

## Article

# Challenges and Pedagogical Responses of English Teachers in The Public High School: Development of Contextualized Instructional Toolkit for Grade 10 Teachers

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**Abstract:** This study looks into the real-life challenges faced by English teachers in public high schools and how they respond to these difficulties in their teaching. Using a qualitative approach, the research aims to better understand teachers' actual classroom experiences, especially the problems they encounter in instruction, lack of resources, diverse student needs, and curriculum demands. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected public high school English teachers and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that teachers frequently encounter difficulties such as large class sizes, limited instructional materials and technological resources, varying levels of student proficiency, and low learner motivation. In response, teachers demonstrate adaptive and reflective pedagogical practices, including differentiated instruction, student-centered learning strategies, contextualization of lessons, and flexible classroom management techniques. The study highlights how teachers develop adaptability in their practice by adjusting their methods to suit their students and classroom situations. Overall, the findings emphasize the need for continuous professional development, stronger institutional support, and better resources to improve the teaching of English in public high schools.

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**Keywords:** English language teaching, public high school, teaching challenges, pedagogical responses, adaptive teaching strategies, differentiated instruction, student-centered learning, teacher adaptability, learner diversity, instructional practices, classroom management, professional development, resource limitations, student engagement, qualitative research.

## 1. Introduction

Mastery of English is a critical objective in the Philippine basic education system due to its significance in academics, international communication and career readiness. English teaching enhances the four major language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and learners' general school performances [1]. Despite this, English teachers still report challenges, including high learner variability in English proficiency, weak English teaching time, large class sizes, lack of resources, classroom management, and adopting communicative and learner-centered pedagogies [2]. The post-pandemic learning ecosystem adds another layer of complexity to these challenges, as teachers need to respond to technological requirements, flexible learning arrangements, and the needs of the learners [1]. These challenges are very relevant in public high schools, particularly those in low-resource environments, and call for us to explore teachers' experiences and pedagogical strategies used to maintain English instruction.

While previous studies have recognized recurring challenges and strategies for teaching English, little is known about the pedagogical responses of teachers in public high schools to common challenges in terms of instruction, learners' needs, resource availability and systemic issues at their schools. While several studies either discuss challenges or strategies, less studies link these challenges to pedagogical responses of teachers in the public school system [1]. As such, this research sought to explore the challenges and responses from English teachers in the Exploring the challenges and responses of English teachers in public high schools in the Division of Cabuyao, particularly Cabuyao Integrated National High School (CINHS) and Pulo National High School (PNHS). The researcher noticed that teachers of English in these schools have problems in performing Communicative Language Teaching strategies like task-based learning, discussion and simulation due to the large number of students and lack of teaching resources. Therefore, the study sought to provide insights that may benefit policy making, support system, teacher professional development and guide in the development of a culturally relevant instructional toolkit for Grade 10 English teachers.

This study is informed by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory that underscores that students' cultural identities, native languages, values and culture shape their English language learning. In culturally diverse classrooms, learners' perceptions, motivation and language comprehension can be impacted by the cultural relevance or relevance to learners' lives of the examples and illustrations in teaching content [3], [4]. In the Philippines, English language is both a language of opportunity in terms of academic and global mobility, as well as one associated with colonialism [5]. Cabuyao teachers manage diverse classrooms and their students' life worlds affect their classroom behaviors, confidence levels and language use. Consequently, local, contextualized and culturally responsive approaches to teaching are crucial in connecting the local context to the English language learning requirement [6].

This study is also shaped by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory which clarifies the impact of teachers' beliefs in their teaching competence on their pedagogical practices and problem-solving [7]. The latter are more inclined to use innovative, responsive, and student-centered teaching strategies like scaffolding, differentiated instruction, communicative language activities, peer-assisted learning, and technology-supported instruction [8], [9], [10], [11], [12]. Teacher confidence is enhanced through training, support and mentoring, and Learning Action Cells, which offer avenues for peer sharing, problem solving, and innovation in addressing challenges in teaching [13], [14], [15]. But teachers' self-efficacy may be dampened by workload, administrative tasks, lack of appreciation, lack of resources, and large class sizes, contributing to burnout [1], [2], [16]. Cabuyao's English teachers are embattled but adaptable, utilizing local resources, mother-tongue support, peer mentoring groups, technology-based resources, and community-based initiatives to continue to provide authentic and contextualized English instruction.

