

Saan Ako Nagkulang?” A Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Method Analysis of The Learning Gaps on G10 Araling Panlipunan

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Abstract — The unprecedented happening of COVID-19 pandemic made a significant impact on education systems worldwide which led to the adoption of remote learning. While it ensured education was unhampered, it also created new challenges, including the potential for increased learning gaps. This study sought to conduct a sequential exploratory research study to identify the learning gaps in Grade 10 Araling Panlipunan subjects. This study found that the perceived level of proficiency in AP10 competencies of Grade 10 students is high. Additionally, out of the seventeen competencies in AP10, only four competencies are perceived to have an average level proficiency of in acquisition, and thirteen proficiencies are perceived to have a high level proficiency of in acquisition. From the interview of teachers, the competencies identified in which students struggle the most are those that require critical thinking skills, research and source evaluation, and application of concepts. Moreover, the teachers perceive the learning gaps of students in Araling Panlipunan as an aftermath of the pandemic, challenges in the critical and analytical thinking skills of students, curriculum standards, and student knowledge mismatch, and need special attention. Finally, the teachers interviewed suggested strategies and interventions to address the learning gaps in AP10 and these include strategies for enhancing student engagement through innovative teaching methods, strategies for developing critical thinking skills, and strategies for differentiated instruction.

Keywords — *Araling Panlipunan 10 Competencies, learning gap, teaching strategies in AP10, COVID-19 pandemic*

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on education systems worldwide, leading to the closure of schools and universities and the adoption of remote learning. While remote learning has allowed students to continue their education, it has also created new challenges, including the potential for increased learning gaps. Dias (nd) cited that learning gaps are the reasons a learner struggles to understand the content or falls behind in academic areas. Learning gaps could also be seen as the differences in academic achievement between students, and these learning gaps can be caused by a variety of factors, including socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.

The Sustainable Development Goal 2030 (SDG 2030) included in its goal for quality education which states that inclusive and equitable quality education must be ensured and that lifelong learning for all must be promoted. Unfortunately, a report by UNESCO (2021) stated that over 1.6 billion kids and young people worldwide were impacted by the epidemic, with the most vulnerable students being the most severely affected. This underpins the loss of progress toward the 2030 Education Agenda goals.

The recent national and international standardized examinations which measure how Filipino students fare in different learning areas place the Philippines in a very despicable position. As cited by Gutierrez (2022) the report made by the World Bank confirmed that the Philippines had among the world's largest education gaps, with more than 90% of students unable to read and comprehend simple texts by age 10.

To say that the education sector was one of the sectors receiving the hardest hit after the pandemic is an understatement. In fact, according to Torres (2021), there is no better description of the Philippine Education system, along with other countries, than the four borrowed words from the concepts of VUCA which are volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

During the opening of the school year 2020-2021, Philippine education faced several challenges in various forms in fulfillment of its mandate of delivering quality, equitable, and culture-based education without compromising the health, safety, and well-being of its people, especially the teachers and learners all over the country (Torres, 2021). As a result, the students' already thinning connection with the school before the pandemic has already been severed after the pandemic (Gutierrez, 2022).

Araling Panlipunan is a subject that plays a significant role in equipping Filipino students with knowledge and understanding of their country's history, culture, society, and government (Lorbis, 2019; Making the Teaching, 2017). Baliling (2020) added that Araling Panlipunan (AP) program helps pupils expand their knowledge of the globe and in various situations, settings, and circumstances, they learn about other people and their ideals. Through AP, learners also get an understanding of their surroundings and how they change and as kids become older, their experiences broaden and they learn in more varied circumstances, but they keep an emphasis on the political, social, economic, and geographic developments that have defined the nation (Baliling, 2020). Corpus and Salandanan (2015) commented that mastering the learning competencies in Araling Panlipunan will help to create a more rounded citizen who can critically assess contemporary social challenges and concerns on both a local and global scale and this enlightened knowledge prompts him or her to act morally and take an active role in addressing these problems and concerns.

Given the importance of Araling Panlipunan, there have been varying methods, strategies, techniques and approaches employed by teachers in an attempt to impart the best of what each lesson requires (Baliling, 2020).

