

The Implementation of Senior High School Alternative Learning System: Basis for a Proposed Professional Development Plan for Teachers

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ABSTRACT

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The study assessed the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Bulacan, focusing on learning delivery, resources, environment, and assessment to propose a professional development plan for teachers. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 342 ALS implementers and learners through surveys and interviews. Findings revealed a diverse teacher demographic, predominantly female and single, with most having less than five years of experience and no recent seminar attendance. Most teachers held Bachelor's degrees, with some possessing

Master's degrees, and a majority had passed the LET exam. Respondents rated ALS



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implementation as “fully implemented,” except for learners who rated the learning delivery and learning resources as “implemented”. As for significant differences among the respondents, ALS implementation has no significant differences among the four learning domains. Challenges included limited interaction, ineffective communication, curriculum mismatches, resource constraints, and high workloads. Overall, there was consensus on ALS implementation across respondent groups, highlighting strengths and areas needing improvement to enhance the program’s effectiveness and teacher support. To effectively address the challenges the ALS program faces, it is essential to enhance instructional delivery through increased face-to-face interaction between students and teachers, alongside providing targeted training on ALS pedagogy for educators. Developing effective learning materials, ensuring adequate facilities, creating a separate ALS curriculum, and establishing clear assessment policies will help minimize distractions, support student engagement, and improve overall learning outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNESCO promotes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (UNESCO, SDG4, 2015). The global Education for All (EFA) movement, which targets 2030, aims to meet the diverse learning needs of individuals worldwide (UNESCO, 2015). In the Philippines, the EFA 2015 National Action Plan has emphasized the Alternative Learning System (ALS) as a vital mechanism to provide educational opportunities for those unable to participate in formal schooling (DepEd, UNICEF, 2022).

The ALS, formerly Non-Formal Education, is designed to address the educational needs of various marginalized groups, including out-of-school youth, adults, individuals with disabilities, and residents of remote areas (RA 9155). By offering flexible and accessible learning options outside traditional schooling, ALS recognizes and values the prior knowledge and skills that learners have acquired informally (DepEd-ALS-EST Handbook, 2019). Its comprehensive programs encompass core academic subjects and practical life skills, ensuring that education remains relevant and applicable to learners’ everyday lives (RA 11510).

Despite its significant outreach—enrolling over 28 million students in the 2022-2023 school year—ALS faces persistent challenges, particularly inadequate support from local stakeholders, which has led to resource shortages that hinder effective instruction (CHI, 2023). The launch of ALS 2.0 in 2019 aimed to enhance access to basic education up to the Senior High School level

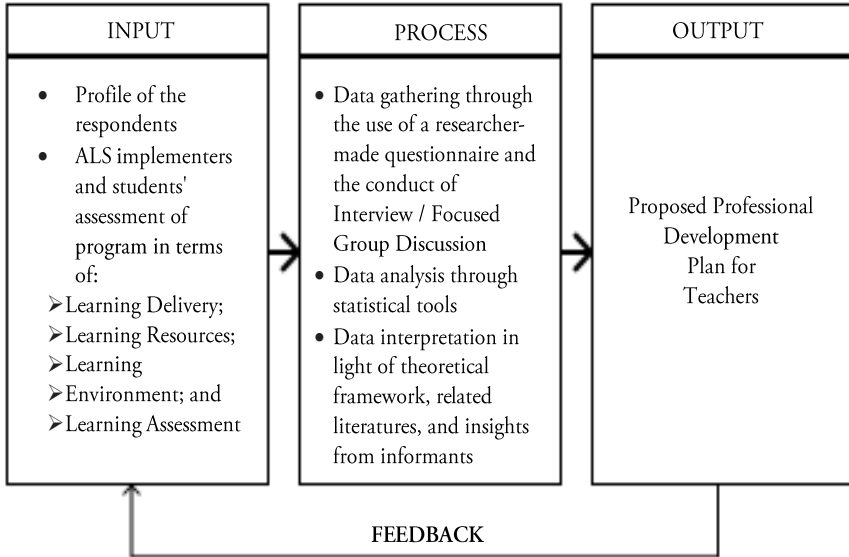
for marginalized groups. Yet, the implementation of this revamped curriculum continues to encounter obstacles. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2024) has proposed recommendations to further enhance ALS accessibility and quality, but gaps remain in the literature regarding the specific challenges and needs of ALS teachers and learners.

This study addresses the research gap by assessing the implementation of the ALS Senior High School (SHS) program in Bulacan, focusing on learning delivery, resources, environment, and assessment. The limited published documentation for ALS 2.0 underscores the necessity of this research, as it aims to inform professional development plans for teachers. By developing two tailored professional development plans—one for experienced teachers and another for new teachers and literacy volunteers—this study seeks to enhance the learning experience and align with the overarching objectives of the ALS program, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes for marginalized learners.

FRAMEWORK

The researcher utilized the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model to assess the effectiveness of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Bulacan. The conceptual framework guided the study, focusing on the profile of respondents (ALS teachers, coordinators, and learners) and the implementation of ALS in terms of learning delivery, resources, environment, and assessment. Data was gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire and interviews/focus group discussions, analyzed using statistical tools, and interpreted in light of related literature and insights from informants. The key output of the study is a proposed professional development plan for ALS teachers in Bulacan, aimed at improving implementation in the four key areas mentioned, which relevant stakeholders may consider, particularly the Department of Education's ALS Department.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the Study



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to assess the implementation of the ALS program under the new ALS K to 12 curriculum, focusing on key areas such as learning delivery, learning resources, learning environment, and learning assessment. Additionally, the study aims to propose two distinct professional development plans: one tailored for experienced and/or tenured teachers and another designed for new teachers and literacy volunteers. These plans are intended to enhance the educational experience for both learners and teachers while aligning with the goals and objectives of the ALS program.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher employed a mixed methods research design, which strategically combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. This approach is appropriate for this study as it allows for a

comprehensive understanding of implementing the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program by providing both broad quantitative insights and in-depth qualitative perspectives. The quantitative data collected through surveys offered a wide-ranging assessment of the program's effectiveness. At the same time, the qualitative component, consisting of focused group discussions with participants, provided deeper insights into the underlying reasons behind the quantitative findings. This dual approach not only enriches the data but also enhances the validity of the results by triangulating findings from different sources.

