Instructional Competencies of Alternative Learning System (ALS) Teachers: Basis for Career Advancement Program

Dhanlee B. Salen, LPT[a], Erlinda J. Porcincula, PhD[b]

[a]dhanlee.salen@deped.gov.ph
[b]ejporcincula@yahoo.com
Mabini Colleges, Inc., Governor Panotes Avenue,
Daet, Camarines Norte, 4600, Philippines

Abstract

This study aimed to determine the instructional competencies of ALS teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte by examining their profiles, teaching performance, instructional competencies, relationships between variables, challenges, and opportunities, and proposing an intervention for career advancement. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 50 ALS teachers across 14 districts and analyzed through statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that most ALS teachers are female, aged 31-40, with 1-5 years of experience, managing 51-75 learners per section and attending an average of 3-4 training sessions. Their teaching performance was strong in content knowledge, pedagogy, and classroom management, but assessment practices needed improvement. A significant relationship was found between educational attainment, training participation, class size, and teaching performance, while instructional competence in assessment negatively correlated with curriculum planning. Key challenges included learner absenteeism, lack of resources, and limited local support, whereas professional development and differentiated instruction were identified as growth opportunities. Project SALEN was proposed as an intervention focusing on targeted training, stakeholder collaboration, and improved assessment strategies. The study concludes that ALS teachers are highly competent, especially in content knowledge and pedagogy, but need development in handling diverse learners and assessment practices. Higher education, training, and larger class sizes positively influence teaching performance. To enhance instructional competencies, the study recommends future research on teacher profiles, the development of professional training programs, continuous learning for ALS teachers, and further evaluation of interventions. Strengthening inclusion, addressing absenteeism, and promoting differentiated instruction are also essential for improving teaching effectiveness and career advancement in the ALS system.

Keywords: Instructional competencies, Alternative Learning System (ALS), Career advancement program, ALS teachers

1. Introduction

In compliance with the mandate of Republic Act No. 10533, entitled Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, and the 10-point agenda of the former administration, the Department of Education (DepEd) issues Guidelines on the Implementation of Enhanced Alternative Learning System (ALS) 2.0 on the 2019 ALS K to 12 Curriculum. These guidelines aim to ensure that the implementation of enhanced ALS 2.0 by the central office, regional and school division offices, and other ALS program implementers and stakeholders is strategically and effectively managed (Official Gazette, 2013).

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a Department of Education (DepEd) program that provides an alternative pathway for out-of-school youth and adults to attain basic education. The ALS has become a common choice for individuals who are unable to avail of formal schooling due to personal and financial reasons. As the demand for ALS teachers rises, it is necessary to understand their instructional competencies to provide quality education to learners (Department of Education, 2016).

The Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR) of Republic Act No. 11510, titled "An Act Institutionalizing the Alternative Learning System in Basic Education for Out-of-School Children in Special Cases and Adults and Appropriating Funds Thereof" cited in section 14 that the DepEd shall develop and conduct regular training programs and workshops for ALS teachers, community ALS implementors, and learning facilities to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and capacity to carry out the programs under the ALS curriculum, as well as enhance their skills on their roles as academic, administrative, and community leaders, in coordination with CHED and other relevant partners in the government, academe, and the private sector, and in order to promote the professional growth of ALS teachers. The training should be aligned with the ALS teachers' training needs, so it is necessary to determine their instructional competencies (Lawphil.net, 2020).

In this study, instructional competencies refer to the skills and knowledge necessary for effective instruction, which are considered fundamental for any educator, particularly in non-traditional learning environments like ALS. These competencies encompass the ability to design, deliver, and assess instruction in ways that address the unique challenges of ALS learners. Instructional competencies are closely linked to teaching performance, which is evaluated using the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF). The IPCRF is a standardized tool that assesses teachers' performance across various Key Result Areas (KRAs), ensuring their practices are aligned with DepEd's goals and priorities.

The study assessed the teaching performance of ALS teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte during the school year 2022–2023 using the indicators outlined in the IPCRF. These indicators provided a comprehensive view of teachers' performance in areas critical to instructional success. The study also examined the instructional competencies of ALS teachers in terms of instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment, and personal competencies. Additionally, it analyzed the significant relationships between the respondents' profiles, teaching performance, and instructional competencies. Moreover, the challenges and opportunities faced by ALS teachers in enhancing their instructional competencies were explored.

The findings of this study served as the foundation for developing a career advancement program for ALS teachers. This program is designed to support the professional growth and career progression of ALS educators by providing targeted training, resources, and development opportunities. For the successful implementation of this program, the study emphasizes the need to: Develop a plan for program implementation and evaluation; Provide appropriate resources for continuous training and development; and Establish a reward and recognition system to encourage professional excellence.