Unfortunately, findings of recent studies underscored negative student performance and attitude towards AP. Lorbis (2019) stated that although a sad reality, many students find AP a boring subject. Cosme (2019) reported that the lack of interest in the lessons of students, their inattention during class discussions, their lack of motivation to study, and their inability to complete the subject's tasks have been shown to be the most frequent student misbehavior towards the Araling Panlipunan subject. Additionally, there exist learning gaps among Grade 10 students in Araling Panlipunan. These gaps are attributed to a variety of factors, such as insufficient instructional time, lack of teacher training and support (Baliling, 2020; Balaus and Salcedo, 2019), inadequate learning materials (Martha, et al., 2021), and limited access to technology (Derraco and Derraco, 2022).

All these tell the need to study and refocus strategies in teaching Araling Panlipunan subjects. The study on the identification of the learning gaps in said subject will help foster a solution that is likely to be more effective in the improvement of the overall academic performance of students.

Learning Gaps in Araling Panlipunan. Various educators arrived at a common definition of what learning gaps are, which are generally the difference between what learners are expected to have learned by a certain grade level versus what they have learned up to that point as opposed to achievement gap which means an inequality in educational opportunities, a learning gap is focused on what a student should know by a certain point but doesn't, although some may use these terms interchangeably, they require different remedies (How Teachers Can Recognize, 2022).

For most literature, learning gaps are cited as the reason a learner is struggling to understand the content or falls behind in academic areas. The term "learning gap" describes the relative performance of individual learners, or, more specifically, the discrepancy between what a student has learned and what is expected of him or her at a certain age or year level. The discrepancy between what a student should have learned by a specific grade level and what they have actually learned up to that time is known as a learning gap. These inequalities frequently widen over time. In other words, the gap between "the way things are" and "the way they should be" is a definition of a gap (Dias, nd).

Welcome (2021) added that while there are learning gaps that are considered minor because they can easily be remedied, some learning gaps are significant and can cause major losses or academic setbacks. This has been confirmed by Dias (nd) who said that gaps, when not remedied can be compounding. Stating further that if learning gaps remain unaddressed, it will increase the chance that children will struggle academically. Learning gaps can be synonymous with a snowball effect wherein they can become bigger problems if they go without remedy. This can even lead to students having a difficult time keeping up with their peers in the classroom, negatively impacting their confidence and mental health. Eventually, it can even bleed into their social relationships and development. (How Teachers Can Recognize, 2022)

The most disadvantaged students have been disproportionately impacted by the disruption to education systems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has the potential to have profound and long-lasting effects (Addressing Learning Gaps, 2023). Learning gaps have widened and have been magnified because of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was cited in the study of Aguhayon, Tingson, and Pentang (2023) the research of Sooknanan and Seemungal (2023) that said the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the current education crisis and widened the learning gap in mathematics among young students. Even in the Department of Education's continuity of learning through the delivery of alternative learning modalities, challenges of distance learning, and unequal access to resources, reports on poor-performing children still falling behind continue (Yang and Beam, 2021).

The school closure, despite the existence of distance learning, usually implies a reduction in instructional time and, as a consequence, also a decline in learning time. Previous research confirmed and has repeatedly found a link between instructional time and student success, as well as other educational outcomes (Abadzi, 2009; Hanushek, 2015; Scheerens, 2014). As indicated by the low accomplishment levels of Filipino learners which has mirrored the poor quality of basic education, a lot of students who complete basic school do not sufficiently acquire the fundamental skills. One factor for this is that students do not have enough time for work or for training (Guarin & Salcedo, 2018). This goes to say that for most, but especially for learners from low-income households and less-skilled kids, missing school lowers learning possibilities (Bonal and Gonzales, 2020). In other research done by Huang, however, it was concluded that students who spend more time studying will do better in school, even if they are of a poor socioeconomic status, but these individual students cannot fix the whole learning gap. In simpler terms, these students cannot close the learning gap by themselves.

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic to education of learners may be alarming, but this is not surprising according to Yang and Beam (2021) as even prior to the pandemic, concerns about the quality of basic education were brought up due to the Philippines' poor performance in previous regional and global learning tests.