The sampling design employed in this study was purposive sampling, which is particularly suitable for qualitative research as it allows the researcher to select participants with specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research objectives. This method ensures that insights gathered directly apply to the study's focus on ALS implementation. The statistical tools utilized for the quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, as cited by Creswell (2018) and Patel et al. (2020), which help understand the distribution and relationships within the data.

Participants

This study was conducted among the SHS ALS schools in twenty-four (24) municipalities and cities in Bulacan. The respondents were the ALS teachers, coordinators, and SHS learners. There were 342 respondents, 53 out of 193 teachers, and 289 out of 6196 SHS learners.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a survey questionnaire tailored to the study participants, drawing upon relevant sources to ensure alignment with established practices. The questionnaire had two parts: the respondent profile and a list of forty indicators across four areas. To ensure accuracy and effectiveness, five experts checked and validated the questionnaire, including representatives from the Bulacan District Education office, an ALS Education Specialist, an ALS Coordinator, an experienced ALS teacher, and a registered psychometrician. Their diverse expertise helped validate the content and clarity of the questionnaire. The final draft was answered by respondents using a four-point Likert scale. After considering the validation panel's feedback, the researcher revised the questionnaire and conducted a pilot test with ALS teachers and learners, yielding a reliability coefficient (α) of 0.98, considered "excellent."

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher obtained ethics clearance from the university before seeking

approval from various Schools Division in Bulacan, which was delivered in person. After receiving the endorsement letter, the researcher visited different schools to schedule the survey and interviews. Some schools permitted in-person surveys, while others opted for online administration via a Google Form link. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to accommodate the limited time of learner-respondents. For the focused group discussions, teachers and learners who volunteered were interviewed, and these discussions were recorded and transcribed for deeper insights. Once the completed surveys were collected, the researcher tabulated the data and collaborated with a university statistician to analyze it using appropriate statistical tools. Finally, a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data led to the proposal of a professional development plan for teachers.

Research Ethics Protocol

The researcher administered her self-made instruments, either through face-to-face interactions or by using Google Forms. This will be done upon receiving approval from the Schools Division of Bulacan to administer these instruments. Encryption and subsequent data deletion will be implemented for data collected through Google Forms after the specified retention period. The withdrawal of participants also means their responses will not be used as part of the data. The researcher cannot simply gather data without their permission as respondents. The first page of the survey questionnaire is a letter asking for their permission to participate voluntarily in the study, and they will be treated confidentially. In case of questions about the study, the respondent can contact the researcher using the email address and/or contact number provided in the letter.

Statistical Analysis

The raw data collected from survey participants underwent a thorough analysis process, including tallying, tabulation, and interpretation, which led to meaningful conclusions and substantial recommendations for the study. The average score (mean) evaluated how respondents rated the ALS program's learning delivery, resources, environment, and assessment and F-test to determine the significant difference in the implementation of the program among the three

groups of respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Mean Distribution of the Implementation of the ALS Program as Assessed by the Respondents in terms of Learning Delivery

Statements	Teachers		Coordinators		Learners		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation		
1. Applies different learning modalities customized according to each learner's need.	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.06	Implemented	3.35	Fully Implemented
2. Provides learners ample opportunities to reflect on their learning and central role.	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.05	Implemented	3.35	Fully Implemented
3. Recognizes prior learning that acknowledges the learner's skills and knowledge acquired through various work or life experiences.	3.55	Fully Implemented	3.63	Fully Implemented	3.04	Implemented	3.41	Fully Implemented
4. Collaborates with learners to assess their learning goals, objectives, and plans to guide them through the learning process.	3.47	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.15	Implemented	3.37	Fully Implemented

5. Encourages active, independent, experiential, and cooperative learning.	3.55	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.47	Fully Implemented	3.51	Fully Implemented
6. Lessons are holistic, practical, and current.	3.36	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.03	Implemented	3.30	Fully Implemented
7. Develop the learners' new skills and understanding and demonstrate to others what they know and can do through projects and portfolios.	3.40	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.14	Implemented	3.35	Fully Implemented
8. Prioritizes learner-centered approaches, recognizing that each learner has unique needs, interests, and learning styles that must be considered when delivering educational content.	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented	3.24	Implemented	3.39	Fully Implemented
9. It emphasizes the importance of high-quality teaching and learning materials and effective instructional design and delivery.	3.42	Fully Implemented	3.69	Fully Implemented	3.17	Implemented	3.43	Fully Implemented

10. Integrates the importance of ongoing assessment and evaluation to ensure that learning delivery strategies are effective and meet learners' needs.

3.45	Fully Implemented	3.31	Fully Implemented	3.40	Fully Implemented	3.39	Fully Implemented
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Grand Mean	3.47	Fully Implemented	3.51	Fully Implemented	3.18	Implemented	3.39	Fully Implemented
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****Legend: Fully Implemented (3.26 - 4.00); Implemented (2.51-3.25); Partially Implemented (1.76 - 2.50); Not Implemented (1.00 - 1.75)*

The data shows mean scores and verbal interpretations of respondents' assessments of Learning Delivery in the ALS program. The highest-rated statements, interpreted as Fully Implemented, include those promoting active, independent, experiential, and cooperative learning (M=3.51), emphasizing high-quality teaching materials and effective instructional design (M=3.43), and recognizing prior learning (M=3.41). The lowest-rated statements, Fully Implemented, pertain to holistic and practical lessons (M=3.30) and customized learning modalities that encourage reflection and skill demonstration through projects and portfolios, with an overall mean rating of 3.30. The grand mean rating of 3.39 indicates a general interpretation of Fully Implemented.

