intentionally select participants who can provide rich, relevant data, while Gentles et al. (2020) emphasize that this approach ensures alignment between participants' experiences and the research goals.

Before data gathering, research committee approval and school administrators' permission were secured, and informed consent was obtained from all the participants. Semi-structured interviews were employed; these enable participants to describe their experiences freely while affording researchers the flexibility to explore further when appropriate (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi, & Syam, 2022). The interview guide, validated by content experts, was designed to cover three broad areas: participants' demographic background, such as age, gender, baccalaureate degree, and years of teaching experience; their teaching experiences in terms of baccalaureate degree interference, challenges, and coping mechanisms; and their perceptions regarding the influence of earning educational units on their teaching practice.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed through Husserl's transcendental phenomenological framework, following the method of phenomenological reduction described by Moustakas (1994). In following Moustakas' (1994) procedure, analysis entailed: (1) bracketing assumptions (epoché), (2) horizontalization of key statements, (3) clustering into meaning units, (4) building structural descriptions, and (5) synthesizing a composite essence of the phenomenon.

As emphasized by Mertens and Ginsberg (2009), ethical qualitative research safeguards participants' dignity, rights, and privacy at every stage of the inquiry. Throughout the research process, ethical standards were carefully observed. Credibility was ensured through member checking and peer debriefing. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Informed consent was obtained, and all data were anonymized and handled in strict confidence.

Figure 1. The steps in Husserl's descriptive phenomenological analysis.



RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Participants

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the non-education graduate teachers, including their age, gender, baccalaureate degree, and years of teaching experience.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Non-Education Graduate Teachers

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20–30 years	5	33.3
	31–40 years	8	53.3
	41–50 years	2	13.3
	51–60 years	0	0.0
Gender	Male	7	46.7
	Female	8	53.3
	Prefer not to say	0	0.0
Baccalaureate Degree	BS in Business Administration (BSBA)	8	53.3
	BS in Information Technology (BSIT)	4	26.7

	BS in Hospitality Management (BSHM)	3	20.0
Years in Teaching	1–5 years	8	53.3
	6–10 years	7	46.7
	11–15 years	0	0.0
	16–20 years	0	0.0

Note: Percentages are based on a total of 15 respondents.

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 15 participants. Most participants were in the 31–40 age group (53.3%), followed by those aged 20–30 (33.3%). This suggests that a significant proportion of the respondents are in their early to mid-career stages, a period often associated with professional growth and the pursuit of job stability. In terms of gender, females (53.3%) slightly outnumbered males (46.7%), reflecting the general trend of greater female participation in the teaching profession.

Regarding academic background, nearly half of the respondents held a degree in Business Administration (42.1%), while others held degrees in Information Technology (21.1%) and Hospitality Management (15.8%). This indicates a diverse range of disciplinary expertise being brought into Araling Panlipunan teaching. Finally, the majority of teachers had relatively limited teaching experience, with 53.3% teaching for 1–5 years and 46.7% for 6–10 years.

This concentration of novice teachers underscores the need for sustained mentoring and professional development to address the challenges commonly encountered in the early years of teaching.

Emergent Themes of the Lived Experiences

This section presents the themes that emerged from the participants’ narratives. These themes capture the core of their lived experiences as non-education graduates teaching Araling Panlipunan, reflecting both the challenges they encountered and the strategies they employed to adapt and grow in the profession.

Table 2: Summary of Themes on Interference of the Baccalaureate Degree

Major Theme	Sub-theme / Indicator	Participants	Frequency
Transferable Skills	Application of business knowledge to AP teaching	1, 7, 13, 15	4
	Use of IT knowledge in explaining historical/technical concepts	6, 10	2
	Understanding student behavior and classroom environment	8, 12	2
	Use of practical and cultural knowledge in discussion	9	1
Gaps in Subject-Specific Pedagogical Knowledge	Insufficient mastery of AP content	2, 3	2
	Lack of pedagogical training and disciplinary preparation	5, 11	2
	Difficulty connecting concepts and overreliance on academic sources	4, 14	2

Transferable Skills and Gaps in Pedagogical Knowledge

While non-education graduates lack foundational teacher training, their diverse baccalaureate degrees equip them with unique, transferable perspectives that enrich Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) instruction. Participants noted that their specific backgrounds provided practical contexts for theoretical subjects, allowing them to bridge the gap between textbook concepts and real-world application. Participant 7, a Business Administration graduate, expressed this advantage: "Bilang isang graduate ng Business Administration, nagagamit ko ang mga natutunan kong management concepts sa pag-organize ng mga klase... kapag tinatalakay ang ekonomiya ng Pilipinas, nagiging mas engaging ito dahil kaya kong magbigay ng real-life examples mula sa business world". This was resonated by Participant 1, who found that their background allowed them to seamlessly relate business concepts to societal and economic issues: "ang business administration din naman kasi as a entrepreneur pag aaralan din natin ang takbo ng ating lipunan... may kinalaman ang businesses sa ating lipunan lalong lalo na sa ekonomya". Even those from highly technical fields found cross-disciplinary utility; Participant 6 noted, "Dahil IT graduate ako, mas napapadali kong ipaliwanag ang mga teknikal na aspeto ng mga historical events... gamit ang mga digital tools".