Upreach (2023) identified different types of learning gaps. These are knowledge gaps, skills gaps, communication gaps, environment gaps, and motivation gaps. These are knowledge gaps, skills gaps, communication gaps, environment gaps, and motivation gaps.

Knowledge Gaps are gaps in knowledge and are barriers to students' success. Essentially, a knowledge gap is a lack of information. Knowledge Gaps could be identified by asking the following questions. "Is it reasonable to think that the child could be proficient in this area without practice?" If the answer is NO, look into different learning gaps because this one is likely, not knowledge related. But if the answer is YES, you have a knowledge gap on your hands. An easy way to eliminate knowledge gaps is to ensure the child is provided with the correct material they need to learn. Students cannot master a concept if they do not have the proper information.

Skill gaps can also stand in the way of students achieving their learning goals. A skill gap is a lack of practice. The easiest way to find skill gaps is to respond to the following inquiries: "Is it realistic to believe that my child might be skilled without practice? If the answer is negative, a lack of abilities is probably the cause.

The third gap mentioned in Upreach (2023) is communication Gaps. A communication gap is a deficit in effective communication. Proper learning cannot occur if there is poor communication between two parties. Some examples might include the instructions being incorrect, the instructions being poorly articulated or vague, the student misinterpreting the instructions, and the instructions not possible. Communication gaps could be identified by answering the questions, Are pupils aware of their responsibilities in the classroom? Is there potential for misunderstanding?

The fourth learning gap is environment gaps, (Upreach, 2023) There are times when a student's surroundings can become a barrier to effective learning. Some examples include unexpected learning roadblocks, missing materials, resources, or technology; no direction; and unexpected costs. The question to ask to identify environmental gaps is whether there are any specific situational aspects that could be impacting their learning experience.

The last in the enumerated list of gaps by Upreach (2023) is motivation gaps. Motivation gap is when a student knows what they need to do and how to do it, yet they still don't do it. Many children struggle with motivating themselves to complete a task or pay attention in school. In short, motivation gaps often prevent students from meeting their learning goals. Given that it's difficult to help overcome students' learning gaps until the root cause is identified. However, here are some of the common reasons children develop motivation gaps in school. (1) They are distracted or unfocused. (2) They can't see the bigger picture, or it doesn't make sense to them. (3) They're not interested in making an effort. (4) They may be anxious or concerned about change. (5) They're used to doing things differently and don't see the point in unlearning old ways.

One method for addressing learning gaps and accelerating learning is to create learning time (Suprayogi, 2017). Learning deficits are a result of a number of causes, including the pandemic, that have developed and require attention. Because of this, certain remedies have been developed to assist students overcome academic challenges and the lack of math confidence of the learners.

Deracco & Derraco's (2022) suggestions consist of: (1.) Araling Panlipunan online teachers should consistently employ a variety of educational activities and utilize various web tools to spice up the courses and provide the students fresh learning opportunities. (2.) Online instructors for Araling Panlipunan should contextualize and localize lectures so that students can understand the topic in their actual world circumstances. Include technological elements and exercises that will improve students' critical and creative thinking abilities. (3.) Araling Panlipunan online instructors

should maintain their students' eagerness for higher education. performance. Teachers may offer orientation to help students become comfortable with various systems and applications online.

Learners Difficulty in Learning Araling Panlipunan. . One of the essential courses in the K–12 Curriculum, Araling Panlipunan, strives to teach students how to be accountable and responsible, industrious people who live in the nation (Derraco, MC & Derraco, N, 2022). Similarly, according to Lorbis (2019) and Making the Teaching (2017), Araling Panlipunan is a topic that significantly contributes to giving Filipino students information and comprehension of their nation's history, culture, society, and government. According to Baliling (2020), the Araling Panlipunan (AP) curriculum aids students in broadening their knowledge of the world and teaches them about other people's values in a variety of contexts. As students get older, their experiences broaden and they learn in more diverse settings, but they maintain a focus on the political, social, economic, and geographic developments that have defined the country (Baliling, 2020). Through AP, students also gain an understanding of their surroundings and how they change.