These assessments are in line with the goal of the study, which aims to assess the level of effectiveness of ALS in different areas of operation, Learning Delivery inclusive. The results provided evidence for the statement in the introduction that the learner-centered approach to education improves learners' performance. Moreover, Brookfield (2017), who discusses active learning strategies, suggested that incorporating these methodologies helps enhance learners' engagement.

Thus, Calimlim's (2021) study highlights the need to consider home-based modular learning, especially in adopting new learning paradigms in the "new normal." Nonetheless, the ALS program has had to adopt various forms of learning, such as blended and online learning, which were moderately assessed. According to Laquiores and Perez (2021), it is also noteworthy that the efficiency of implementers' indicators in the ALS substantially concerns Learning Delivery

across such accents as instructional competence, learners’ influence, program delivery, advocacy, and social mobilization.

This implies that one cannot use the Learning Delivery model alone as the way forward in implementing the curriculum without considering the capability and interests of the tutors who offer the courses on behalf of the institution.

Vallespin (2021) also emphasizes the benefits of the modular learning approach that improves the student’s educational experience as it conforms to the positive feedback in this study. Nevertheless, the overall scores, useful ideas, and individual approaches to learning-teaching processes can be considered priorities for improvement. In particular, strengthening these areas could improve learning and transform learner experiences towards superior thinking and skills application.

Thus, it can be stated that the effectiveness of Learning Delivery in the ALS program has been confirmed, while certain directions for its improvement have been revealed. The correspondence of these results with the study’s aims and goals, in addition to the existing literature, cannot be overstated; teaching approaches and content, therefore, should be a work in progress. With reference to the revealed deficiencies, mainly, the lack of comprehensive and practical lessons and the improvement of learning/teaching methodologies for individual learning needs, the ALS program can build up its educational approach to better support the students’ needs. In the long run, this sustained effort for betterment will help shape the program in general and the performance of those who participate in it.

Table 2
Mean Distribution of the Implementation of ALS Program as Assessed by the Respondents in terms of Learning Resources

Statements	Teachers		Coordinators		Learners		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation		
1. Provides sufficient learning modules for each learner.	3.45	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.19	Implemented	3.34	Fully Implemented
2. Provides various supplementary learning resources to cater to the learning needs of the students.	3.23	Implemented	3.19	Implemented	3.19	Implemented	3.20	Implemented

3. Ensures that the learning materials content is carefully selected to include different identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic background.

3.57 Fully Implemented 3.38 Fully Implemented 3.43 Fully Implemented 3.46 Fully Implemented

4. Utilization of locally produced learning resources to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of the materials to the learners' contexts.

3.34 Fully Implemented 3.31 Fully Implemented 3.16 Implemented 3.27 Fully Implemented

5. Provide each learner a copy of modules, handouts, and other specific learning materials based on his/her personal interests and learning needs.

3.53 Fully Implemented 3.38 Fully Implemented 2.49 Partially Implemented 3.13 Implemented

6. Enhances the quality and accessibility of learning resources through technology.

3.60 Fully Implemented 3.31 Fully Implemented 3.48 Fully Implemented 3.46 Fully Implemented

7. Utilizes ready-to-use digitized modules accessed through computers, smartphones, and other digital devices.

3.43 Fully Implemented 3.44 Fully Implemented 2.48 Partially Implemented 3.12 Implemented

8. Encourages the community and stakeholders to participate in identifying, developing, and utilizing learning resources to ensure that the materials align with the learners' needs and interests.	3.25	Implemented	3.13	Implemented	3.04	Implemented	3.14	Implemented
9. Uses an integrated approach where lessons are tackled as practical applications across functions in everyday life.	3.42	Fully Implemented	3.25	Implemented	3.39	Fully Implemented	3.35	Fully Implemented
10. Encourages collaboration and sharing of learning resources among learners, facilitators, and other stakeholders to promote a continuous learning and improvement culture.	3.43	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.13	Implemented	3.31	Fully Implemented
Grand Mean	3.42	Fully Implemented	3.31	Fully Implemented	3.10	Implemented	3.28	Fully Implemented

***Legend: Fully Implemented (3.26 - 4.00); Implemented (2.51-3.25); Partially Implemented (1.76 - 2.50); Not Implemented (1.00 - 1.75)

The mean score for respondents' assessments of Learning Resources in the ALS program is 3.28, indicating a "Fully Implemented" status and a high overall rating for resource availability and quality. Most individual statements fall within this category, except for those related to digitized modules, learner-specific materials, community involvement in resource development, and supplementary learning resources, which have lower means ranging from 3.12 to 3.20 and are rated as "Implemented." While the high scores suggest that resources are accessible and inclusive, the lower scores highlight areas needing improvement, such as diversifying supplementary materials, enhancing community engagement,

and strengthening connections between lessons and real-world applications. Challenges like limited funding, lack of technology access, and insufficient expertise in resource development underscore the need for ALS implementers to utilize localized instructional materials that reflect learners' environments and learning styles. Also, problems encountered by mobile teachers as a result of the study of Arpilleda (2018) include a lack of instructional materials and other facilities intended for the learners.

However, this study also highlighted the problems of ALS teachers, namely, the limited availability of learning resources and the ability to teach learning competencies in different strands (Flores, 2022). Therefore, ALS programs must be equipped with quality learning materials to attain learning competencies across all strands of the program. Caingcoy et al. (2021) also highlighted the importance of instructional materials and participants' cooperation in improving the learning process.

The assessment of learning resources aligns with the study goals and objectives, which seek to establish the impact of ALS in various domains of Learning Delivery, Resources, Environment, and Assessment. In light of the research results presented above, one can state that the specific argument introduced in the introduction of this work is true: It is useful to provide students with sufficient learning materials for successful learning. Carreon (2021) indicates that consistent access to the internet and training with academic sites are fundamental to educators' needs, especially in online learning environments.