Additionally, the program encourages ALS teachers to reflect on their professional practice, identify areas for improvement, and pursue lifelong learning as part of their commitment to quality education. By addressing the instructional competencies of ALS teachers, the study aims to strengthen the overall delivery of ALS programs and ensure the continuous professionalization of its workforce.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This study aimed to determine the instructional competencies of ALS teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. Specifically, it sought to examine their profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, years of teaching experience, number of trainings attended, number of learners per section, and the passing rate of learners during SY 2022-2023. It also aimed to assess their teaching performance based on the Key Result Areas (KRAs) of the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) and evaluate

their instructional competencies in instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment, and personal competencies. Additionally, the study explored the significant relationship between ALS teachers' profiles and their teaching performance, as well as the association between teaching performance and instructional competencies. It further identified the challenges and opportunities ALS teachers face in developing their instructional competencies and proposed an intervention to support their career advancement.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationship between ALS teachers' profile variables, their teaching performance as measured by the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF), and their instructional competencies based on survey responses. The descriptive aspect analyzed teachers' profiles, IPCRF performance ratings, instructional competencies, and the challenges and opportunities they encounter in competency development. The correlational aspect explored the relationships among teachers' profiles, IPCRF ratings, and instructional competencies. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire adapted from Asis et al. (2023) and supplemented by IPCRF results from SY 2022-2023, which assess performance across Key Result Areas (KRAs), including content knowledge and pedagogy, learning environment, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, and professional growth and development.

2.1. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

This study was conducted in the 14 districts of the Schools Division of Camarines Norte, with a total population of 50 ALS teachers, all of whom were included through total enumeration sampling. The respondents comprised 26 teachers from Bicol-speaking towns (Basud, Daet North, Daet South, Mercedes, San Vicente/San Lorenzo Ruiz, Talisay, and Vinzons) and 24 teachers from Tagalog-speaking towns (Capalonga, Jose Panganiban East, Jose Panganiban West, Labo East, Labo West, Paracale, and Sta. Elena). This distribution ensured a comprehensive representation of ALS teachers across the division, allowing for a thorough analysis of their instructional competencies, teaching performance, and professional development needs.

2.2. Data Gathering Procedures

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher followed ethical standards, including securing permission from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS), ensuring respondent privacy, orienting participants on the study's objectives, acknowledging non-original works through APA referencing, and maintaining confidentiality throughout the research process. Data collection involved administering a survey questionnaire and analyzing ALS teachers' Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) for SY 2022-2023 to assess teaching performance. To mitigate potential risks, informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants were aware of the study's purpose, risks, benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time. The research instrument used was an adapted survey questionnaire from Asis et al. (2023), originally designed to assess instructional competence among public secondary school teachers. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographic profile, instructional competencies (instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment, and personal competencies), and challenges and opportunities in competency development. Document analysis of IPCRF ratings supplemented the survey, evaluating ALS teachers across five domains: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners, Curriculum and Planning, Assessment and Reporting, and Personal Growth and Development. A four-point Likert scale was used to measure instructional competencies, ensuring alignment with ALS teaching standards while identifying areas for improvement.

2.3. Statistical Treatment of Data

For data tabulation and analysis, Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20 were utilized. The profile of ALS teachers was described using frequency count, percentage distribution, and ranking. To assess teaching performance and instructional competencies, the weighted mean was employed as a measure of central tendency, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of the data.

Inferential statistics were applied to determine whether the data supported or refuted the hypothesis. To test the significant relationship between teachers' profiles, teaching performance, and instructional competencies, correlation analysis was conducted using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r). This statistical tool measured the strength and direction of the linear association between variables, assessing how changes in one variable influenced the other. Pearson's correlation coefficient was particularly useful in determining whether variations in teachers' profiles corresponded to differences in teaching performance and instructional competencies, providing statistical evidence for significant associations (Freedman et al., 2007).

In addition to Pearson's r, Somers' Delta was employed to analyze ordinal relationships, particularly in assessing the strength and direction of associations between ranked variables. This nonparametric measure was appropriate for evaluating whether variations in instructional competencies corresponded to differences in teaching performance and demographic factors. Furthermore, the Contingency Coefficient was used to examine the degree of association between categorical variables, such as demographic characteristics and performance classifications. This provided additional insights into the overall dependency between these variables, complementing the correlation analysis with a broader statistical perspective.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Respondents

The profile of ALS teachers plays a crucial role in understanding their instructional competencies and teaching performance. Age distribution data revealed that most respondents were between 31-40 years old (32.0%), while only 2.0% were aged 61 and above. This aligns with Saron et al. (2023), who emphasized that younger ALS teachers often possess the physical stamina needed for outreach programs in remote areas. Additionally, female teachers (62.0%) outnumber males, supporting the findings of Saron et al. (2023) and Pinca (2019), which highlight the female-dominated nature of the teaching profession. In terms of civil status, the majority (76.0%) were married, reinforcing Pablo (2021), though contradicting Martinez and Luzano (2023), who found that most ALS teachers were single. Educational attainment showed that 66.0% held bachelor's degrees, while 34.0% had master's degrees, affirming Pinca (2019) and Arpilleda (2021), who noted that ALS teachers typically hold college degrees, with some pursuing further studies for career advancement.