Lorbis (2019) noted that most students find Araling Panlipunan as a boring subject primarily because it deals with history, economics, politics, constitution, and society. The contents are highly objective in nature and it should be taught in an exact and comprehensive way. So, teachers struggle to motivate learners and must make information relevant to the experiences of the learners.

The study of Guarin and Salcedo (2018) revealed that the students' acquisition of the majority of Araling Panlipunan skills is below average and that students encountered slightly serious problems in acquiring Araling Panlipunan skills. It was recommended in the same study that the students' Araling Panlipunan abilities need to be further improved, thus interventions and corrective measures must be taken. Teachers may undertake exercises that, in particular in the areas where they attained poor levels of acquisition, would need to foster learners' higher-order thinking abilities.

Cosme (2019) discovered in her study that the students are usually having low or failing grades in Araling Panlipunan because their academic performance was greatly affected by their behavior towards the subject. The most frequent student misbehavior towards the Araling Panlipunan subject have been shown to be the lack of interest in the teachings, their inattention during class discussions, their lack of motivation to study, and their inability to complete the subject's tasks.

Pinon (2021) found that students who are studying Araling Panlipunan 8 - Kasaysayan ng Daigdig have issues or challenges. Topics like Rebolusyong Siyentipiko/Industrial, Panahong Renaissance, Panahon ng Kaliwanagan/Panahon ng Repormasyon, and Digmaang have been challenging for the pupils to relate to and the pre-test results showed that all student respondents received failing grades and shown a low level of competence for each test item, but in the post-

test after certain interventions were introduced, all student respondents received passing grades and demonstrated a high level of mastery for each test item.

While most researchers highlight the negative attitude of learners toward the Araling Panlipunan subject, the findings in the study made by Derraco and Derraco (2022) serve as a silver lining since it reported that students that use online learning have a favorable opinion about the topic of Araling Panlipunan and its contributing aspects are technology, teacher skill, and educational methods. Moreover, many of the students participating in online distance learning have high academic performance which means that they can easily transfer or apply their knowledge, skills, and understanding on the subject to their daily lives. Finally, academic performance and attitude have a negligible, positive correlation which suggests that a good attitude toward the subject of Araling Panlipunan is not a guarantee of high performance in school.

Strategies in Teaching Araling Panlipunan. To be able to cope with the challenges of distance learning and its aftermath, teachers use a variety of strategies, techniques, and approaches. However, time challenges the ability of teachers to explore traditional strategies to the ones which could cope with changes (Baliling, 2020).

One strategy introduced is the use of differentiated instruction. Differentiating instruction may entail having the teacher offer lessons at various degrees of difficulty depending on the aptitude of each student, or it may entail presenting the same topic to all students using a range of instructional methodologies (Balaus & Salcedo, 2019). As pointed out by Guarin and Salcedo (2018) problems arise in the teaching of Araling Panlipunan subject, for instance the acquisition of skills in a certain topic or lesson because teachers use the same teaching strategies for all students when it is important that Araling Panlipunan teachers learn to teach social studies standards to both students with special needs and general learners.

The use of differentiated instruction to learners of Araling Panlipunan found that differentiated instruction has a better effect than non differentiated instruction. In the study by Balaus and Salcedo (2019) it was revealed that the student participants in the experimental group who were exposed to differentiated instruction performed better than the student participants in the control group who were not exposed to differentiated instruction.

Another strategy in teaching Araling Panlipunan is using multiple intelligences in teaching. The use of multiple intelligences in teaching AP means recognizing that each student has unique abilities and intelligences and finding ways to cater to these multiple intelligences of the learners. This approach involves using differentiated approaches, strategies, and methods that match the different learning styles and strengths of students. By doing so, teachers can empower young people to effectively use their intelligence and enhance their learning and understanding of the subject (Baliling, 2020).