Impact of Resource Constraints

Technology and poor internet connection are key challenges that limit English teachers from closely observing their students' progress and ensuring active participation (Carreon, 2021). These resource limitations can distort the quality of learning delivery and learners' commitments, which is very influential in the ALS program that intends to support marginalized learners. In order to overcome these challenges, the ALS programs should be provided with adequate learning resources such as learning devices, internet connection, and quality learning resources. The existence of a contextualized module was suggested by Ambayon and Millenes (2020) to improve learners' performance, and more than 75% of the lecturers from the study by Cheng and Bakar (2017) found that the suggested module is useful for students and lecturers, giving considerable support for new lecturers.

Furthermore, Bautista and Aranas (2023) highlight the necessity of stable internet connections, access to digital technologies, and the creation of a roadmap to operationalize the Philippine education system's commitment to achieving

the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in relation to green and digital transformation across various education levels. By addressing these resource-related challenges and implementing evidence-based learning delivery modes and effective pedagogy, the ALS program can enhance its overall effectiveness and better support the learning needs of its diverse student population.

Table 3
Mean Distribution of the Implementation of ALS Program as Assessed by the Respondents in terms of Learning Environment

Statements	Teachers		Coordinators		Learners		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	Verbal Interpretation		
1. Provides a safe and conducive learning environment for all learners.	3.53	Fully Implemented	3.31	Fully Implemented	3.52	Fully Implemented	3.45	Fully Implemented
2. Designed a flexible, inclusive, and accessible to all learners regardless of their backgrounds and circumstances.	3.25	Implemented	3.19	Implemented	3.36	Fully Implemented	3.27	Fully Implemented
3. Creates an interactive and collaborative learning environment that encourages active participation and fosters a sense of community among learners.	3.26	Fully Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented	3.40	Fully Implemented	3.37	Fully Implemented
4. Facilitates meaningful learning experiences and helps learners achieve their academic goals.	3.51	Fully Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.48	Fully Implemented

5. is equipped with appropriate technology and resources to support various modes of learning and communication.	3.19	Effective	3.25	Effective	3.42	Fully Implemented	3.29	Fully Implemented
6. Has great flexibility when it comes to where teaching-learning happens.	3.32	Fully Implemented	3.69	Fully Implemented	3.43	Fully Implemented	3.48	Fully Implemented
7. Prioritizes learner safety and well-being, and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that learners feel supported and protected.	3.57	Fully Implemented	3.69	Fully Implemented	3.54	Fully Implemented	3.60	Fully Implemented
8. Has access to various learning environments like schools, barangay centers, and workshops.	3.28	Fully Implemented	3.63	Fully Implemented	3.47	Fully Implemented	3.46	Fully Implemented
9. Recognizes the importance of the physical environment, ensuring that classrooms, learning centers, and other spaces are clean, safe, and well-maintained.	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.50	Fully Implemented	3.42	Fully Implemented
10. is designed with inclusivity, ensuring that every learner feels valued, respected, and represented regardless of sexual orientation, race, disability, and socio-economic background.	3.53	Fully Implemented	3.81	Fully Implemented	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.61	Fully Implemented

Grand Mean	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.48	Fully Implemented	3.46	Fully Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented
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***Legend: Fully Implemented (3.26 - 4.00); Implemented (2.51-3.25); Partially Implemented (1.76 - 2.50); Not Implemented (1.00 - 1.75)

The data shows that respondents rate the Learning Environment in the ALS program highly, with a grand mean of 3.44 classified as “Fully Implemented.” Most individual statements also fall within this category, though statements 2 and 5 received slightly lower scores of 3.27 and 3.29, respectively, still interpreted as “Fully Implemented.” These high scores suggest that the program offers a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment, while areas with lower scores may require further investigation and improvements, such as enhancing access to technology and diverse learning spaces.

This positive assessment of the learning environment aligns with the study’s objectives, which aim to evaluate the effectiveness of ALS in various domains, including Learning Delivery, Resources, Environment, and Assessment. The findings support the argument presented in the introduction regarding the importance of a supportive learning environment in fostering educational success. Cagang (2024) emphasizes effective strategies for creating supportive learning environments within ALS, reinforcing the need for continuous improvement.

Conversely, Barrameda (2021) identifies challenges related to technology access and teacher training, suggesting that addressing these issues could lead to improved scores associated with technology resources. This is particularly relevant as integrating technology is essential for modern educational practices. Belaineh (2017) found that students who perceive their learning environment as conducive to their education tend to adopt a deep learning approach, resulting in better academic performance. In contrast, students who view their environment as less supportive may adopt a surface learning approach, leading to lower academic outcomes.

Rivera (2017) noted that a blended learning environment offers special needs students the advantage of having a physical teacher for guidance and access to virtual resources that enhance their learning experience. An effective learning environment, whether physical or virtual, is crucial for facilitating knowledge acquisition, development, and application (Williams & Clint, 2023).

Despite the high ratings for the learning environment, Flores (2022) reported that ALS teachers face challenges, particularly a lack of learning facilities. Despite these obstacles, several promoting factors contribute to effective teaching and learning, including students’ positive emotions, constructive learning behaviors,

supportive teacher actions, strong teacher-student relationships, and cognitive abilities. However, hindering factors such as insufficient environmental support, negative student behavior, and adverse teacher behavior can impede learning. Farah and Al-Hattami (2023) further explore the conceptual and practical implications of these findings, underscoring the importance of addressing both promoting and hindering factors to enhance the overall educational experience. By improving the identified areas of concern, particularly in technology access and learning facilities, the ALS program can strengthen its learning environment and better support its diverse learner population.