Teaching experience also varied, with 54.0% having 1-5 years, consistent with Tan (2019), Saron et al. (2023), Martinez and Luzano (2023), Gepila (2020), and Flores (2022), who reported that most ALS teachers are in the early stages of their careers. However, these findings contradict Pablo (2021), who found that most ALS teachers had 6-10 years of experience. Professional development was also analyzed, showing that 54.0% attended 3-4 training sessions, contradicting Flores (2022) and Pablo (2021), who reported that ALS teachers either attended more or fewer training sessions on average. The number of learners per section also varied, with 60.0% handling 51-75 students, contrasting Pablo (2021), who found that most ALS teachers managed smaller class sizes of 41-50 learners. This suggests that ALS teachers in Camarines Norte are handling larger class sizes, which may impact their instructional strategies and classroom management techniques.

In terms of student achievement, 56.0% of ALS learners had a passing rate of 26-50%, indicating challenges in ensuring student success. This aligns with Osawa (2021), who emphasized the need for improved instructional strategies to enhance ALS learners' academic performance. The relatively low passing percentage

suggests that teachers may need additional support, training, and resources to address learning gaps effectively. The findings indicate that while ALS teachers demonstrate strong instructional competencies, factors such as teaching experience, training participation, class size, and student performance influence their effectiveness. Addressing these aspects through professional development, enhanced instructional methods and tailored interventions can significantly contribute to improving ALS education in Camarines Norte.

Table 1. Profile of the ALS Teachers

Profile		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age			
21-30		11	22.0
31-40		16	32.0
41-50		14	28.0
51-60		8	16.0
61 and above		1	2.0
	Total	50	100
Sex			
Male		19	38.0
Female		31	62.0
	Total	50	100
Civil Status			
Single		9	18.0
Married		38	76.0
Widowed		1	2.0
Separated		1	2.0
Annulled		1	2.0
	Total	50	100
Educational Attainment			
Bachelor's Degree Holder		33	66.0
Master's Degree Holder		17	34.0
	Total	50	100
Length of Teaching ALS			
1-5 years		27	54.0
6-10 years		8	16.0
11-15 years		3	6.0
16-20 years		7	14.0
21-25 years		2	4.0
26-30 years		2	4.0
31-35 years		1	2.0
	Total	50	100
Number of Trainings Attended			
1-2 trainings		4	8.0
3-4 trainings		27	54.0
5 and above		19	38.0
	Total	50	100
Number of Learners per Section			
51-75		30	60.0
76-100		20	40.0
	Total	50	100
Passing Percentage of Learners SY 2022-2023			
1-25%		20	40.0
26-50%		28	56.0
51-75%		1	2.0
76-100%		1	2.0
	Total	50	100

3.2. Teaching Performance of the ALS Teachers Along the KRAs of IPCRF

Document analysis was conducted to assess the teaching performance of ALS teachers based on the IPCRF KRAs in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. As shown in Table 2, Content Knowledge and Pedagogy received the highest rating of 4.80 ("Outstanding"), reflecting ALS teachers' strong subject mastery and ability to adapt teaching strategies for diverse learners, including out-of-school youth and adults. Their use of project-based learning, discussions, hands-on activities, and real-world applications enhances student engagement and comprehension. However, Assessment and Reporting received the lowest rating of 4.45 ("Very Satisfactory"), indicating a need for improvement in aligning assessments with curriculum goals. Since ALS learners often have irregular educational backgrounds, teachers rely on varied and informal assessment methods that may not always align with formal curriculum standards. Additionally, reporting on learner progress may not fully capture individual growth, highlighting the need for better-adapted assessment tools that accurately reflect student abilities and support instructional adjustments. These findings align with Saron et al. (2023), who also found that ALS teachers excelled in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, emphasizing their expertise in subject matter and teaching methodologies. However, the results contrast with Parto and Yango (2023) and Gepila (2020), who identified Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners as ALS teachers' strongest domain, stressing the importance of inclusive classrooms and diverse learner management. Similarly, Pablo (2021) found that Curriculum and Planning was the highest-rated domain, highlighting ALS teachers' ability to structure lessons effectively. These differing results suggest that while ALS teachers demonstrate strong overall performance, specific areas of strength vary across studies, depending on context and instructional challenges.