### **Challenges and Pedagogical Responses of English Teachers**

The reviewed literature reveals that English instruction in Filipino high schools are heavily influenced by recent educational reforms, particularly the roll-out of the MATATAG curriculum. The MATATAG curriculum, introduced through policy guidelines and implementing memoranda in 2023-2024, seeks to combat learning loss, reduce the K-12 curriculum, and refocus instruction on competencies. For English teachers, this brings new learning objectives and opportunities for classroom teaching. It also poses additional demands, especially in planning lessons, aligning assessment and resourcing new curriculum guides. The reform promotes "better" teaching, but also places a strain on teachers and school districts during the transition period to ensure suitable resources, training and support is in place.

One of the major issues in the literature is the ongoing resources shortage in public secondary schools. English teachers continue to face textbook and other learning resources shortages, lack of visual resources, and technology-supported resources. As

Cerbo (2025) stresses, due to these deficiencies, teachers often develop and use makeshift or teacher-designed material like worksheets, printables and teachable reading passages. This takes extra time away from teachers that they would normally need for other aspects of teaching. An absence of properly functioning technology, such as LCD projectors, reliable internet connections, computer laboratories and audio apparatuses also means the use of multimedia-based tasks is limited, which is crucial in teaching learners listening, speaking and media literacy.

The literature also sheds light on the impacts of overcrowded classrooms and lack of instructional support on English language teaching and learning. Large class sizes hinder the use of communicative and learner-centred approaches, such as discussions, feedback from peers, oral presentations and group work. These approaches play a critical role in English language learning, but they need a class size and classroom environment conducive to such activities. As a result, many teachers are forced to adopt more traditional, text-focused and lecture-based teaching strategies, despite knowing the benefits of interactive and communicative approaches. As Cerbo highlighted, these classroom and resource challenges do not allow teachers to implement their classroom practice in line with learner-centered values of the MATATAG curriculum [17].

A second key theme is how learners' cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds impact English education. In line with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, these studies highlight the influence of students' home languages, their values and cultural beliefs, as well as their exposure to English on motivation, interactions, and understanding in the classroom. Students can find content to be less meaningful and relatable when materials and examples are unfamiliar to them [3], [18]. In the Philippines, where English learning relates to academic achievement and the history of colonialism, teachers must find a balance between fostering communicative competency and cultural considerations [5]. As such, teachers employ local resources, culturally relatable examples, code-switching, and translanguaging to personalise lessons and make them more relatable for the students [6].

The studies reviewed also highlight the need for teacher readiness, support, and self-efficacy to tackle challenges. According to Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, teachers with positive beliefs on their teaching efficacy implement more innovative, student-centered and dynamic teaching methods. Teachers who have high self-efficacy apply strategies of scaffolding, differentiation, communicative tasks, peer-assisted learning, and employ technology to meet the diverse needs of their learners [8], [9], [10], [11]. In Cabuyao, Learning Action Cells and peer mentoring sessions can strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence, ability, and motivation by enabling opportunities for them to exchange and reflect on their teaching strategies and challenges, and solve problems with one another [19]. Such collegiality is significant as it helps teachers not feel alone and better navigate the realities of English teaching.

But the literature acknowledges teacher self-efficacy can be diminished by workloads and administrative responsibilities, lack of recognition, lack of follow-up support, and lack of ongoing professional development. These factors can cause stress, exhaustion and burnout, which impacts teachers' motivation and commitment to using effective teaching strategies [1]. Many English teachers in the Division of Cabuyao rise above these challenges. They adapt to these challenges by developing localised resources, providing mother tongue support, using technology, implementing peer-assisted learning strategies, and working together. In general, literature indicates that the challenges English teachers face are inextricably linked to their pedagogical responses, and that it is important to develop a contextualised teaching toolkit based on the needs, realities and experiences of teachers of Grade 10 English in public high schools.

### **Research Question**

This study aimed to explore the challenges encountered by English teachers in public high schools and the pedagogical responses they employ in addressing these challenges. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions.

### Central Question

How do English teachers in public high schools describe Challenges and Pedagogical Responses of English Teachers In the Public High School: Development of Contextualized Instructional toolkit for Grade 10 Teachers.

### Corollary Questions

1. What are the challenges encountered by Teachers in teaching English in public high schools?
2. What pedagogical response do teachers describe as effective in addressing these challenges?
3. How do the teachers' profile (years of experience, educational Attainment) influence their choice of pedagogical responses?
4. How do the specific challenges faced in the classroom shape the development of Teachers' pedagogical strategies?
5. Based on the shared experiences of the participants, what instructional toolkit for Grade 10 English teachers can be proposed to enhance English language instruction?