Table 4
Mean Distribution of the Implementation of ALS Program as Assessed by the Respondents in terms of Learning Assessment

Statements	Teachers		Coordinators		Learners		MEAN	Verbal Interpretation
	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>		<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>			
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>		
1. Applies different types of assessments that are varied and fair for all learners regardless of sexual orientation, race, disability, and socio-economic background.	3.53	Fully Implemented	3.63	Fully Implemented	3.17	Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented
2. Combines different methods to assess what learners know and can do, including observing learners' performance, dialogue, and analyzing the quality of learners' outputs or products and learners' mastery of a skill or concept.	3.34	Fully Implemented	3.75	Fully Implemented	3.08	Implemented	3.39	Fully Implemented
3. Includes the recognition of prior learning through diagnostic assessment.	3.34	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.48	Fully Implemented	3.40	Fully Implemented

4. Includes formative and summative assessments like short quizzes, peer feedback, projects, exams, and portfolios.	3.55	Fully Implemented	3.75	Fully Implemented	3.16	Implemented	3.49	Fully Implemented
5. Provide timely and constructive feedback to the learners.	3.32	Fully Implemented	3.25	Implemented	2.43	Partially Implemented	3.00	Implemented
6. Helps students stay involved and motivated for self-assessment.	3.47	Fully Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.47	Fully Implemented
7. Prioritizes the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, in addition to content knowledge.	3.45	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.25	Implemented	3.36	Fully Implemented
8. Recognizes learners' prior knowledge and experiences and supports the development of their cultural identity and heritage.	3.47	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.44	Fully Implemented	3.43	Fully Implemented
9. Provides and presents rubrics for performance tasks and other outputs.	3.49	Fully Implemented	3.38	Fully Implemented	3.14	Implemented	3.34	Fully Implemented
10. Engages parents by effectively communicating the assessment outcomes.	3.09	Implemented	2.69	Implemented	3.39	Fully Implemented	3.06	Implemented
Grand Mean	3.41	Fully Implemented	3.40	Fully Implemented	3.20	Implemented	3.34	Fully Implemented

***Legend: Fully Implemented (3.26 - 4.00); Implemented (2.51-3.25); Partially Implemented (1.76 - 2.50); Not Implemented (1.00 - 1.75)

Respondents rate Learning Assessment practices in the ALS program highly, with a grand mean of 3.34, and classified as fully implemented. Strengths

include formative and summative assessments—short quizzes, peer feedback, projects, exams, and portfolios—receiving mean scores of 3.49, 3.47, and 3.44, all interpreted as “Fully Implemented.” However, statements regarding timely feedback (mean of 3.00) and parent engagement (mean of 3.06) received lower scores, interpreted as “Effective,” indicating a need for improvement in communicating assessment outcomes to parents.

The positive assessment of learning assessment practices aligns with the study’s objectives, which aim to evaluate the effectiveness of ALS in various domains, including Learning Delivery, Resources, Environment, and Assessment. The findings support the argument in the introduction regarding the importance of effective assessment strategies in enhancing educational outcomes. Barrameda (2020) identified challenges related to unclear assessment criteria and communication, consistent with the lower scores observed in this study regarding timely feedback and parent engagement.

However, concerns have been raised regarding the effectiveness of the Alternative Learning System (ALS). World Bank education specialist Takiko Igarshi noted that low participation and passing rates in ALS suggest the program is “not fully effective” (Tomacruz, 2018), while UNICEF (2021) reported that some ALS completers were inadequately prepared for the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) test. ALS teachers also encountered challenges in assessment and evaluation, as well as content and instruction, which they perceived as somewhat serious issues (Flores, 2022). Furthermore, Ocampo (2021) found that ALS learners generally exhibit low attainment of the functional literacy skills necessary to navigate the challenges of a globalized world, indicating they have not fully acquired the essential competencies. These findings highlight the need for improvements in the ALS program to better prepare learners for future opportunities.

By focusing on enhancing communication with parents, providing timely feedback, and incorporating effective assessment strategies like portfolio assessment, the ALS program can strengthen its learning assessment practices and better support the academic growth and development of its diverse learner population.

Table 5
Significant Difference in the Assessment of ALS implementation among the Three Groups of Respondents

	Respondent Type	Mean	Computed F-test	Computed p-value	Decision	Remarks
Learning Delivery	Learners	3.180			Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Teachers	3.466	0.0982	0.9065		
	Coordinators	3.506				
Learning Resources	Learners	3.100			Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Teachers	3.425	0.3502	0.7048		
	Coordinators	3.313				
Learning Environment	Learners	3.463			Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Teachers	3.381	0.5291	0.5896		
	Coordinators	3.481				
Learning Assessment	Learners	3.200			Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Teachers	3.406	0.1691	0.8445		
	Coordinators	3.400				

Table 6
Content Analysis on the Challenges Encountered by the Participants

Participant	Narrative Extracts	Labels	Initial Codes
Theme 1: Instructional Delivery and Support			
Learner A	Kailangan po talaga may mag tuturo ng face-to-face sana.	Instructional Approaches	
Learner B	Yung sa pag pasok po, kasi po pag face-to-face parang nasa 30 mins lang po kami kada subject.	Instructional Time	
Learner C	Bale nag o-online na lang po ma'am, napipilitan mag-online kasi nga po hindi naman kami makapunta.	Instructional Challenge	Limited Face-to-Face Interaction (2)
Learner D	Pero mas maganda talaga ma'am yung face-to-face kesa po sa online.	Instructional Approaches	Need for more face-to-face classes (3)
Learner E	Mahirap po pag online kasi po minsan walang internet, walang load.	Instructional Challenge	Teacher communication issues (2)

Learner F Minsan po may pagkakataon na kailangan po namin yung reply dahil magpapasa po ng module nung linggo na yun, ibig sabihin hindi muna magagawa kung wala yung sagot ngayon. Ibig sabihin iwan ka rin sa module nung week na yun dahil wala pa yung sagot na yun mga information po. Teacher Availability Delivery of Lesson (1)

Learner G Yun lang po dahil nag uumipisa palang po kami, pero po last year nag aral din po kami ALS din po junior high school grade 10 yun. Okay naman po pinapaliwanag po ng teacher kung pano yung module, yung dito lang ngayon bigay lang po sila ng bigay yung iba po hindi pinapaliwanag kahit mag tanong ka sa gc. Teacher Guidance

Teacher H Pero po sa isang experienxe ko po na hindi po pala lahat kayang makinig, hindi lahat kayang i-absorb ang lesson. Listening and comprehension skills