However, this subject-matter expertise immediately clashes with a distinct lack of pedagogical translation. The lived experience here is one of initial dissonance: possessing vast academic knowledge but lacking the instructional vessels to deliver it to younger learners.

Participant 14 profoundly captured this bottleneck: "My baccalaureate degree, while providing a strong foundation in social science theories, may present challenges in teaching... These challenges include limited practical application, overemphasis on academic jargon, difficulty connecting to local contexts, and over-reliance on academic sources. Similarly, Participant 3 noted the structural disparity between themselves and their formally trained peers: "I find it difficult to teach Aral Pan even though I consider myself an expert in my field... not like education graduates, who are full of training in pedagogy".

Table 3: Summary of Themes on Challenges in Teaching Araling Panlipunan

Major Theme	Sub-theme / Indicator	Participants	Frequency
Challenges in Content Mastery	Difficulty gaining an in-depth understanding of AP topics	10	1
	Difficulty applying teaching methods and techniques	12, 15	2
	Difficulty developing engaging lesson plans and activities	4, 6	2
	Lack of student motivation and difficulty handling discussions	1, 8	2
Pedagogical Challenges	Lack of pedagogical training and assessment skills	2, 3, 7, 14	4
	Difficulty integrating active learning techniques	5, 9, 11	3
	Difficulty addressing diverse learning needs and rapport building	13	1

Challenges in Content Mastery and Pedagogy

The transition into the classroom exposes unit earners to the highly structured and often daunting realities of the educational system. The core struggle extends beyond what to teach to the complex dynamics of managing a

classroom and implementing a curriculum. Participant 7 highlighted the paralysis of planning without theoretical grounding: "Halimbawa, noong unang taon ko, nahirapan akong mag-design ng mga interactive activities para sa mga estudyante dahil wala akong formal training sa pedagogy."

Beyond lesson planning, participants struggled with modern classroom management and student engagement. Participant 1 observed the difficulty of competing with modern distractions: "dealing with the students who are less motivated to learn... masyado silang babad sa social media at mga online games".

Furthermore, the systemic demands of modern education compound this stress. Participant 15 detailed the administrative and structural pressures: "Navigating the intricacies of the K-12 curriculum, understanding and adhering to specific learning standards, and aligning lessons with national and local learning objectives can be quite daunting."

Even when teachers felt confident in general topics, the specific depth required for Araling Panlipunan provoked anxiety. As Participant 10 admitted, "The major challenge is ensuring that I have an in-depth understanding of the subject matter to teach and answer students' questions confidently".

Table 4: Summary of Themes on Coping Mechanisms

Major Theme	Sub-theme / Indicator	Participants	Frequency
Seeking Mentorship and Collaboration	Seeking guidance and mentorship from experienced teachers	2, 15	2
	Asking for advice from co-teachers with expertise	4, 6	2
Attending Training and Workshops	Participating in seminars, workshops, and training	1, 3, 8, 14	4
	Searching online seminars and internet-based learning	11,13	2
Utilizing Online Resources	Watching educational videos and using academic materials	2, 5, 12	3
	Using educational videos and interactive games	7	1
	Using books and educational websites for lesson ideas	9, 10	2
	Accessing teacher blogs, websites, and lesson plans	13, 14, 15	3

Coping Mechanisms — Mentorship, Training, and Online Resources

Faced with significant pedagogical gaps, the participants demonstrated remarkable resilience by actively seeking out both formal and informal support networks. A heavy reliance on collaborative survival and self-directed learning characterizes the lived experience of coping. Mentorship emerged as a critical lifeline. Participant 14 emphasized the value of peer support: "I collaborate with experienced educators, seeking their guidance and mentorship to refine my teaching practices". Participant 2 similarly sought to "ask for technical assistance from my peer/master teacher" to bridge immediate gaps in their practice.

Simultaneously, the participants heavily leveraged digital resources to simulate the pedagogical training they lacked. Participant 6 explained, "Gumagamit ako ng mga online resources tulad ng mga educational videos at articles, at palagi akong humihingi ng advice sa mga co-teachers." Participant 7 used multimedia to enhance engagement, stating, "Ginagamit ko ang mga documentaries mula sa YouTube para ipakita ang historical events nang mas malinaw at makatotohanan."

