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English Assessment in the Alternative Learning System: A Phenomenological Lens

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of English teachers in the Philippine Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Division of Malaybalay City, focusing on assessment methods, implementation challenges, coping strategies, and recommendations for improvement. A qualitative phenomenological design involved 12 purposively selected ALS English teachers with at least two years of experience. Data were collected through validated 20-question semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. Findings revealed the use of performance tasks, oral and written activities, portfolios, and diagnostic, formative, and module-based assessments adapted to learners' literacy levels and circumstances. Teachers encountered heterogeneous reading and writing skills, irregular attendance associated with work and family obligations, limited materials and facilities, competing documentation demands, and learners' low confidence and language anxiety. They responded through differentiated tasks, flexible scheduling, contextualized activities, modified modules, and constructive individual feedback. Overall, effective ALS English assessment emerged as a balance between consistent competency expectations and responsive, learner-centered implementation. The study recommends adaptable assessment rubrics, targeted teacher training, improved instructional resources, and accessible progress-monitoring approaches. Because findings reflect self-reported experiences from 12 teachers in one division, they are not statistically generalizable and do not establish assessment effectiveness. By documenting context-sensitive assessment practices, the study offers practical guidance for ALS program improvement and contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), with potential benefits for educational and institutional sustainability.

Keywords: *Alternative Learning System, Authentic Assessment, English Assessment, Learner-Centered Assessment, Nonformal Education, Phenomenological Research, Teacher Resilience*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) provides an alternative educational pathway for out-of-school youth and adults in the Philippines, particularly individuals whose circumstances have prevented them from completing formal education. Despite its importance in promoting functional literacy and lifelong learning, challenges in accessibility, learning continuity, and resource availability continue to affect its implementation. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2025) reported that approximately 4.9 million Filipino youth were out of school, with only around 600,000 reached by ALS. Similarly, Albert et al. (2024) identified institutional and resource constraints affecting the effectiveness of ALS implementation. English assessment is essential in determining learners' communication competencies, monitoring literacy development, and providing appropriate instructional support. The Department of Education (2026) emphasizes competency-based, formative, and portfolio-based assessments that accommodate diverse learning needs. However, implementing these practices in nonformal education requires considerable flexibility and professional judgment. This study explores the lived experiences of ALS English teachers in the Division of Malaybalay City, focusing on their assessment practices, implementation challenges, coping strategies, and insights for improvement.

Research Problem

English assessment in ALS presents considerable challenges because learners differ in educational backgrounds, language proficiency, literacy readiness, learning pace, and personal responsibilities. Teachers must ensure that assessment activities accurately reflect learners' competencies while remaining accessible, meaningful, and aligned with curriculum expectations. Previous Philippine studies identified limited instructional materials, inadequate learning time, learner diversity, and literacy difficulties as recurring challenges among ALS teachers (Francisco & Buri, 2024; Quiñones, 2024). Recent scholarship emphasizes that effective assessment requires teachers to understand learners' needs and make informed decisions regarding assessment design, implementation, and feedback (Pastore, 2023). Authentic assessment also encourages the application of knowledge and competencies in meaningful situations rather than relying exclusively on conventional examinations (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024). Nevertheless, contextual limitations may prevent teachers from consistently implementing these approaches. Although previous studies have examined ALS implementation and English literacy instruction, further investigation is needed into how ALS English teachers specifically experience, interpret, and adapt assessment practices in community-based learning environments. In particular, the lived experiences of teachers in the Division of Malaybalay City require closer examination concerning the methods they employ, challenges they encounter, coping strategies they develop, and improvements they consider necessary. Addressing this research gap may provide a contextualized understanding of English assessment in nonformal education.

Assumptions of the Study

This study is anchored on the assumption that English assessment in ALS is a socially situated and context-dependent educational process shaped by learners' characteristics, available resources, institutional expectations, and teachers' professional judgment. Assessment practices are understood as extending beyond the measurement of academic achievement to include identifying learning needs, providing feedback, and supporting competency development (Pastore, 2023; Poehner, 2025). The study further assumes that ALS English teachers can meaningfully describe and reflect on their assessment experiences, including the challenges and adaptations associated with evaluating learners in flexible educational environments. Their firsthand accounts are considered valuable sources of insight into the practical realities of assessment implementation. These assumptions guide the exploration of

participants' experiences without presupposing the effectiveness of particular assessment approaches or the uniformity of teachers' experiences.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of English teachers in the Alternative Learning System in the Division of Malaybalay City regarding the implementation of English assessment practices. Specifically, it sought to examine the assessment methods employed by teachers in evaluating learners' English competencies; identify the challenges encountered in implementing assessments within diverse and nonformal educational environments; describe the coping strategies utilized to address assessment-related difficulties; and explore teachers' insights and reflections concerning the improvement of English assessment practices. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study intended to generate contextualized insights that may support more responsive, inclusive, and meaningful English assessment in ALS.