Theme 2: Learning Facilities and Resources

Learner I Opo sa module po lalo po sa math, kasi po bilang matagal na kami sa pag aaral iwan kami dun, tas sarili po talaga sariling pagsisikap paano mo pag aaralan kaso dahil sa bukod po sa mahina, kailangan po talaga may tuturo na face-to-face sana. Instructional Resources

Learner J Yung sa pagbibigay po ng module, kulang kulang nga po minsan po may nawawalan ng module pipicturan nalang po para magkakopya ng module. Quality of Learning Materials

Learner K Mahirap din po kasi kung sa cellphone ka mag babasa talagang kailangan po talaga module kung mag bibigay man po ng module dapat po kumpleto. Accessibility of Learning Materials

Learner L	Kakulangan po sa pasilidad kasi po ALS na nga po kami bale balik school kami tapos nakiki-room lang kami. Hindi namin masasabi na amin ito, kailangan pagandahin ito, yun po ang unang kakulangan sa amin mga ALS, pasilidad - room.	Learning Spaces	Difficulty understanding the modules (1) Availability of Modules (5) E-Learning materials (1)
Learner M	Ma'am yung about po sa classroom, may face-to-face po sana kami kahit mga twice a week po sana, para mas magkaron po ng improvement. Mahirap po kasi kung puro module, activity lang ng activity hindi naman po namin ganon maintindihan yun.		Lack of dedicated ALS facilities (3)
Learner N	Ang problema po pag ka umaulan o high tide nahihirapan po kami pumasok dahil sa laki ng tubig sa labas sa mga dadaan po pero sa mga guro, mag-aaral okay naman po.	Desire for Improvement of Facilities	
Teacher O	Hindi po lahat ng bata na nakaka-receive na module, ginagawa po namin nagka-conduct din po kami ng research dun sa specific at para po madali mapaunawa sa bata kasi po. ano po sabihin na po natin kung may kulang sa regular mas lalo po sa ALS.	Lack of Modules	
Teacher P	Kami mismo yung maghahanap ng mga module online na idownload namin and then babato namin sa mga bata gamit yung messenger or email nila.	Unavailability of module	
Teacher Q	Another thing, the module because I'm new, there are module na wala specially grade 12. There are subjects na walang module completely walang module for grade 12.	Unavailability of module	
Teacher R	Yun ginagamit po nalang din po dito sa grade 11 yun lang din po kinikuha naming pero po maam yung iba ma'am kami nalang po gumagawa like po sa powerpoint, module po may iba pong module na kami sa ALS po kaya po lang hindi po halos lahat, wala pa yung iba. Diba 2nd quarter ngayon naghahanap pa po kami ng aklat/module.	powerpoint presentation for lesson	

Theme 3: Curriculum Mismatch

Learner S	Marami pong magbigay ng sulatin	Curriculum alignment
Learner T	Para pong hindi mo na alam kung matatapos yung mga gagawin mo sa bahay sa sobrang dami.	

Teacher U	<p>Ang curriculum po kasi ng senior high ay naka anchor po sa regular, yung iba pong tinuturo namin or yung ibang laman po ng curriculum guide hindi na sila align. Para ang ginagawa po talaga nila dahil gusto po nila magka diploma ng grade 12,</p>	Curriculum alignment
	<p>mag-aaral sila kaya lang po yung alignment. Kasi may subject pa po kami na math, ang math po namin ay gen. math at stat pa po. So medyo hindi na po nila kailagan pero ang bilin po ng ALS ay yung kailangan ng bata numeracy, literacy. Lalo po yung math namin may algebra po kami dun.</p>	<p>Workload of written activities (2) Curriculum (2) Difficulty of subject (2) Scope (3)</p>
Teacher V	<p>So basically yung iba wala na gusto mag-college, sobrang konti lang po nakakausap namin na gusto nila pa. So hindi lang po talaga align sa gusto nila sa curriculum sobrang hirap po ang curriculum ng senior high na regular para isunod sa kanila. Lalo po yung graduate ng ALS ng junior high school kung baga basic math tinuturo sa kanila tapos pag dating dito bigla po silang nag algebra.</p>	SHS ALS subject
Teacher W	<p>Yun po pinaka malaking problema yung scope ng dapat ituro naming the whole year, e hindi po kaya kasi po once a week lang po sila. ‘Yung pangalawa araw naman po nila focus on beauty care and hair dressing yung mga academics ang hirap itarget para macovered lahat ng lesson sa bong week. Hindi mo lang saan mo sasalba kaya lang po edi kami na lang po mga teachers gagawa ng paraan paano namin makukuha yung dapat na scope para sa mga bata.</p>	Scope of the lesson/ subject
Teacher X	<p>Syempre po nung 1st time yung halos pareho-pareho din po ng ALS implementation. Yung curriculum sa umpisa po talaga nangangapa kami kasi nga po wala pa siya particularly for ALS senior school so parang experiment. Experiment talaga sya so kailangan naming mangapa kung san ano yung babagay talaga for ALS.</p>	New to curriculum
	<p>Mas icontextualized yung lesson para madali nilang maintindihan.</p>	Contextualized lesson
Teacher Y	<p>Pinka malaking problema yung scope ng dapat ituro namin the whole year, hindi po kaya kasi po once a week lang po sila. Yung mga academics ang hirap itarget para macovered lahat ng lesson sa buong week.</p>	Scope of the lesson or subject

Theme 4: Learning Assessment Challenges

Teacher Z	Sa umpisa ma'am ng hiram kami ng curriculum and then nung syempre ano po may mga student na interested na mag college di po namin alam kung paano namin sila i-a-assess ito ba ay portfolio or graded.	Grading System	Grading system guidelines (2)
Teacher AA	When it comes to TVL ma'am nakapag pa-assess na kami ng students yung gusto lang po mag pa-assess kase syempre gagastos din naman po sila.	Voluntary assessment	Assessment portfolio (1)
Teacher AB	“Wala pong exam provided, ang teachers po ang gumagawa hindi po sya baba ng DepEd.”	Learners exam	Types of assessment (1)
Teacher AC	Since di ba po alam natin di ba pag ALS hindi naman po talaga di ba numerated so wala pong proper guidelines na binigay sa amin nung binigay po sa amin nung last year so yun po maam sa ALS with regards the grading system.	Grading system	