## 2. Materials and Methods

### Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative design to better understand the challenges faced by English teachers and the instructional strategies they take to address these in public high schools. This design was suitable as it enabled the researcher to understand and describe teachers' experiences, beliefs, classroom practices and pedagogic response in an insightful and rich way. Qualitative approaches are particularly valuable for investigating teachers' professional experiences and practices, including their decision-making, particularly when the intent is to gain insight on their approaches to classroom circumstances [20]. The descriptive qualitative approach also assisted the study by enabling the researcher to describe and interpret English teachers' challenges and pedagogical responses; beyond that, these teachers were able to share their actual experiences that could feed into educational decision-making. Additionally, the study employed a semi-structured survey questionnaire to establish the prevalence and nature of the challenges and teaching responses to strengthen the findings. This aided triangulation and enhanced the quality and richness of the data collected. The findings informed the creation of an instructional toolkit that is relevant to the teachers' current context of English education in public high schools [15].

### Participants of the Study

Participants of this study were teachers of Grade 10 English of the public high schools in the Division of Cabuyao, who were considered key informants due to their English teaching experiences and handling of the different challenges of classroom teaching. A minimum of ten English teachers were chosen through purposive sampling to participate in the interview so that they have the credentials, teaching experience, and teach Grade 10 English. This sampling strategy was fit for the purpose as the researcher was able to collect data and information that were relevant and meaningful to the study from the most qualified teachers. The inclusion criteria for respondents were that they were currently employed as English teachers in a public high school in the Division of Cabuyao, teaching Grade 10 English during the period of the study, had a minimum of five years teaching experience, were willing to voluntarily be interviewed, and could provide feedback on their experiences with instructional challenges and responses. English teachers who do not teach English, are not allocated to the tenth grade, are not teaching in public high schools in the Division of Cabuyao, have less than five years' experience, or are unwilling or unavailable to participate in an interview were not considered for inclusion.

### Sampling Design

The purposeful sampling was utilized in selecting participants with relevant experiences and deep knowledge about the teaching challenges.

### Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was used as the primary instrument in this qualitative study to obtain rich data on the experiences of high school English teachers in teaching Grade 10. The instrument had open-ended questions that let participants share their perceptions of the main challenges they face in teaching English, their strategies to improve their teaching in the classroom, their view on how the MATATAG curriculum has affected their teaching, and the support that they need from school and the Department of Education. The interview also stressed that there were no correct or incorrect answers; that the responses of the participants would not be disclosed and that they could refuse to answer or terminate the interview at any point. As the instrument was semi-structured, the researcher was able to follow up or probe the participant's response to a question to obtain more information. For the instrument to be of quality, it was validated by two part-time faculty members of the University of Cabuyao (English educator and researcher) and one public school administrator outside the university. The teaching toolkit was also validated by an English teacher who specialises in teaching English. The validators scrutinized the interview guide and toolkit based on its clarity, relevance and suitability to gather data, and their feedback and recommendations were then integrated in the study.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection process was conducted to ensure the required data were appropriately collected from the selected participants. The first step of data gathering was to seek permission from the Schools Division Office of Cabuyao to conduct the study, letters of endorsement for the school principals, and written consent of the respondents (teachers) according to the ethical principles of research. Once permission was secured, the researcher deployed survey instruments to printed questionnaires that were distributed physically and online questionnaires to some of the participants. The survey objective was explained to them, together with the confidentiality of their answers and schedule of the return of the completed questionnaires. The researcher then set up interviews, as determined by their schedules, and with their consent, the interviews were audio recorded. Their responses were transcribed into verbatim form for qualitative coding and analysis, and the results of the survey were tabulated using spreadsheets or statistical programs. Frequency counts and percentage distribution were also used to describe the demographics of the teacher-participants and to clarify trends in their beliefs, practices, challenges and pedagogical approaches to teaching English.