Table 2. Teaching Performance of the ALS Teachers Along the IPCRF

Domain	Rating	Descriptive Interpretation
Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	4.80	Outstanding
Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners	4.75	Outstanding
Curriculum and Planning	4.65	Outstanding
Assessment and Reporting	4.45	Very Satisfactory
Personal Growth and Development	4.64	Outstanding

Rating Scale:	**Descriptive Interpretation:**
4.50 – 5.00	*Outstanding*
3.50 – 4.49	*Very Satisfactory*
2.50 – 3.49	*Satisfactory*
1.50 – 2.49	*Unsatisfactory*
1.00 – 1.49	*Poor*

3.3. Instructional Competencies of ALS Teachers

In this study, instructional competencies refer to the essential teaching skills of ALS teachers, which serve as the foundation of educational efforts in the Department of Education. Instructional delivery, one of the four key parameters in assessing instructional competencies, involves the interaction between the learner, teacher, content, and essential skills necessary for effective learning. As shown in Table 3, the highest weighted mean of 3.58 ("Highly Competent") corresponds to the indicator "Selects examples relevant to student experiences and makes connections to a real-world context," while the lowest, 3.42 ("Highly Competent"), relates to "Selects teaching methods appropriate to the content standards." The overall weighted mean of 3.49 confirms that ALS teachers are highly competent in instructional delivery, demonstrating clarity, pacing, and engagement in lesson implementation. However, while their ability to connect lessons to real-life experiences is strong, there is room for improvement in selecting and applying diverse teaching methods. These findings align with Pablo (2021), who emphasized the significance of integrating real-life scenarios into teaching to enhance learning engagement and comprehension. This highlights the importance of continuous professional

development in helping ALS teachers refine their instructional strategies and better align their delivery with students' unique needs and learning contexts.

Table 3. Instructional Competence of ALS Teachers along Instructional Delivery

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1.	States clearly the lesson objective and demonstrates mastery of the subject matter.	3.50	Highly Competent
2.	Presents topic in logical sequence and paces lesson appropriately.	3.50	Highly Competent
3.	Stress mastery of competencies relevant to the curriculum guide.	3.44	Highly Competent
4.	Selects examples relevant to student experiences and make connections to a real-world context.	3.58	Highly Competent
5.	Shares thought-provoking questions in teaching.	3.48	Highly Competent
6.	Embeds and encourages higher-order thinking skills along with teaching foundation skills.	3.48	Highly Competent
7.	Incorporates various teaching aids like models, diagrams, PowerPoint, etc.	3.54	Highly Competent
8.	Selects teaching methods appropriate to the content standards.	3.42	Highly Competent
9.	Uses relevant teaching strategy to meet learning competencies.	3.48	Highly Competent
10.	Demonstrates the successful use of the knowledge/skills in problem-solving through modeling.	3.44	Highly Competent
	Overall Weighted Mean	3.49	Highly Competent

Rating Scale: **Descriptive Interpretation:**
3.25 – 4.00 *Highly Competent*
2.50 – 3.24 *Competent*
1.75 – 2.49 *Somewhat Competent*
1.00 – 1.74 *Not Competent*

Classroom management plays a vital role in ensuring that ALS teachers can create a structured and effective learning environment. The study's findings indicate that ALS teachers excel in setting boundaries and expectations at the beginning of the class (3.50, "Highly Competent"), demonstrating their ability to establish clear rules that promote discipline and productivity. A well-managed classroom allows for better student engagement, minimized disruptions, and a more focused learning experience. Teachers' competence in maintaining discipline and fostering a positive atmosphere reflects their capacity to handle diverse learners and adapt to various classroom challenges. However, the lowest-rated indicator, "Shows systematic routine work/s" (3.24, "Competent"), suggests that while teachers are skilled in managing classroom dynamics, there is room for improvement in establishing consistent and well-structured daily routines. A more systematic approach to classroom procedures can help create predictability, reduce behavioral issues, and maximize instructional time, ultimately benefiting both teachers and learners.

These findings support Ablaza (2022), who emphasized that effective classroom management requires a diverse set of strategies to align lesson delivery, execution, and evaluation with clear learning objectives. A well-structured classroom environment not only enhances teaching effectiveness but also ensures that students feel secure, motivated, and actively engaged in their learning process. To further strengthen classroom management, continuous professional development programs focusing on structured routines, behavior management techniques, and differentiated instruction should be provided to ALS teachers. By refining their classroom management strategies, teachers can foster a more organized, efficient, and student-centered learning environment, ultimately improving both instructional delivery and learner outcomes.

Table 4. Instructional Competence of ALS Teachers along Classroom Management

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1.	Maintains discipline and control.	3.30	Highly Competent
2.	Creates a warm and welcoming room by proper positioning of chairs, displays, and equipment.	3.40	Highly Competent
3.	Shows systematic routine work/s.	3.24	Competent
4.	Develops classroom rules that foster respect, caring and community in the classroom.	3.48	Highly Competent
5.	Makes expectations for behavior clear at the beginning of the school year.	3.42	Highly Competent
6.	Keeps the class in order by staying on time and on task.	3.36	Highly Competent
7.	Have a regular daily schedule to help the learners prepare for the upcoming activities.	3.30	Highly Competent
8.	Set boundaries and expectations at the beginning of the class.	3.50	Highly Competent
9.	Involves parents and guardians in classroom discipline.	3.26	Highly Competent
10.	Provides learners with individual opportunities for acquiring the knowledge/skills.	3.38	Highly Competent
	Overall Weighted Mean	3.36	Highly Competent