Theoretical or Conceptual Basis

The study draws on Sociocultural Theory, contemporary perspectives on teacher resilience, and phenomenology to understand English assessment as an adaptive process influenced by social interaction, contextual conditions, and professional experiences. Sociocultural Theory provides a framework for understanding how language learning and assessment are shaped by interaction, mediation, and learners' social environments. Poehner (2025) emphasized the contribution of Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory to second-language assessment, particularly the relationship between assessment, instructional support, and language development. This perspective is relevant to ALS because learners possess diverse linguistic backgrounds and require assessment activities responsive to their learning contexts. Teacher Resilience explains how educators respond and adapt to professional challenges while sustaining their instructional responsibilities. Vallés and Clarà (2023) conceptualized teacher resilience as a dynamic relationship between educators and challenging professional situations, influenced by social and cultural resources. This perspective supports the examination of how ALS English teachers manage assessment difficulties associated with resource limitations, learner diversity, and irregular participation. Phenomenology serves as the philosophical foundation for understanding the meanings teachers assign to their experiences. Van Manen (2023) emphasized the significance of exploring lived experiences to understand professional practice and human meaning-making. Accordingly, the phenomenological perspective enables the study to examine how ALS teachers describe, interpret, and reflect on their English assessment practices. Together, these perspectives establish a conceptual basis for understanding English assessment as a socially situated, professionally adaptive, and experience-based educational process.

The study primarily aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), which promotes inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities. Specifically, its focus on meaningful English assessment relates to improving learning outcomes, addressing educational inequalities, and supporting literacy development among youth and adults. The United Nations (2025) emphasized the importance of strengthening inclusive education systems and expanding learning opportunities for marginalized populations. By examining ALS teachers' assessment experiences, the study may contribute evidence to inform fair, learner-centered, and context-responsive evaluation practices. The study also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) because ALS serves individuals who experience barriers to completing formal education. Investigating flexible assessment methods and learner-sensitive practices may help identify approaches that reduce educational disadvantages associated with differences in literacy proficiency, socioeconomic circumstances, and learning

opportunities. In terms of sustainability, the study supports educational sustainability by examining practices that may promote continuing literacy development and lifelong learning. It also has implications for institutional sustainability through potential improvements in teacher assessment competencies, professional development, assessment resources, and educational support systems. Socioeconomic sustainability is indirectly relevant because accessible and meaningful literacy assessment may support learners' continued educational participation and development of functional communication skills. Technology-assisted assessment may also offer opportunities for improving assessment implementation, provided that digital tools remain appropriate to learners' circumstances and available resources. UNESCO (2023) emphasized that educational technology must be evaluated in terms of relevance, equity, and sustainability. Accordingly, the study's contribution lies in generating evidence that may guide inclusive and sustainable assessment improvements rather than directly measuring progress toward the SDGs.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to understand the lived experiences and perspectives of ALS English teachers concerning assessment implementation. This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of their assessment methods, encountered challenges, coping strategies, and reflections on improving English assessment practices within nonformal educational settings.

Research Locale or Study Setting

The study was conducted in the Division of Malaybalay City, focusing on English teachers implementing assessment practices within the Alternative Learning System. The research setting provided the context for examining teachers' experiences in assessing learners under the ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, particularly in relation to the diverse educational needs and circumstances of ALS learners.

Participants or Data Sources

The study involved twelve (12) officially recognized ALS English teachers selected through purposive sampling. Participants had at least two years of teaching experience and were directly involved in designing, administering, or evaluating English assessment activities under the ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. Their professional experiences provided firsthand information on assessment practices, implementation challenges, coping strategies, and opportunities for improvement.

Research Instruments or Materials

A validated semi-structured interview guide containing twenty (20) open-ended questions served as the primary research instrument. The guide was anchored on the ALS K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum under DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2019, and followed Seidman’s three-interview series model. It was designed to explore participants' professional backgrounds, lived experiences in implementing English assessments, and reflections on their assessment practices.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through individual in-depth interviews conducted in English, each lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Participants' responses were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate documentation of their experiences. Following transcription, member checking was conducted by providing participants with summarized interview transcripts to verify the accuracy and interpretation of their responses.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework, consisting of familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. HyperRESEARCH Version 4.5.7 was utilized to facilitate the organization, coding, and systematic analysis of interview transcripts. The trustworthiness of the findings was established through qualitative procedures addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to data collection, the necessary institutional approvals and research ethics clearance were secured. Informed consent was obtained from all participants to ensure voluntary participation. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, and appropriate ethical standards were observed to protect participants and ensure the responsible handling of their responses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 English Assessment Practices Employed by ALS Teachers