### 3. Result and Discussion

**Table 1.** Summary of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes
1. Learner-Related Language and Literacy Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Reading Comprehension and Non-Reader-Learners</li> <li>• Low Motivation and Multiple Learning Constraints</li> <li>• Lack of Foundational Language Skills Low Self Esteem and participation Anxiety</li> <li>• Lack of Instructional Resources</li> </ul>
2. Classroom Environment and Resource Constraints Affecting Instructional Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowded Classrooms and Limited Instructional Materials, Limited Vocabulary Words Affecting Lesson Comprehension</li> <li>• Adaptive Strategies in Large Classes with Limited Resources</li> <li>• Lack of instructional technology</li> </ul>
3. Adaptive and Learner-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated, Scaffolded and Collaborative</li> </ul>

Centered Instructional Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction</li> <li>• Contextualized Teaching for Meaningful Learning</li> <li>• Game based-Learning strategies</li> </ul>
4. Differentiated, Collaborative and Scaffolded Learner-Centered Instructional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated, Scaffolded and Collaborative Instruction</li> <li>• Contextualized Teaching for Meaningful Learning</li> <li>• Game-Based Learning Strategies</li> </ul>
5. Pedagogical Transformation Toward Adaptive, Learner-Centered, and Technology-Enhanced Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evolution Toward Student-Centered and Collaborative Teaching Practices</li> <li>• Experience Based Teaching and Professional Development</li> <li>• Adaptive and Context-Responsive Teaching Practices</li> </ul>
6. Professional Learning-Driven Enhancement of Pedagogical Competence and Instructional Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing Pedagogical Practice through Graduate Studies and Professional Development Training</li> <li>• Continuous Professional Development and Graduate school for Effective Language Teaching</li> </ul>
7. Foundational Language Deficits and the Need for Responsive, Remedial Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Grammatical and vocabulary Accuracy</li> <li>• Modification of Instructional Strategy and Challenges in reading comprehension</li> <li>• Student Mental Health and Emotional Needs</li> <li>• Low Level of Content Understanding</li> </ul>
8. Reflective and Adaptive Instructional Practices for Responsive Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated and collaborative Instruction through game base activities</li> <li>• Flexible Teaching approach and Adaptive Teaching Strategies</li> </ul>

Table 1 presents the (8) superordinate themes that emerged from the Analysis of Grades 10 English teachers Challenges and Pedagogical Responses of English Teachers in the Public High School, these themes is all about the effective English teaching in public high schools requires more than subject expertise. It demands adaptive pedagogy that help to build strong professional growth, adequate resources, and a deep understanding of learners' academic and emotional needs.

The identified superordinate themes are: (1) Learner-Related Language and Literacy Challenges; (2) Classroom Environment and Resource Constraints Affecting Instructional Effectiveness; (3) Adaptive and Learner-Centered Instructional Strategies; (4) Differentiated, Collaborative and Scaffolded Learner-Centered Instructional Practices; (5) Pedagogical Transformation Toward Adaptive, Learner-Centered, and Technology-Enhanced Teaching; (6) Professional Learning-Driven Enhancement of Pedagogical Competence and Instructional Effectiveness; (7) Foundational Language Deficits and the Need for Responsive, Remedial Instruction); (8) Reflective and Adaptive Instructional Practices for Responsive Teaching.

### **Theme 1: Learner-Related Language and Literacy Challenges**

The conversation highlights the presence of learner-related language and literacy difficulties encountered by English teachers in public high schools, which impede English lessons. Teachers reported that a number of Grade 10 learners have poor reading comprehension, limited vocabulary in English, concerns about non-readers, basic language skills, motivation, anxiety in participating, and confidence to speak English.

Teachers have to reduce their lessons, provide reading and language skill instruction, and combine the use of the mother tongue to make teaching more accessible. This concurs with Meniado who noted that reading comprehension is a significant problem among secondary school Filipino learners, particularly when students have weak vocabulary and lack reading experience. And teachers reported that the students are shy, fearing mistakes, and reluctant to speak because of their weak English skills, which is in line with Dörnyei and Ryan, who noted that motivation and confidence play significant roles in learning a second language. Similarly, MacIntyre and Gregersen identified that positive classroom conditions, collaborative learning, and feedback help alleviate language anxiety, which would allow the students to participate more. Using Filipino or Tagalog as a bridge language also shows the role of using first language to support second language learning, as Cummins proposed that the first language can be used as a scaffold in L2 learning. Likewise, Garcia and Kleyn described how translanguaging supports multilingual learners to enhance comprehension, engagement and confidence by prioritizing the use of both their first and second language in the learning process. But these learning issues are compounded by the lack of instruction resources, which constrain teacher support for individual learners, remedial teaching and interactive tasks. This aligns with UNESCO (2023), which found that a lack of teaching resources has a negative impact on teaching quality, learner engagement and teacher morale. Overall, the results suggested that there is a need to provide more reading intervention programs, vocabulary building, comprehension strategies, differentiated approach, scaffolding, peer tutoring, collaborative learning and positive-classroom community for struggling and multi-ability learners.