Theme 5: Teacher Training Needs

Teacher AD	Yun nga po ala po exclusive na ALS training senior high school unlike po sa junior at tsaka sa elementary meron po.	Exclusive training	
Teacher AE	Ang nag tatraining lang po talang sa amin ng ALS ay isa lang po ang amin pong coordinator/ focal person na si sir ***	Trainer	
Teacher AF	additional training po talaga for ALS senior high school and then sana mapabilis ano po yung syempre curriculum tsaka yung standard pa pag dating sa ALS senior high	Additional Training	

Teacher AG	Yun po number one naman din po yun training for the teachers program and projects for the learners.	Exclusive training	ALS background ⁽¹⁾
Teacher AH	Unang una po dun yung trainings and seminars para sa mga teachers kasi kung baga lahat po kam halos even me po na sa akin binigay yung pagiging coordinator. Kung baga na pinpoint lang po, oh ma'am ikaw kahit po wala akong training, wala akong seminars regarding po sa ALS, wala po background or idea, what is ALS po. That's why po nung nag-start na po yung school year medyo nangangapa ako, nagtatanong po ako, nag ssearch po ako pano ba yung sa ALS senior high school. Dahil nga po bago lang din siya so medyo nahirapan po ako talaga po lahat ng pwede kong pagtanungan, pinagtatanungan ko muna para lang po ano, yun po sana para po mas maging maganda yung pag implement sa mga bata	No background on ALS	Lack of training(5)
Teacher AI	Hindi po kasi nakakapunta sa seminar di ba po may pasok simula lunes hanggan biyernes kaya po pili lang po ang naka attend sa amin sa training at seminar	Training Attendance	

The analysis comparing assessments of ALS implementation across Learners, Teachers, and Coordinators found no significant differences in any of the four components. Low F-test values and p-values above 0.05 suggest the respondent groups have similar overall opinions, indicating consistent service delivery across stakeholders. However, the absence of statistically significant differences does not rule out subtle variations in opinions or experiences.

A study by Hero and Cruz (2023) showed no difference in perceptions of ALS implementation between Region III and the National Capital Region. This continuity reconfirms the idea that a mutually beneficial educational climate can be achieved because the stakeholders relate to ALS as one established program.

Moreover, Farah and Al-Hattami (2023) added that the perceptions of the teaching and learning environment influenced students' participation, pointing out that all the stakeholders may have the same perception of the program. Of course, more quantitative similarities can be identified, but qualitative differences remain, and overall positive perceptions should be followed by further qualitative research to reveal these differences. Furthermore, the study also shows a positive correlation between the implementation process of the ALS program and the effectiveness of the 21st-century learners' skills, stressing the need to enhance the

competencies needed by the learners for the future. On the other hand, Calabit’s study from 2022 established that learner readiness to the next level of education within the ALS learning strand had not changed significantly, meaning that, although the program might be beneficial in some ways, it has some shortcomings in preparing learners for future studies.

Thus, the results of the present research suggest that the majority of stakeholders support the concept of the ALS program, and the program would only be successful in practice if it is effectively implemented. Nonetheless, the absence of meaningful differences in perceptions also signifies the necessity to further monitor and enhance the situation due to potentially existing problems that define people’s experiences. Further research should include quantitative studies to understand better the specific needs and characteristics of learners, teachers, and coordinators and to have a better basis for interventions and improvements in the ALS program. The program can thus progress in areas of needed improvements by considering common stakeholder perceptions and providing for various learners enrolled in ALS.

Table 6
Content Analysis on the Challenges Encountered by the Participants

Participant	Narrative Extracts	Labels	Initial Codes
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Learner F	Minsan po may pagkakataon na kailangan po namin yung reply dahil magpapasa po ng module nung linggo na yun, ibig sabihin hindi muna magagawa kung wala yung sagot ngayon. Ibig sabihin iwan ka rin sa module nung week na yun dahil wala pa yung sagot na yun mga information po.	Teacher Availability	Teacher communication issues (2) Delivery of Lesson (1)

Learner G	Yun lang po dahil nag uumipisa palang po kami, pero po last year nag aral din po kami ALS din po junior high school grade 10 yun. Okay naman po pinapaliwanag po ng teacher kung pano yung module, yung dito lang ngayon bigay lang po sila ng bigay yung iba po hindi pinapaliwanag kahit mag tanong ka sa gc.	Teacher Guidance
Teacher H	Pero po sa isang experienxce ko po na hindi po pala lahat kayang makinig, hindi lahat kayang i-absorb ang lesson.	Listening and comprehension skills

The data in Table 6 presents narrative extracts from ALS participants that reveal the key challenges they face. After carefully analyzing these narrative excerpts, the researchers were able to identify the following thematic categories:

Theme 1: Instructional Delivery and Support

The delivery of ALS instruction faces significant challenges due to limited face-to-face interaction between students and teachers, with students preferring face-to-face interaction for better understanding and participation, but the current setup not allowing for sufficient interaction, leading to difficulties in understanding material and completing assignments, ultimately negatively impacting student learning outcomes, further complicated by the diverse circumstances of ALS participants; teacher support is another critical aspect of ALS implementation that faces challenges, with some teachers lacking the necessary skills to effectively communicate with and support students, leading to difficulties in understanding modules and completing assignments, which can negatively impact student learning outcomes, additionally complicated by the lack of dedicated ALS facilities and resources, with learners reporting problems with the level of communication and support provided by their teachers, such as not receiving timely feedback on assignments and insufficient explanations of module content.