The research findings in the study of Baliling (2020) indicate that the use of multiple intelligence strategies in teaching Araling Panlipunan is moderately effective among public

secondary schools in the City Division of Tabuk, Kalinga. The study also found that teachers' awareness and perception of multiple intelligences were limited, and they faced moderately serious problems in using these strategies in teaching. It recommended that Araling Panlipunan teachers should be provided with training and professional development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in using multiple intelligence strategies in teaching. The study also suggests that school administrators should support and encourage the use of these strategies by providing necessary resources and materials. Additionally, the study recommends further research on the effectiveness of multiple intelligence strategies in teaching Araling Panlipunan, as well as on identifying and addressing the challenges faced by teachers in implementing these strategies.

Another strategy in teaching Araling Panlipunan is the Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach. The Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach's historical foundation was established in the study of Wijayanti (2013) who said that constructivism and behaviorism theory shaped the CTL Approach. She advances that in constructivism, students may create their own knowledge by tying together their earlier learning and experiences, putting those concepts to use in a fresh setting, and combining what they learned with the pre-existing intellectual construct further enumerating the five steps in learning in a constructivist way namely: activating knowledge, acquiring knowledge, understanding knowledge, applying knowledge, and reflecting knowledge (Wijayanti, 2013).

A study made by Lorbis found that there is a significant difference between the learning competencies of the Grade Two pupils in Araling Panlipunan before and after applying Contextualized Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach thereby leading to the conclusion that the CTL Approach is useful to increase mastery in learning competencies in Araling Panlipunan.

II. Methodology

The study used the sequential-exploratory mixed method. The exploratory-sequential technique is a sequential method that is employed when the researcher wants to combine qualitative results with quantitative analysis. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), a researcher interested in creating a novel instrument, taxonomy, or treatment regimen will find this two-phase method to be especially helpful.

The sequential-exploratory mixed method approach is an effective and relevant choice for this researcher's study. Firstly, this approach allowed the researcher to first explore qualitatively to gain an in-depth understanding of the learning gaps and potential interventions from the perspective of teachers and students. The qualitative data and analysis from Phase 1 informed the development of the quantitative instrument in Phase 2. Exploring first qualitatively through open-ended interviews allows teachers to provide detail and nuance on the learning gaps and share their expertise on potential strategies to help address the learning gaps. This provided rich data not possible with only quantitative measures. The qualitative data helped ensure the survey instrument

measures the concepts most relevant to the research questions, rather than making assumptions. This strengthened the validity of the quantitative phase. Secondly, the mixed methods approach leveraged the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more complete understanding of the research problem than either method alone. Finally, this mixed methods approach aligned well with the researcher's aims to deeply explore the topic qualitatively while also collecting generalizable quantitative data, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of the research questions.

For the qualitative phase, the purposive sampling method was used to determine the participants of this research. This method aimed to select participants who can provide rich and diverse perspectives on the research questions. According to Frost (2023), purposive sampling is a non-probability way of gathering a sample in which researchers utilize their knowledge to select certain participants who will aid the study in achieving its objectives. These individuals have certain qualities that the researchers must consider while analyzing their study issue. In other words, individuals are chosen by the researchers "on purpose."

For the quantitative phase, the researcher used random sampling in the selection of the respondents. A sample of Grade 10 students from selected cluster 5 schools in the division of Davao City were given the questionnaires.

III. Results and Discussion

Competencies in AP10 which Students Perceived to Struggle the Most. Of the seventeen AP 10 competencies, only four competencies got the level of proficiency of average. These are nasusuri ang kahalagahan ng pag aaral ng kontemporaryong isyu with 3.30 perceived level of proficiency, the fifth, sixth, and seventh competencies namely; naisasagawa ang mga angkop na hakbang ng CDRRM plan, nasusuri ang dahilan, dimensyon at epekto ng ng globalisasyon, and naipapaliwanag ang kalagayan, suliranin at pagtugon sa isyu ng paggawa sa bansa, got 3.29, 3.15, and 3.33 level of perceived proficiency. The thirteenth competency also got average level of perceived proficiency with 3.18 numerical value. The average level of proficiency means that means that the level of acquisition of the competency being described is average.

The overall level of perceived proficiency in the Competencies in AP10 as perceived by students is 3.48 with the description high and the interpretation of the level of acquisition of the competency being described is high.