### **Theme 2: Classroom Environment and Resource Constraints Affecting Instructional Effectiveness**

The conversation illustrates that large classroom sizes, insufficient teaching materials, limited vocabulary knowledge and the absence of technology in classrooms seriously impact English teaching, student participation, as well as the achievement of learning goals in secondary public schools. Teachers indicated that large class sizes make it difficult to give learners one-on-one support and monitoring, immediate feedback, and help to those who have difficulties in reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and communication. Given English is a language of practice, interaction and feedback, overcrowding often compels teachers to teach in a whole class, rather than individual front. Students also have limited vocabulary which has implications for understanding texts, classroom dialogues, and instructions, which reinforces Nation's (2021) argument that vocabulary is key to reading comprehension and second language learning. The participants also stated a lack of materials and technology limits interactive, authentic, and engaging English learning experiences. This is consistent with OECD (2024), which noted that low-technology schools struggle to offer innovative and learner-centered learning environments, and Chapelle and Sauro, who reported that technology-enhanced language learning has benefits for vocabulary, pronunciation, listening and communication skills. Technology shortages also impact students' digital literacy, which is now an important outcome for education, as students need to evaluate, create and share information via digital media [21]. In response, teachers employ alternative strategies, such as makeshift teaching materials, peer tutoring, mixed ability grouping, cooperative learning, and other low-cost teaching techniques. These strategies are in line with Tomlinson and Johnson and Johnson, who suggested that differentiated instruction, peer tutoring and cooperative learning are effective in addressing mixed-ability, large classes. But the teachers' responses in this study cannot substitute for system-level support, as effective long-term instruction relies on facilities and support materials, reasonable class sizes, ongoing professional learning and policy [22]. Overall, the responses point to the need to decrease class sizes or include support staff, provide updated textbooks and reading materials, increase access to support technology, improve professional training,

and create a contextualized toolkit of simple and low-cost teaching materials, vocabulary and learning tasks, cooperative learning tasks, and technology-based lessons for resource-limited public high school classes.

### **Theme 3: Adaptive and Learner-Centered Instructional Strategies**

The conversation reveals that public high school English teachers adapt teaching to address the classroom challenges by considering the students' needs, readiness, interests, and classroom environment. Rather than adopting set method, teachers opt for responsive teaching approaches, including tiered activities, scaffolding, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, contextual examples, controlled use of the mother tongue, and game-based activities, to support and motivate their English classes. This aligns with Tomlinson that differentiation of instruction is critical in diverse classrooms because students vary in readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers reported that struggling readers (including non-readers) feel supported by tiered tasks, cooperative work, paired work, group reading, and peer tutoring, where more capable students' model and explain reading strategies and vocabulary and motivate them to participate. This is in line with Johnson and Johnson, who noted that collaboration increases reading achievement, motivation and peer support; and Allington, who suggested struggling readers learn more when they are provided with meaningful opportunities to read stimulating, interesting texts and continuous, consistent support linked to their interests and lived experiences. Teachers also contextualize the curriculum by simplifying texts, using pictures and illustrations, providing localized examples, and taking small steps toward comprehension and success. These strategies are consistent with Abaño et al. [23], who found teachers make lessons simpler to understand using local examples and learner-sensitive approaches, and with Eslit et al. [1], who identified that English lessons become relevant when students can transfer what they learn to their everyday experiences and communities. Furthermore, the teachers employ game-based learning strategies in the form of question-and-answer sessions, educational games, and post-game discussions, to protect learners from anxiety, build motivation, and keep learners attentive. These align with Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, which highlights how students are more motivated when their activities provide autonomy, competence and relatedness, and with Plass, Homer, and Kinzer, who argued that game-based learning is cognitively engaging by requiring learning to recall, apply concepts and solve problems. In all, the results suggest that differentiated instruction, contextualized teaching, scaffolding, cooperative learning, and game-based learning should be continuously enhanced, particularly for localized lesson planning, designing meaningful games, and promoting learner-sensitive activities that promote motivation, comprehension, and literacy achievement.