Theme 2: Learning Facilities and Resources

The lack of dedicated facilities and resources for ALS poses significant challenges, as classes are often held in shared spaces that create distractions and hinder student focus. This deficiency impedes effective teacher support and the availability of learning materials, with studies highlighting insufficient facilities as a key issue for ALS teachers. Additionally, students often struggle

with the provided modules, requiring more detailed explanations, and there is a reported shortage of materials, particularly for Grade 12, which complicates understanding and assignment completion. Teachers may rely on supplementary materials that are time-consuming and may not effectively meet the specific needs of ALS learners. Overall, inadequate educational resources lead to difficulty understanding course content and negatively impact student learning outcomes.

Theme 3: Curriculum Mismatch

The curriculum design of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) faces significant challenges, with students often feeling overwhelmed by the heavy workload of written activities and assignments outside of limited in-person class time, negatively impacting their learning experience, further complicated by the lack of a separate curriculum as ALS programs typically follow the regular Senior High School (SHS) curriculum, leading to difficulties in adapting content and activities for ALS learners, resulting in learners struggling to understand the material and adjust to the new curriculum, while ALS teachers may lack the necessary training or resources to effectively teach these learners, with key challenges including the need for more contextualized lessons, difficulties in understanding certain subjects like Math, the inability to cover the entire curriculum due to limited class time, and the overwhelming workload of written assignments, with participants suggesting that a more convenient policy and a separate ALS curriculum tailored to their needs would greatly improve the learning experience, making it crucial to address these curriculum design issues to enhance the effectiveness of the ALS program and support the diverse needs of its learners.

Theme 4: Learning Assessment Challenges

The lack of clear assessment policies for ALS students creates challenges in covering sufficient material for exams within limited class time, leaving students overwhelmed and struggling with assignments, affecting teachers who often lack the necessary tools to effectively assess student learning and progress, with a 2022 study by Flores identifying key issues in the ALS senior high school program, including the absence of standardized assessment tools and guidelines from DepEd, resulting in inconsistent evaluation methods and uncertainty regarding grading and certification, further complicated by the voluntary nature of TVL course assessments, which often require student fees, posing barriers for economically disadvantaged learners, and without standardized guidelines, teachers must create their own assessment tools, leading to further inconsistencies and difficulties in monitoring student progress, underscoring the urgent need

for clear policies and standardized assessment practices to better support both students and teachers in the ALS program.

Theme 5: Teacher Training Needs

ALS teachers face challenges due to inadequate training in ALS pedagogy, hindering their ability to effectively address the unique needs of ALS learners, exacerbated by high turnover rates and mismatches in subject specialization, with many feeling underprepared, lacking specialized training in non-formal education, prior ALS experience, and necessary skills in instructional planning, classroom management, and assessment tailored to ALS, as highlighted by a 2019 study by Reyes, which also found a lack of continuous professional development opportunities and recommended targeted training programs focusing on andragogy, flexible learning modalities, and learner-centered pedagogies, with focused group discussions revealing similar concerns, including limited training opportunities, the need for additional capacity-building specific to ALS, and a desire for faster development of the curriculum and standards for ALS education.

The study on the implementation of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Bulacan has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the use of purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings, as it focuses on a specific group of participants with particular knowledge or experience, potentially overlooking broader perspectives. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the research, while providing in-depth insights, may not capture the full range of experiences and opinions across all stakeholders involved in ALS. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data from participants could introduce bias, as individuals may present their experiences in a manner that aligns with perceived expectations. Lastly, the study's findings are context-specific to Bulacan, which may not be applicable to other regions or educational settings, necessitating further research to validate and expand upon these results in different contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

The research outcomes show that except for areas where significant discrepancies exist in the perceived levels of implementation of the ALS program between Bulacan teachers/coordinators and learners, overall, Learning Delivery, Resources, Environment as well as Assessment with regards to the ALS program appears to be a positive experience among the majority of the learners and teachers/coordinators of Bulacan. The teachers and coordinators who use the components of the ALS program tend to rate them as being “Fully Implemented.”

On the other hand, the learners rated them as being “Implemented”, wherein the gap identified shows the areas that need to be improved for the improvement of learner outcomes and the successful alignment of different stakeholders’ perception of the components of the ALS program and hence, augment the strengths of the said program.

However, the study shows that the quality of implementation of this ALS program is generally consistent as the assessment scores obtained by the teachers, coordinators, and learners do not vary widely. This consistency can be attributed to the idea that the program has consistently shown a positive learning experience within the number of its practices. However, to move to the next level of program improvement, a multifaceted approach is required, which should cover components like instruction and instructional support, materials, facilities and environment, and curriculum and instruction.

The study also notes that the practice years and type of position held affect the teacher’s perception of the ALS program. This implies a need to develop a teachers’ professional development framework that meets the needs of various teacher groups. First-year teachers and literacy volunteers can benefit from special training in assessing learning and resources, whereas experienced teachers need training according to their job descriptions. This way, the ALS program has an opportunity to design different professional development plans for these two groups, creating more meaningful support strategies for the educators.

The study has generated new knowledge contribution to the field of education which perceptions of ALS implementation among different stakeholders, underscoring the necessity for customized professional development strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the program in Bulacan.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

This study provides valuable insights for policy development by proposing targeted professional development plans for ALS educators that align with the identified needs and challenges in the implementation of the program, thereby informing strategies to enhance educational outcomes for marginalized learners. The findings of this study, along with the proposed professional development plan for ALS teachers, could be published in a journal article for international dissemination, raising awareness about the program and prompting a review of ALS policies and curriculum. Furthermore, the development plan could be adopted by the ALS department head as a tool to enhance program implementation by educators. Lastly, sharing these insights with current and future implementers and researchers can contribute to policy enhancement and

continuous improvement in the ALS program.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FUNDING

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, that could influence or bias the content of this article. This study was conducted independently without any external funding from organizations or individuals that could have a vested interest in the findings.

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request to ensure transparency and facilitate independent verification of the results. AI was utilized ethically solely to enhance readability, with due diligence and mindfulness applied to ensure that it did not contribute to the analysis or interpretation of the content.

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