Rating Scale: **Descriptive Interpretation:**
3.25 – 4.00   *Highly Competent*
2.50 – 3.24   *Competent*
1.75 – 2.49   *Somewhat Competent*
1.00 – 1.74   *Not Competent*

Assessment plays a vital role in evaluating ALS teachers' instructional competencies, ensuring that learners' progress is effectively monitored and instructional methods are continuously refined. The findings reveal that ALS teachers are highly competent in assessing written works, tracking learner progress, and gathering evidence to inform instructional decisions (3.40). This suggests that teachers effectively utilize assessments to gauge student understanding and make necessary adjustments to their teaching approaches. Effective assessment practices allow teachers to identify learning gaps, provide targeted interventions, and enhance overall instructional delivery. Additionally, assessment results offer valuable insights to parents, helping them understand their child's academic development and the areas needing improvement. By consistently evaluating student performance, ALS teachers can tailor their instructional methods to meet learners' diverse needs and support their academic success.

Despite their strengths in assessment, the study highlights that monitoring learners on a daily basis received the lowest rating (3.20, "Competent"), indicating inconsistencies in routine assessments. Daily assessment is crucial for providing immediate feedback, identifying challenges in real-time, and implementing timely interventions to address learning difficulties. Without consistent formative assessments, some learners may struggle without immediate support, potentially leading to disengagement or gaps in understanding. While ALS teachers effectively conduct periodic assessments, enhancing their ability to integrate daily monitoring strategies—such as quick formative assessments, informal questioning, and real-time feedback—would improve learning outcomes. Strengthening these practices ensures that assessment is not just a tool for evaluation but a continuous process that fosters deeper understanding and engagement among ALS learners.

The overall rating of 3.33 ("Highly Competent") indicates that ALS teachers have a strong foundation in assessment practices, but further improvements can be made in daily monitoring and feedback mechanisms. These findings align with Asis et al. (2023), who emphasize that assessment is not only a means of measuring learner progress but also a powerful tool for adapting teaching strategies to improve student learning outcomes.

To address this, ALS teachers should receive training on diverse assessment techniques, formative assessment strategies, and effective feedback mechanisms. Integrating these practices will help teachers create a more responsive, student-centered learning environment that prioritizes continuous growth, leading to better retention, mastery of concepts, and improved learner performance in the Alternative Learning System.

Table 5. Instructional Competence of ALS Teachers along Assessment

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Uses informal assessment that is aligned with the content standards.	3.32	Highly Competent
2. Measures the performance abilities and skills of learners.	3.32	Highly Competent
3. Assess written works of learners.	3.40	Highly Competent
4. Recognizes the results of assessment to track learners' progress.	3.40	Highly Competent
5. Gathers evidence on learners' knowledge/learning that informs instructional decisions.	3.40	Highly Competent
6. Assesses learning to monitor learners on a day-to-day basis.	3.20	Competent
7. Provide learners the ability to track their educational goals.	3.30	Highly Competent
8. Gather information about the various learning styles of learners in the classroom.	3.28	Highly Competent
9. Integrate assessment into the process of teaching and learning.	3.38	Highly Competent
10. Support learners' self-regulation.	3.32	Highly Competent
Overall Weighted Mean	3.33	Highly Competent

Rating Scale: **Descriptive Interpretation:**
3.25 – 4.00 *Highly Competent*
2.50 – 3.24 *Competent*
1.75 – 2.49 *Somewhat Competent*
1.00 – 1.74 *Not Competent*

Personal competence is a vital aspect of ALS teachers' instructional competencies, as it encompasses key qualities such as responsibility, adaptability, empathy, cultural sensitivity, and time management. These attributes contribute to teachers' ability to foster meaningful connections with students, create a supportive learning environment, and motivate learners to achieve their goals. The highest-rated indicator, "Have a sense of responsibility and contribute to the learners' growth" (3.64, "Highly Competent"), highlights ALS teachers' strong dedication to their students' academic and personal success. This suggests that ALS educators play an essential role in guiding, mentoring, and inspiring learners, many of whom face significant educational barriers. Their ability to instill confidence and provide consistent encouragement ensures that ALS students remain engaged and motivated in their learning journey.

Despite their overall strong performance in personal competence, some ALS teachers may find it challenging to consistently set high yet achievable expectations for their learners, as indicated by the lowest-rated indicator, "Establishes high but achievable expectations to encourage a love for learning" (3.40, "Highly Competent"). While still rated positively, this suggests that some teachers may struggle to balance the difficulty level of their lessons with the diverse capabilities of their students. Setting expectations that are too low may lead to stagnation, while overly ambitious goals could discourage learners who already face difficulties. To address this, ALS teachers may benefit from training in differentiated instruction, goal-setting strategies, and personalized learning approaches that help them tailor expectations to individual learners' needs. Providing constructive feedback, recognizing progress, and fostering a growth mindset can further encourage students to embrace learning challenges with confidence.