### **Theme 4: Differentiated, Collaborative and Scaffolded Learner-Centered Instructional Practices**

The conversation shows differentiated, collaborative, scaffolded, flexible, and game-based teaching and learning are crucial pedagogical strategies that respond to learners' varied needs in English classrooms in public high schools. The participants' teachers acknowledge that learners have different levels of readiness, learning preferences, interests, language ability and vocabulary; they speed up or slow down lessons, tasks and class activities to improve learners' engagement and achievement. This is consistent with Tomlinson, who described differentiated instruction allows teachers to change content, process, products and learning environment according to the needs of the students rather than the whole class with a one-size-fits-all approach. Likewise, Eslit et al. [1] noted that adaptive teaching strategies boost motivation and understanding because the lessons become more personalised to learners' abilities and learning styles. Teachers also provide scaffolding with modeling, guided practice, cues, prompts, and increasing independence to foster learner's independence, particularly in reading comprehension, grammar, writing, essay writing, and oral tasks, similar to Cabardo and Cabardo. Teachers also address challenges students face in English lessons by providing simpler explanations,

slower pace and digestible tasks, remedial tasks and formative assessment strategies to address mistakes and misconceptions. This is responsive teaching as highlighted by Tomlinson, and it confirms UNESCO's (2022) position that equity in education requires strategies that take into account differences in learning pace, language proficiency and readiness. Our conversation also reveals that teachers use game-based learning and functional language use to enhance vocabulary acquisition, communication, self-confidence, and motivation. Vocabulary puzzles, matching, vocabulary bingo and team tasks are some of the games teachers play with students to build vocabulary through repetition, meaningful use and retrieval processes, which Nation explained are key aspects of vocabulary learning. Plass, Homer, and Kinzer also highlighted that game-based learning enhances cognitive engagement as students apply problem-solving, memory, and learning in the context of games. In sum, the responses point out that English teachers require ongoing professional learning in differential instruction, scaffolding, co-operative learning, formative assessment, remediation and purposeful game-playing for them to adapt to the diverse needs of learners and to provide inclusive, stimulating and learner-centered teaching and learning environments.

### **Theme 5: Pedagogical Transformation Toward Adaptive, Learner-Centered, and Technology-Enhanced Teaching**

Through discussion, the paper shows the ongoing pedagogical shift in their English teaching from traditional, teacher-centered approaches to more adaptive, learner-centered, collaborative and technology-enhanced teaching. Teachers reported their adaptation and improvement as they adjust to changing curricula, learner needs, lack of resources, and diverse students' differing English proficiency, confidence and comprehension. Rather than focus primarily on lecturing and back-to-back teaching, they now incorporate discussion, group and collaborative work, differentiated activities, student engagement, technology-enabled learning, and contextual approaches to enhance student learning to make it more meaningful and relevant. This is in line with Tomlinson, who stressed that responsive teaching enables teachers to modify content, process, pacing and assessment to meet learners' needs, and Eslit et al. [24], who found that learner-centered teaching and learning strategies boost students' motivation, engagement and learning outcomes. The teachers' transition to collaboration is also backed up by Johnson and Johnson, who clarified that cooperative learning enhances achievement, communication and inter-personal skills, and Freeman et al, who found that active compared to passive learning is more effective in developing understanding and retention. The discussion also demonstrates that teachers' learning journey is determined by classroom experiences, reflective practice, seminars and lifelong learning and development, which guide them to develop skills and strategies in differentiation, scaffolding, classroom management and learner-centered teaching. This is consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. [22], who noted that professional development needs to be ongoing and collaborative and aligned with classroom challenges, and Avalos, who highlighted the importance of development through experience, reflection, and adjustment. Teachers also showcase adaptive and context-appropriate teaching through their choice of language, pace, and explanations, including situations where they use Filipino to bridge understanding as students are unable to comprehend instructions in English. This is in line with Abaño et al. [23], who observed that teachers develop greater creativity and student focus through classroom experience, and Tomlinson and Moon, who highlighted that students do better when their learning is matched based on their level. More broadly, these findings suggest schools should continue to invest in teachers' ongoing training in adaptive teaching, collaborative learning, use of technology in teaching, differentiated instruction, and the integration of multilingual teaching strategies, acknowledging the use of Filipino as a valid pedagogic strategy in English language teaching.