Acquired Level of Proficiency of Grade 10 Students in AP 10.

32 students have a level of acquired proficiency in AP 10 of low to very low. The total average of 61, with the description of high, has been noted as the level of acquired proficiency in

AP 10 of Grade 10 students. This means that the level of acquired proficiency in AP 10 of the respondents is high.

This confirms the previous findings on the students' perceived proficiency. The students perceived their proficiency to be high and the result of the test assessing their acquired proficiency is also high.

The competencies in AP10 that students struggle with the most.

From the interview of the five teachers, only two teachers identified specific competencies found in the Most Essential Learning Competencies released by the department of Education. T1 said that the first quarter competency on “naipaliliwanag ang pangkasaysayan, pampulitikal, pang-ekonomiya, at sosyo kultural na pinagmulan ng globalisasyon” is what most student find difficult. T4 identified competencies “Nasusuri ang mga halimbawa ng paglabag sa karapatang pantao sa pamayanan, bansa, at daigdig”, and “Naipapaliwanag ang mahahalagang probisyon ng Reproductive Health Law”. T4 explained that these competencies require critical thinking among students and most Grade 10 students lack the critical thinking required for such competencies. This is agreed by T2 and T3 who said that they (students) lack critical thinking skills. Many students find it challenging to analyze historical events, government policies, and societal issues critically. Developing the ability to evaluate information, discern biases, and make informed judgments is crucial in Araling Panlipunan ” , “another is the lack of critical thinking skills of students. Developing the ability to evaluate information, discern biases, and make informed judgments are skills lacking in our students”, respectively.

The second theme identified from the interview of the teacher-participants of this study is research and source evaluation. T2 said that students lack research skills and source evaluation. Research skills are essential in AP10, and students sometimes struggle with finding reliable sources of information. While teaching them how to evaluate the credibility of sources and cross-reference information is important it remains an ongoing process. T4 added that students find difficulty in interpreting and analyzing reading materials.

Finally, another competency that students lack is the application of concepts. T3 believes that students lack the skill of application of historical knowledge. T5 observes that the learning competencies that students find difficult the most are those that require the application of economic concepts to decision-making scenarios. T1 said “Para sa akoo ang melcs na naipaliliwanag ang pangkasaysayan, pampulitikal, pang-ekonomiya, at sosyokultural na pinagmulan ng globalisasyon. Naa ni sa first quarter na topic.” T1 believes that this competency requires that students at least have the capacity to apply the concepts before they can explain them.

The perceptions of the teachers on the learning gaps of students in Araling Panlipunan 10. There are four themes under this category. The first theme is the aftermath of the pandemic. T1 attributes learning gaps to the pandemic, emphasizing the lack of critical thinking skills and low

comprehension among students. The pandemic is considered a significant factor, and students are not seen as solely to blame for the observed gaps.

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic to education of learners may be alarming, but this is not surprising according to Yang and Beam (2021) as even prior to the pandemic, concerns about the quality of basic education were brought up due to the Philippines' poor performance in previous regional and global learning tests.

The second theme is challenges in critical thinking and analytical skills. T3 points to a lack of critical and analytical thinking as a root cause of learning gaps. Students struggle to analyze reading materials, indicating a challenge in making meaning from the content, with some facing low reading comprehension. Moreover, T2 believes that diversity can create gaps in foundational knowledge and skill sets. This means that students who come from diverse educational backgrounds, and the level of exposure to critical thinking, research skills, and subject content may have varying foundational knowledge and skill sets. While T1 confirms the statement of T3 who said that students are not trained to think critically. They are not reading questions with comprehension and they have very low comprehension skills.

The third theme is curriculum standards and student knowledge mismatch. T4 cited misalignment between the curriculum and the students' prior knowledge as a potential significant reason for the existence of learning gaps in Araling Panlipunan. The curriculum may assume a certain baseline, and students from different educational backgrounds might not have received consistent exposure to essential concepts. The curriculum may assume a certain baseline, leading to learning gaps as students from diverse backgrounds may not have consistent exposure to essential concepts. T1 seems to agree by saying that the students lack the skills needed for them to be able to thrive in their Grade 10.