The overall weighted mean of 3.55 ("Highly Competent") affirms that ALS teachers excel in building positive relationships, fostering trust, and motivating students through passion and belief in their potential. These findings align with Cartoneros (2024), who emphasized that ALS teachers play a pivotal role in students' academic and personal development by offering care, encouragement, and mentorship. Similarly, Tan (2019) highlights the importance of understanding and addressing students' individual needs to create a more inclusive and supportive educational experience. To further enhance personal competence, ALS teachers should engage

in continuous professional development focused on socio-emotional learning, mentoring techniques, and motivational strategies. Strengthening these areas will allow teachers to better support and uplift their students, fostering both academic success and personal growth in the Alternative Learning System.

Table 6. Instructional Competence of ALS Teachers along Personal Competence

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. Avoids any form of discrimination towards learners, parents, or colleagues.	3.60	Highly Competent
2. Establishes high but achievable expectations to encourage a love for learning.	3.40	Highly Competent
3. Responds to learners' requests promptly and treat all learners with respect.	3.56	Highly Competent
4. Shows a feeling of responsibility towards learners.	3.60	Highly Competent
5. Have a sense of responsibility and contribute to the learners' growth.	3.64	Highly Competent
6. To have a sympathetic attitude toward learners.	3.56	Highly Competent
7. Exhibits sensitivity to gender and cultural differences and learners with special needs.	3.60	Highly Competent
8. Responds appropriately in a non-threatening and proactive learning environment.	3.56	Highly Competent
9. Being flexible and capable of adjusting to novel situations.	3.46	Highly Competent
10. Collaborate with the teaching staff in the functional activities.	3.52	Highly Competent
Overall Weighted Mean	3.55	Highly Competent

Rating Scale: **Descriptive Interpretation:**
3.25 – 4.00   Highly Competent
2.50 – 3.24   Competent
1.75 – 2.49   Somewhat Competent
1.00 – 1.74   Not Competent

3.4. Significant Relationship between Respondents' Profiles and Teaching Performance

The test for a significant relationship between ALS teachers' teaching performance along the KRAs of IPCRF and their profile variables, including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, length of teaching ALS, number of trainings attended, number of learners per section, and passing percentage, was conducted using the Correlation Coefficient (C) and Somer's Delta Correlation Coefficient (d) at a 0.05 significance level through SPSS Software. The results in Table 7 reveal several significant relationships, including a positive correlation between educational attainment and learning environment and diversity of learners (d = 0.121), suggesting that teachers with a bachelor's degree are more capable of creating inclusive classrooms that address diverse learning needs. Similarly, the number of learners per section also showed a significant positive relationship with the learning environment and learner diversity (d = 0.133), implying that teachers handling larger classes develop more adaptive teaching strategies and classroom management techniques to foster inclusivity.

Additionally, curriculum and planning demonstrated significant relationships with both the number of trainings attended (d = 0.205) and the number of learners per section (d = 0.183), highlighting that teachers who undergo continuous training and manage larger classes are more effective in lesson planning and curriculum implementation. The study supports the findings of Perez et al. (2019), which suggest that teachers with larger class sizes tend to adopt structured teaching approaches and employ diverse strategies to engage all students effectively. Moreover, Özgenel and Mert (2019) found that while gender and seniority do not significantly impact teachers' perceptions of school effectiveness, educational background plays a crucial role, with female teachers often demonstrating higher performance levels. Additionally, Asis et al. (2022) concluded that teachers generally exhibit high instructional competence, though their study revealed no significant difference in competence based on teacher profile variables, ultimately leading to the recommendation of an instructional enhancement program. These findings reinforce the importance of higher education, professional training, and class size in shaping effective teaching strategies and fostering inclusive learning environments in the ALS program.

Table 7. Test for Significant Relationship between Respondents' Profiles and Teaching Performance

Profile	Content Knowledge and Pedagogy		Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners		Curriculum and Planning		Assessment and Reporting		Personal Growth and Professional Development	
	Test Statistics	*p-value*	*Test Statistics*	*p-value*	*Test Statistics*	*p-value*	*Test Statistics*	*p-value*	*Test Statistics*	*p-value*
Age	-.003	.953	.048	.314	.097	.140	.102	.275	.055	.582
Sex	.014	.923	.225	.103	.116	.409	.254	.179	.182	.190
Civil Status	.084	.986	.163	.849	.238	.557	.271	.859	.278	.380
Educational Attainment	-.116	.256	.121*	.037	.064	.534	.018	.897	-.078	.589
Length of Teaching ALS	-.068	.383	.044	.467	.100	.194	-.012	.911	-.024	.821
Number of Trainings	.013	.872	.070	.076	.205*	.034	-.036	.787	-.137	.255
Number of Learners per Section	-.083	.365	.133*	.033	.183*	.046	.010	.941	.100	.463
Passing Percentage of Learners	.009	.905	.037	.612	.073	.452	-.006	.964	.117	.382