### **Theme 6: Professional Learning-Driven Enhancement of Pedagogical Competence and Instructional Effectiveness.**

The conversation highlights that ongoing professional learning is crucial in building English teachers' pedagogic competence, confidence, resilience and personalized teacher effectiveness. Teachers become more effective because they participate in seminars, workshops, graduate studies, peer collaboration, mentoring and reflective teaching experiences because these serve as a platform for them to enrich their knowledge of language teaching, build their repertoire of teaching strategies and better meet the varying needs of learners. This view echoes that of Abañó et al , who stressed that teachers' development is based on experiences, adaptation and problem-solving, and of Eslit et al [1], [23], who reported that English teachers in public secondary schools need training in differentiated instruction, language pedagogy, communicative language teaching, and digital teaching strategies. Participants' answers indicate that graduate studies and professional development programs make teachers more reflective, contextualized, and creative in their teaching practice, particularly when working with students of different proficiency levels, motivation, and anxiety levels. Teachers who undertake further learning in seminars and graduate studies also use more learner-centered and game-based learning, trauma-informed and innovative teaching strategies that motivate and engage students through creative learning. From these responses, the role of schools and institutions in fostering professional learning should be encouraged by offering needs-based and ongoing training, scholarships, and study leaves, with flexible timetables and financial support. In short, professional learning should be institutionalized and tailored to classroom needs in the areas of differentiated instruction, assessment literacy, technology, inclusive education, learner engagement, classroom motivation, game-based learning, trauma-informed teaching, and the reduction of language anxiety.

### **Theme 7: Foundational Language Deficits and the Need for Responsive, Remedial Instruction**

The discussion shows that many Grade 10 learners have severe foundational language deficits in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, sentence formulation, oral communication skills, and even decoding skills, which hinder their ability to comprehend instructions, understand lessons, fulfil academic tasks, and actively participate in their English lessons. Educators reported that this results in them having to adapt or completely re-plan lessons based on students' poor vocabulary, lack of grammatical accuracy, low engagement, lack of understanding, or low confidence. This observation is consistent with Eslit et al. [1], which discussed that many English teachers in the Philippines' public secondary schools are faced with learners who have weak vocabulary, limited grammar and reading skills, all of which require flexibility, modification of lessons and materials, and short-term remedial strategies. Because vocabulary and grammar impact learners' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in English, these language skills should be intentionally introduced in everyday language tasks, rather than taught only as separate skills in isolation, as Nassaji and Fotos mentioned that grammar is better learned in communicative language tasks. The discussion also reveals that reading comprehension is still a challenge, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic affected learning, which also found that UNESCO (2022) reported a fall in literacy skills, along with the need for remediation and flexibility in teaching. Likewise, DepEd learning recovery programs for 2023-2025 focused on diagnostic assessment, Catch-up, Reading Intervention, Catch-up Friday, and Teacher-led literacy support to tackle learning outcomes of students below grade level. Teachers also reported that lesson plans should not be scripted, and paced and sequenced flexibly, especially when students face difficulties. In addition to academic mastery, teachers noted that learners' mental health, stress, anxiety, emotional draining, and family issues (i.e. personal life) contribute to their commitment and learning, prompting teachers to empathize and prioritise wellbeing. This is in line with UNESCO (2021) which highlighted the emergence of post-pandemic mental health issues among

learners, and DepEd (2023-2025) which enhanced mental health, child protection, psychosocial support, learner wellness, and emotionally supportive learning environments. In all, the study suggests that regular diagnostic assessments, remedial reading, language, grammar and vocabulary, and the incorporation of both vocabulary and grammar in the English lesson are important. The flexibility in lesson implementation and the training in scaffolding and differentiated instruction for teachers is also a must as well as the improvement of school-based mental health.