3.1.1 Authentic and Output-Oriented Competency Assessment

The participants employed performance-based and written assessments to evaluate learners' English communication competencies. These included oral reading, storytelling, role-playing, speaking activities, essays, reflections, and practical communication tasks. Teachers also utilized portfolios containing learners' written works and completed activities to document progress over time. These assessment methods enabled learners to demonstrate English competencies through observable performances and meaningful outputs rather than relying exclusively on conventional examinations. The findings indicate that authentic assessment allows teachers to evaluate functional literacy and practical language application in ways responsive to learners' educational backgrounds. Vlachopoulos and Makri (2024) emphasized that authentic assessment connects academic competencies with real-world tasks and supports meaningful learning. Similarly, Francisco and Buri (2024) highlighted the importance of adaptive instructional practices in addressing the diverse English literacy needs of ALS learners. These perspectives support the participants' use of performance activities, written outputs, and portfolios as complementary assessment approaches.

3.1.2 Continuous and Developmental Assessment Practices

Teachers employed diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to monitor learners' English competency development. Diagnostic procedures included the Functional Literacy Test, pre-reading assessments, and initial literacy evaluations. Formative assessments involved oral recitations, reading activities, quizzes, sentence construction, and written exercises, while summative assessments evaluated competency attainment through module-based tests and performance outputs. Teachers also utilized learning activity sheets and progress-monitoring records to document learners' development. These practices suggest that assessment in ALS functions as an ongoing instructional process rather than a single measurement of achievement. Lui and Andrade (2022) explained that formative feedback supports learning through processes that help learners interpret and respond to information about their performance. Likewise, Pastore (2023) emphasized the importance of teachers' assessment literacy in designing responsive evaluations and using assessment evidence to support instructional decisions. Such perspectives are consistent with the developmental and feedback-oriented assessment practices described by participants.

3.1.3 Flexible and Context-Responsive Assessment Approaches

Participants adjusted assessment activities according to learners' literacy levels, learning pace, educational backgrounds, and personal circumstances. They simplified instructions, modified written tasks, and provided alternative assessment opportunities when conventional activities were unsuitable. Oral reading, guided conversations, and speaking exercises were frequently used to assess learners who experienced difficulty completing written requirements. Teachers also adapted module-based assessments to accommodate differences in learner readiness. The findings demonstrate that flexibility is central to maintaining meaningful assessment in community-based education. CAST (2024) emphasized the importance of providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to reduce barriers to learning. Similarly, Quiñones (2024) identified differentiated instruction and tailored literacy activities as practical responses to the diverse learning needs of ALS participants. These perspectives reinforce the value of assessment approaches that maintain competency expectations while providing accessible opportunities for learners to demonstrate understanding.

3.2 Challenges Encountered in Implementing English Assessment

3.2.1 Learner Readiness and Literacy-Level Challenges

Participants reported considerable differences in learners' foundational literacy skills and academic preparedness. Some learners experienced difficulty recognizing letters, reading simple texts, writing basic sentences, and understanding English instructions, while others demonstrated more advanced competencies. These variations complicated the administration of uniform assessment activities and required teachers to provide individualized assistance, simplified tasks, and alternative evaluation methods. The findings highlight foundational literacy as an important consideration in designing appropriate English assessments. Francisco and Buri (2024) identified learner diversity as a significant challenge in ALS English literacy instruction, while Quiñones (2024) documented reading difficulties, cultural differences, and varied learning needs among ALS participants. These studies support the observation that assessment methods must consider learners' actual competencies rather than assuming comparable levels of academic readiness.

3.2.2 Competing Life Responsibilities Affecting Learner Attendance

Teachers identified employment obligations, family responsibilities, and personal circumstances as major reasons for irregular learner attendance. Some learners were unable to participate consistently in scheduled instructional sessions and assessment activities because they prioritized income-generating work or household responsibilities. These attendance patterns disrupted learning continuity, complicated progress monitoring, and required teachers to provide alternative schedules and additional assessment opportunities. The findings suggest that ALS assessment practices must accommodate the realities of learners balancing education with socioeconomic responsibilities. Albert et al. (2024) identified operational and contextual challenges affecting the delivery of alternative education in the Philippines. Similarly, Paez (2024) reported concerns involving learner interaction, instructional delivery, and resource availability in ALS implementation. These findings emphasize the importance of flexible assessment arrangements that support educational participation without disregarding learners' personal circumstances.