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05 level

3.5. Significant Association Between Teaching Performance and Instructional Competencies

Table 8. Test for Significant Relationship between the Teaching Performance and the Level of Competence of ALS Teachers

	Instructional Competence							
	Instructional Delivery		Classroom Management		Assessment		Personal Competence	
	R	*p-value*	*R*	*p-value*	*r*	*p-value*	*r*	*p-value*
Content Knowledge and Pedagogy	-.063	.666	.017	.908	.053	.715	.058	.691
Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners	-.230	.109	-.202	.160	-.176	.221	-.203	.158
Curriculum and Planning	-.185	.198	-.114	.430	-.296*	.037	-.112	.440
Assessment and Reporting	.100	.488	.162	.262	.012	.932	.082	.571
Professional Growth and Development	.221	.122	.174	.227	.068	.637	.082	.570

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05 level

The significant association between ALS teachers' teaching performance along the KRAs of IPCRF and their instructional competencies in instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment, and personal competence were computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r). Table 8 shows a significant negative correlation between instructional competence in assessment and teaching performance in curriculum planning (r = -0.296), with a p-value of 0.037 at the 0.05 significance level, indicating that this relationship is not due to chance. This suggests that while strong assessment skills allow teachers to effectively evaluate student progress, they may unintentionally divert focus from comprehensive lesson planning, which involves structuring lessons, setting objectives, and ensuring alignment with educational standards. Teachers highly skilled in assessment may dedicate more time to refining evaluation methods, potentially reducing their emphasis on long-term curriculum development. The findings emphasize the need for a balanced approach where both assessment and curriculum planning are given equal attention to ensure optimal teaching performance. These results contradict the study of Saron (2023), which asserts that instructional competence directly determines teaching performance, implying that higher competency levels lead to better teaching

Outcomes. Furthermore, Pablo (2021) highlighted that ALS teachers play a crucial role in student learning but often resist performance-based evaluations, emphasizing that assessing teacher quality should account for the complexities of the profession and the diverse attributes necessary for effective teaching.

3.6. Challenges and Opportunities Faced by the ALS Teachers in Developing Their Instructional Competencies

Teachers in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) face unique challenges in developing their instructional competencies, which significantly impact their ability to deliver quality education. As shown in Table 9, learner absenteeism ranked as the most significant challenge, with 47 out of 50 respondents identifying it as a major issue. This problem stems primarily from socioeconomic pressures, as many learners prioritize working to support their families over attending classes, leading to academic disengagement and a decreased likelihood of program completion. The second and third most pressing challenge, reported by 36 respondents each, is the lack of learning facilities and materials. Many ALS teachers struggle with the absence of permanent Community Learning Centers (CLCs), often conducting classes in barangay halls, chapels, nipa huts, or even outdoors, limiting instructional effectiveness due to the lack of essential tools such as blackboards, chairs, and tables. Additionally, the shortage of textbooks, workbooks, and modules aligned with the new ALS curriculum further restricts effective teaching and learning. These findings align with Flores (2022), who emphasized that inadequate learning facilities, insufficient materials, minimal local government support, and high absenteeism rates hinder instructional effectiveness. The study supports Flores' assertion that these barriers contribute to teacher and student frustration, negatively affecting engagement, retention, and overall learning outcomes in the ALS program.

Table 9. Challenges Faced by the ALS Teachers in Developing Their Instructional Competencies

	Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1.	Lack of learning facilities	36	2.5
2.	Lack of learning materials	36	2.5
3.	Difficulty in the integration of learning competencies within and across learning strands	10	9
4.	Absenteeism of learners	47	1
5.	Low enrollment rate	16	7
6.	Minimal support from Barangay and Municipal Local Government Unit	30	4
7.	Unstable peace and order situation	5	10
8.	Difficulty in the use of differentiated instruction to address the multi-level group	17	6
9.	Difficulty in handling diverse learners	15	8
10.	Lack of supports from parents	23	5

ALS teachers have access to various opportunities that enhance their instructional competencies, allowing them to improve their teaching effectiveness despite existing challenges. As shown in Table 11, the most significant opportunity, cited by 46 respondents, is the chance to attend trainings, seminars, and workshops. These professional development programs help teachers refine their teaching practices, stay updated on new strategies, and adapt to the evolving educational landscape. Although budget constraints limit training availability, ALS teachers maximize the opportunities provided by the Department of Education (DepEd) at regional and division levels to acquire essential skills for addressing diverse learner needs. The second-ranked opportunity, with 42 respondents, is the ability to help out-of-school youth and adults complete their basic education, a core mission of ALS that significantly improves students' personal and professional prospects. The third key opportunity, identified by 31 respondents, is the use of differentiated instruction to address the varying educational backgrounds of ALS learners, enabling teachers to tailor lessons for better student engagement and success. These findings align with Donnelly (2021), who emphasized that professional development programs focusing on innovative teaching strategies and pedagogical flexibility empower ALS teachers to effectively meet the diverse learning needs of their students.