Suggested strategies and Interventions to address the Learning Gaps in AP 10

From the interview of teachers, it showed that the strategies and interventions to address the learning gaps of students in AP 10 are strategies that enhance student engagement through innovative teaching methods, strategies developing critical thinking of students, and differentiated instruction. The teachers highlight the need to move away from traditional didactic teaching methods by integrating innovative techniques to spark student interest, as well as shifting the focus onto developing critical thinking abilities rather than just memorizing content. Additionally, catering to individual learning requirements through differentiated instruction is raised as an important consideration.

T1 emphasized the importance of making lessons more appealing by integrating ICT and enhancing critical thinking. T2 used real-world examples to create an inclusive and effective learning environment, addressing specific challenges in Araling Panlipunan.

T1 communicated the importance to make lessons that will enhance the critical thinking of the students, arguing that since it is already given that students find Araling Panlipunan boring, might as well make Araling Panlipunan more interesting for students by incorporating technology, along with integrating activities to improve critical thinking and reading comprehension.

T3, T4, and T5 emphasized critical thinking over rote memorization. T3 acknowledged that students come from diverse educational backgrounds, and the level of exposure to critical thinking, research skills, and subject content may not be the same. This diversity can create gaps in foundational knowledge and skill sets. Hence according to T3, there is a need to address these learning gaps by requiring a holistic and differentiated approach.

Analysis

The perceived level of proficiency in AP10 competencies of Grade 10 students is high. This signifies that students perceived themselves to have a high level of acquisition of the competencies required in AP10. Out of the seventeen competencies in AP10, only four competencies are perceived to have an average level proficiency of acquisition, thirteen proficiencies are perceived to have a high-level proficiency of acquisition.

The overall level of acquired proficiency in AP10 of one hundred fifteen Grade 10 students is high. This is despite some students getting low and very low acquired proficiency.

From the interview of teachers, the competencies identified in which students struggle the most are those that require critical thinking skills, research and source evaluation, and application of concepts. Additionally, the teachers perceive the learning gaps of students in Araling Panlipunan as an aftermath of the pandemic, challenges in the critical and analytical thinking skills of students, curriculum standard, and student knowledge mismatch, and need special attention.

Furthermore, the teachers interviewed suggested strategies and interventions to address the learning gaps in AP10 and these include strategies for enhancing student engagement through innovative teaching methods, strategies for developing critical thinking skills, and strategies for differentiated instruction.

Discussion

Grade 10 students have a high overall perceived level of proficiency in the competencies outlined in Araling Panlipunan 10 (AP10). The majority of the 17 AP10 competencies were rated by students as having a high level of acquisition. However, there were a few key competencies related to critical thinking, research skills, source evaluation, and application of concepts that students still struggle with.

Teachers affirmed these competency gaps, attributing them to the impacts of the pandemic on learning, challenges developing critical thinking abilities, curriculum misalignment, and fundamental student knowledge issues. They provided valuable perspectives on strategies to

address these AP10 learning gaps through enhanced student engagement tactics, critical thinking skill development, and differentiated instruction.

While students rate their AP10 competency proficiency highly overall, this study exposed underlying deficiencies in key higher-order competencies. The teachers' insights and recommendations on improving student learning in these areas provide a useful starting point.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE



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The author was born on February 16, 1983. A dedicated educator, live in Samantha Homes, Bago Gallera, Davao City. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology at Brokenshire College Davao. She acquired 18 units in Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies at Philippine College of Technology and successfully passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in 2015.

Darlene L. Pineda nurtured young minds in Araling Panlipunan 10 in Crossing Bayabas National High School for six years. Aside from teaching, her ancillary tasks are Cluster 4 Coordinator in Basic Education Information System (BEIS) and Learner Information System (LIS). She is also appointed as ICT Coordinator and a member of ICT Media Team in the school where she is currently assigned as Teacher I.

Beyond the classroom, Darlene L. Pineda leverages her technological savvy to provide virtual assistance services as an online Bookkeeper. Her commitment to education and technology drives her to seek innovative ways to engage and inspire others.

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