Table 5: Summary of Themes on Motivation to Pursue Educational Units

Major Theme	Sub-theme / Indicator	Participants	Frequency
Career Stability and Professional Growth	Seeking job security and better compensation	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9	6
	Pursuing professional growth and teaching competence	15	1
Passion for Teaching and Making an Impact	Desire to inspire and help students learn	4, 8, 11	3
	Fulfillment from student engagement and learning	3, 5	2
	Desire to contribute to student success	12, 15	2
	Desire to improve teaching skills for quality education	9	1
	Fondness for children	10, 13, 14	3
Influence of Experiences and Role Models	Influence of parents and family expectations	1, 8, 14	3
	Inspired by former teachers and mentors	1, 2, 5	3
	Motivated by personal and professional experiences	7, 15	2

Motivation for Pursuing Educational Units

A complex interplay of extrinsic practicalities and deep, intrinsic passions drives the decision to pursue formal education. Initially, economic necessity and job security served as primary catalysts for entering the profession. Participant 1 candidly shared, "Seguro pinaka unang rason is security masyado kasing mababa ang sahod sa private institution... pero noong nag-aral na ako sa units unti-unti ko nang napamahal ang pagtuturo".

However, as they spent time in the classroom, this extrinsic motivation rapidly evolved into a profound intrinsic desire to impact student lives. Participant 5 beautifully captured the emotional reward of teaching: "the satisfaction of seeing a student go back home with a smile after the lecture, of being able to make them understand something new... is unexplainable". Participant 10 echoed this sentiment, stating they pursued units because they "wanted to share knowledge, inspire students to reach their full potential, and make a meaningful difference in their lives". Recognizing their own limitations was also a driving factor; as Participant 15 noted, "I felt a strong desire to contribute to the education of young minds. However, I recognized the need to enhance my pedagogical skills... This motivated me to pursue relevant educational units".

Table 6: Summary of Themes on Motivation to Pursue Educational Units

Major Theme	Sub-theme / Indicator	Participants	Frequency
	More structured and engaging lesson plans	2, 6	2

Improvement in Teaching Strategies and Methodologies	Use of project-based learning and interactive lessons	7, 8	2
	Enhanced ability to create relevant and interactive lessons	9, 10, 16	3
Enhanced Understanding of Students' Needs and Diverse Learning Styles	Acquisition of pedagogical knowledge	4, 13	2
	Use of differentiated instruction for diverse learners	7, 14, 15	3
Increased Confidence and Preparedness as a Teacher	Willingness to overcome challenges despite struggles	1, 3, 5, 11	3
	Increased confidence and classroom preparedness	4, 12, 15	3

Impact of Educational Units on Teaching Practice

The completion of educational units represents a critical turning point in the participants' phenomenological journey, transforming their initial vulnerabilities into structured, pedagogical competence. The theoretical knowledge gained is directly applied in the classroom. Participant 15 detailed this transformation: "They have provided me with a deeper understanding of child and adolescent development, allowing me to tailor my teaching methods to cater to the diverse learning styles... I have gained valuable insights into effective lesson planning, classroom management strategies, and assessment techniques".

The units equipped them with specific frameworks to organize their teaching. Participant 7 noted, "Natutunan ko ang iba't ibang teaching techniques tulad ng differentiated instruction na nagagamit ko para mas matulungan ang mga estudyanteng may iba't ibang learning styles." Ultimately, this formalized training allowed participants to merge their baccalaureate expertise with educational theory. Participant 2 summarized this synergy perfectly: "These educational units transform my teaching practices in AP by blending content expertise with effective pedagogy. It equips me with the tools to create a more engaging, inclusive, and impactful learning experience".

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the transition of non-education graduates into Araling Panlipunan classrooms is characterized by an initial "pedagogical dissonance," followed by structured adaptation and professional growth. This phenomenon perfectly illustrates Lee Shulman's globally recognized framework of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). International literature on out-of-field teaching consistently demonstrates that possessing strong Content Knowledge (CK) does not automatically translate to teaching efficacy. As the data extracts reveal, unit earners must actively deconstruct their advanced, university-level "academic jargon" to build the specific pedagogical skills required to make that content comprehensible to secondary learners.

Consequently, this initial lack of pedagogical translation leads to an overwhelming feeling of systemic disorientation, which aligns with the concept of "reality shock" (Veenman, 1984)—a phenomenon frequently cited in international literature regarding alternatively certified teachers. Studies from the United States and Australia regarding out-of-field assignments demonstrate that non-traditional educators often feel vulnerable and paralyzed by bureaucratic curriculum standards and classroom management issues. For the participants in this study, the essence of the early teaching experience is an acute awareness of their own professional gaps, forcing them to confront the reality that subject expertise alone cannot sustain a classroom.