#### **Theme 8: Reflective and Adaptive Instructional Practices for Responsive Teaching**

The talk concludes that teaching English is reliant on reflective and adaptive instruction practices that allow teachers to respond to students' academic, language and emotional needs in the classroom. Teachers reported that instruction cannot be a linear process because learners differ in comprehension, confidence, motivation, readiness and engagement; hence, teachers need to observe student responses and react to students, reflect on teaching and decision-making, and change strategies as needed. This finding aligns with Eslit et al.'s [1] study of English teachers in public secondary schools who often adapt lessons due to reading problems, English language confidence, poor comprehension, and varied language proficiency, which led them to suggest scaffolding, contextual learning, and varying the pace of instruction to enhance learning. Farrell [25] also stressed the role of reflection in teachers being more able to improve their teaching quality, learner rapport, and professional self-efficacy, as reflection enables them to integrate theory and practice. The teachers' experiences demonstrate that when learners are "struggling" or "disengaging" they modify lessons from lecture-dominated teaching to tailored, interactive, collaborative, and gamified teaching through activities like group sentence writing, peer discussions, interactive exercises, vocabulary practice, spelling activities, concept overviews, and recall quizzes. These help to refocus attention, involve students, enhance vocabulary retention, and engage them in meaningful and active learning. This is in line with OECD (2021), which found that when teachers employ participatory, adaptive and responsive teaching practices instead of focus primarily on lecture-style delivery, student engagement and outcomes are strengthened. It also supports UNESCO (2022), which highlighted the need for flexible, participatory, collaborative and student-centered practices following the pandemic to overcome learning loss, lack of motivation and engagement. Teachers also learnt to pace lessons and not push students to complete lessons when they haven't yet mastered the concepts, echoing OECD's (2021) emphasis that effective teachers priorities progress, not curriculum coverage. Furthermore, vocabulary review, spelling exercises, and quizzes are helpful repetition techniques, as supported by Schmitt and Schmitt [26], who reported that repeated exposure to vocabulary words and repeated encounters with them (through reading and using them) boost vocabulary learning. In summary, the results suggest schools should priorities adaptive and reflective teaching, consider lesson plans as starting points, have flexible pacing policies, and offer opportunities for professional development in formative assessment, differentiation, scaffolding, engagement, adaptive classroom management, gamification and vocabulary development strategies.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the results, the following conclusions were drawn from the findings:

1. **Instructional Challenges and Strategies:** Managing classrooms with large class sizes and limited instructional resources or materials makes it challenging for the teachers to provide individualized attention and variety of instructional strategies. However, strategies, such as collaborative learning, scaffolding, and practical application exercises, can help learners actively participate and develop critical language skills effectively.

2. **Classroom Management Challenges and Responses:** Establishing clear routines, setting expectations, managing student behavior and using engaging activities can maintain an organized, focused, and inclusive learning environment. It can also promote positive teacher-student relationship and encourage collaboration and participation.

3. Professional Challenges and Adaptations: Teachers with master's program signifies their deeper commitment to reflective and evidence-based practice and more equipped with enhanced pedagogical knowledge, research competence, and critical thinking skills, and are better prepared to address diverse learner needs and respond to the evolving demands of education.

4. Motivational Challenges and Approaches: Different motivational approaches in teaching can encourage students to overcome learning challenges, develop self-efficacy, and sustain their effort in mastering language skills, ultimately enhancing both academic performance and a lifelong appreciation for learning English.

5. Student Learning Outcomes and Pedagogical Impact: Despite challenges, the combined pedagogical responses of English teachers through professional adaptation, motivational approaches, effective instruction, and classroom management lead to measurable improvements in students' language skills, confidence, and communicative competence, highlighting the critical link between teacher practices and learner achievement.

In order to sustain the Teachers improvement in teaching English and the learner's enhancement in English communication, the development of the Contextualized Instructional Toolkit for Grade 10 Teachers is said to be significant for the Public High School English teacher's and learners.

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality of English language teaching in the public sector, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers handling large classes with limited instructional resources should adopt structured, learner-centered strategies such as cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, and scaffolded tasks and differentiated instruction to maximize participation.

2. Teachers should consistently implement structured classroom management systems by establishing clear routines, explicitly teaching behavioral expectations, and reinforcing positive conduct through recognition and feedback. They also continue to use engaging, student-centered activities should be integrated to sustain attention and participation.

3. Schools and educational leaders should maximize the expertise of teachers with master's degree by engaging them in instructional leadership roles such as mentoring peers, leading professional learning communities, and facilitating action research initiatives. Public Schools should also provide structured opportunities for teachers of different disciplines for their continuous professional growth in order to sustain reflective and evidence-based practices especially in teaching English courses.

4. Teachers should integrate varied, student-centered motivational approaches such as goal-setting, meaningful tasks, timely feedback, and recognition of progress to strengthen learners' self-efficacy and sustained engagement in English learning. They should also continue to promote inclusive and relevant learning experiences that connect lessons to students' real-life contexts, fostering both academic achievement and long-term interest in the language.

5. The proposed Contextualized Instructional Toolkit for Grade 10 English Teachers should be pilot-tested, and should have a continuous refinement to ensure the alignment with curriculum standards and learners' real-life contexts. They should be actively involved in its design and implementation, supported by training, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms to ensure its effective use. Regular evaluation of its impact on students' communication skills should guide further improvement and its sustainability.

6. Public Schools should provide enough and appropriate instructional resources and or materials and technological tools such as multimedia resources, and digital platforms that support teaching English to the public high school learners.

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