Table 10. Opportunities Experienced by the ALS Teachers in Developing Their Instructional Competencies

	Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1.	Teachers are given opportunity to attend trainings, seminars, and workshops	46	1
2.	Provide professional growth for teachers *(like scholarships, short course, etc.)*	20	7
3.	Provide the out-of-school youths and adults to complete their basic education	42	2
4.	Provide more socially efficient solutions for learners at high risk of dropping out	26	4
5.	With enough facilities or learning centers	19	8
6.	Sufficient learning materials and resources	13	10
7.	Learners' high level of learning engagement	14	9
8.	Full support from Barangay, Municipal Local Government Unit, and parents	24	6
9.	Teachers use differentiated instruction to address the multi-level group	31	3
10.	Proper handling of diverse learners	25	5

3.7. Proposed Intervention for the Career Advancement of the ALS Teachers

Project SALEN (Strategic Action Planning for Learning Excellence Nurturance) is an intervention designed to enhance ALS teachers' instructional competencies by addressing key challenges identified in the study Instructional Competencies of Alternative Learning System (ALS) Teachers: Basis for Career Advancement Program. The project aims to improve instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment, and personal development through professional development workshops, structured classroom routines, assessment frameworks, and learner engagement initiatives. Survey results revealed critical areas for improvement, including selecting appropriate teaching methods, establishing systematic routines, conducting continuous assessments, and setting high but achievable expectations, while learner absenteeism emerged as a major challenge affecting teaching effectiveness. To address these concerns, Project SALEN follows a three-phase implementation process: Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. The planning phase includes a needs assessment and intervention design, while the implementation phase focuses on teacher training, structured classroom routines, continuous assessment strategies, and programs to reduce absenteeism. The evaluation phase tracks key performance indicators (KPIs) such as improvements in instructional delivery, classroom management, and student participation through feedback and progress monitoring. Student participants will be selected based on attendance records, learning progress, and teacher recommendations, ensuring support reaches those most in need. Funding will come from the School MOOE and/or local funds, adhering to standard accounting procedures. Expected outcomes include enhanced instructional competencies among ALS teachers, improved classroom management, more structured and engaging learning environments, and increased student participation. Through systematic monitoring and evaluation, Project SALEN will ensure sustainable improvements in ALS instruction, fostering a culture of excellence and professional growth for ALS teachers.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the majority of ALS teachers in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte are aged 31-40, predominantly female, married, bachelor's degree holders with 1-5 years of experience, having attended 3-4 relevant trainings, managing 51-75 learners per section, and reporting a learner passing rate of 26-50% for SY 2022-2023. Their teaching performance is exceptional across most IPCRF domains, particularly in Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, though minor improvements are needed in Assessment and Reporting to better align assessments with curriculum goals. ALS teachers were rated as "highly competent" in instructional delivery, classroom management, assessment, and personal competencies, excelling in real-world applications, maintaining order, and respecting cultural diversity; however, continuous development is needed, particularly in handling diverse learners. Certain teacher profile variables significantly influence teaching performance, with higher educational attainment and larger class sizes positively correlating with improved learning environments and learner diversity, while attending more training and handling more students enhance curriculum planning.

A significant but negative correlation between instructional competence in assessment and teaching performance in curriculum planning suggests the need for balanced professional development to strengthen both areas, while the absence of significant relationships in other aspects indicates the influence of factors beyond the study's scope. Major challenges include learner absenteeism, inadequate facilities and materials, and minimal local government support, though opportunities exist in training participation, differentiated instruction, and community involvement to improve ALS teaching effectiveness. To address these issues, Project SALEN is proposed as an intervention to enhance teaching methods, classroom management, and assessment practices, with a focus on professional development and reducing absenteeism, ultimately fostering a culture of excellence and supporting ALS teachers' career advancement.

Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that future researchers examine how teachers' profiles influence their instructional competence and consider other personality characteristics related to teaching effectiveness. Education and training institutions may develop ongoing professional development programs focusing on advanced classroom management and differentiated instruction to support ALS learners' diverse needs. ALS teachers may sustain efforts to maintain high instructional competence, while government agencies should ensure continuous motivation and support for teachers to uphold their commitment to quality education. Further studies may explore the relationship between ALS teachers' profiles and their teaching performance to identify strategies that optimize teacher effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes. ALS teachers may continuously assess and enhance their instructional competencies by integrating diverse teaching strategies and engaging in lifelong learning. Additionally, they may promote social inclusion, unlock learners' potential, and collaborate with stakeholders to address socioeconomic challenges such as learner absenteeism, with differentiated instruction as a key approach. Finally, future researchers may assess the impact of proposed interventions and explore additional factors that contribute to enhancing ALS teachers' instructional skills.

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