To navigate these systemic challenges, unit earners develop robust coping mechanisms. The reliance on peer-to-peer mentorship observed in this study is a universal phenomenon among out-of-field teachers. Global

research, such as Hobbs' (2013) work in Australia, highlights that informal departmental support is often the primary coping mechanism for teachers lacking formal training. What makes the Philippine context unique, however, is the high degree of digital resourcefulness. Unit earners are essentially "hacking" their own professional development by combining the localized, context-specific wisdom of their co-teachers with global instructional strategies available online, demonstrating a highly proactive stance in addressing their pedagogical limitations.

Despite these early hurdles, the decision to remain in the field and formally pursue educational units reflects a complex duality of motivation that strongly aligns with the global FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) model developed by Watt and Richardson. International literature often notes that alternative-pathway teachers may enter the profession as a fallback for career security. However, those who stay and pursue formal credentialing do so because they experience high levels of intrinsic "social utility value"—the deep desire to shape the future. For these unit earners, pursuing educational units transcends compliance; it is a formal declaration of their evolving professional identity from an "industry practitioner" to a "dedicated, lifelong educator."

Ultimately, the outcomes of this study strongly support international assertions regarding the efficacy of targeted alternative certification and continuing education programs. When non-education graduates are formally introduced to educational psychology and methodology, they can rapidly integrate their rich, real-world baccalaureate knowledge with formal teaching practices. The essence of this experience is one of profound empowerment. Completing educational units validates their presence in the classroom, dismantles their initial "imposter syndrome," and equips them with the exact pedagogical tools needed to deliver highly effective Araling Panlipunan instruction.

Synthesis of Essence

Across themes, the lived experiences of non-education graduates teaching Araling Panlipunan reflect a journey of struggle, adaptation, and transformation. They enter the profession with transferable skills from their baccalaureate degrees but face gaps in subject-mastery and pedagogical knowledge. Their teaching is marked by moments of uncertainty, yet also by creative coping strategies—mentorship, training, and resourcefulness—that reveal resilience. Motivations to pursue formal educational units are driven by both necessity (job stability) and vocation (passion and inspiration). Ultimately, acquiring these units reshapes their teaching, equipping them with methodologies, a deeper understanding of learners, and renewed confidence.

The essence of their lived experience is negotiating competence: moving from a place of deficit toward growth through resilience, professional development, and a commitment to teaching. Their narratives affirm that while non-education graduates face structural challenges in teaching Araling Panlipunan, their adaptive strategies and pursuit of educational units allow them to carve meaningful and impactful roles as educators.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The phenomenon of non-education graduates teaching Araling Panlipunan is fundamentally a process of professional metamorphosis. They enter the classroom as "content experts in exile"—possessing deep, real-world knowledge of economics, history, and sociology, yet lacking the pedagogical vocabulary to translate this expertise into lessons for younger learners. Consequently, their early lived experience is defined by vulnerability, systemic disorientation, and a profound reliance on peer survival networks. However, this study concludes that the 18-unit educational requirement is not merely a bureaucratic hurdle for licensure; it is the vital phenomenological bridge that validates their identity as educators. When provided with structured pedagogical training, these individuals cease to be "out-of-field" liabilities and transform into highly valuable pedagogical integrators who successfully merge the pragmatic realities of their baccalaureate degrees with educational theory. Therefore, the core conceptual contribution of this study is the recognition that alternative pathway teachers are not inherently deficient; rather, they are a reservoir of untapped, interdisciplinary potential that requires targeted, pedagogical unlocking.

Based on the higher-order insights generated by this study, several specific and evidence-based innovations are recommended for educational policy and practice. For the Department of Education (DepEd), there is a need to move beyond generic induction programs by developing a targeted onboarding policy specifically for non-education hires. To address their initial pedagogical vulnerability, DepEd should implement a "Co-Teaching Incubation Period" during the first grading quarter, explicitly pairing unit-earners with Master Teachers in Araling Panlipunan. Furthermore, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) must reform the 18-unit Certificate in Professional Education curriculum to be highly context-specific. Instead of offering generalized foundational courses, TEIs should innovate by providing "Pedagogical Translation" modules to train baccalaureate degree holders to deconstruct their advanced, industry-specific jargon into developmentally appropriate lesson plans. At the institutional level, school administrators should formalize the highly effective informal peer networks found in this study by establishing structured Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These PLCs should be tasked with creating "Shared Resource Banks"—localized digital repositories where non-education graduates can access contextualized lesson plans, local historical data for Southern Leyte, and vetted multimedia tools. Finally, to advance this line of inquiry, future researchers are encouraged to conduct longitudinal studies tracking the pedagogical evolution of unit-earners from their first year of teaching through their licensure, alongside quantitative impact evaluations to validate the student learning outcomes of classes handled by unit-earners versus traditional education graduates.

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