3.2.3 Resource and Environmental Constraints

Participants reported inadequate instructional materials, limited assessment tools, and insufficient learning facilities. Some educational activities were conducted in barangay halls or other community spaces with limited resources and equipment. These conditions restricted the range of assessment activities teachers could administer and required adjustments in the preparation and implementation of English evaluation tasks. Resource limitations affect

teachers' capacity to provide varied, consistent, and accessible assessments. Francisco and Buri (2024) identified insufficient instructional materials and limited teaching time among the challenges encountered by ALS English teachers. Paez (2024) likewise emphasized the need for improved instructional resources, facilities, and implementation support. These studies support the participants' observations that assessment effectiveness depends partly on the availability of appropriate learning materials and institutional resources.

3.2.4 Structural and Assessment Design Challenges

Participants experienced difficulties associated with limited instructional time, multiple professional responsibilities, documentation requirements, and the mismatch between standardized assessment materials and learners' actual competencies. Teachers reported that some prescribed activities were too advanced for learners with limited reading and writing skills. Consequently, they modified assessment instructions, adjusted task complexity, and balanced evaluation activities with administrative responsibilities. The findings demonstrate the need to reconcile curriculum expectations with learners' readiness and teachers' operational conditions. Pastore (2023) explained that assessment literacy involves professional knowledge and judgment in developing and implementing appropriate evaluation practices. Agtarap et al. (2024) also documented challenges associated with assessment implementation and teachers' adaptation of evaluation strategies. These perspectives highlight the importance of assessment frameworks that provide clear expectations while allowing contextually appropriate adjustments.

3.2.5 Psychological and Affective Barriers

Participants observed that some ALS learners experienced low self-confidence, hesitation, anxiety, and discouragement during English assessments. Learners with weak literacy skills were sometimes reluctant to read aloud, speak English, or complete written activities because they feared making mistakes or being embarrassed. These emotional difficulties affected their willingness to participate and demonstrate their competencies during evaluation. The findings indicate that emotional considerations are relevant to the assessment process, particularly among learners with interrupted educational experiences. Alrabai and Algazzaz (2024) found that teacher emotional support contributed positively to language learners' psychological needs, emotions, and engagement. Quiñones (2024) likewise identified emotional and social difficulties among the challenges affecting literacy development in ALS. These studies support the importance of encouraging, respectful, and learner-sensitive assessment environments.

3.3 Coping Strategies Employed by ALS English Teachers

3.3.1 Adaptive and Level-Responsive Assessment Practices

Teachers responded to differences in learner proficiency by modifying assessment activities according to individual capabilities. They simplified instructions, adjusted task difficulty, provided guided activities, and differentiated written and oral requirements. Participants also adapted assessment expectations to accommodate learners who needed additional support in foundational literacy while providing appropriate tasks for more advanced learners. These strategies reflect the importance of differentiated assessment in addressing diverse educational needs. CAST (2024) recommended designing learning opportunities that reduce barriers and recognize differences in learners' capacities for engagement and expression. Similarly, Quiñones (2024) identified differentiated instruction, grouping, remediation, and tailored approaches as strategies employed by ALS teachers to address literacy challenges. These findings are consistent with the participants' efforts to maintain accessible and responsive assessment practices.

3.3.2 Flexible and Accessible Assessment Delivery

Participants implemented flexible assessment schedules and alternative opportunities for learners who could not regularly attend learning sessions. Teachers allowed learners to complete missed activities, accomplish module-based requirements, and participate in make-up assessments. They also adjusted assessment delivery according to learners' availability and personal circumstances, particularly when work and family obligations interfered with scheduled sessions. These strategies indicate that flexible assessment delivery supports continued learner participation despite irregular attendance. Albert et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of strengthening the operational effectiveness of ALS to address barriers to educational access and participation. Paez (2024) also highlighted implementation difficulties related to instructional delivery and learner interaction. The participants' flexible scheduling and alternative assessment practices demonstrate practical responses to these accessibility concerns.

3.3.3 Contextualized and Resource-Responsive Assessment Practices

Teachers contextualized assessment activities by relating English communication tasks to learners' everyday experiences, community situations, and practical needs. Participants also utilized locally available materials when standard instructional resources were insufficient. These adaptations enabled teachers to continue assessment activities despite limited access to specialized materials and facilities. The findings suggest that contextualization enhances the practical relevance and accessibility of English assessment. Vlachopoulos and Makri (2024) emphasized the importance of authentic tasks that connect learning with real-world applications. Francisco and Buri (2024) likewise identified adaptability as a significant element of ALS English literacy instruction. These perspectives support the use of familiar situations and accessible materials in evaluating practical communication competencies.

3.3.4 Responsive Modular Assessment and Continuous Replanning

Participants used instructional modules, learning activity sheets, simplified exercises, and follow-up activities to address difficulties in assessment implementation. Teachers modified module-based tasks when learners struggled with instructions or competency requirements. They also repeated explanations, adjusted learning activities, and revised assessment arrangements based on learners' progress, attendance, and demonstrated understanding. These practices indicate that responsive assessment requires continuous instructional adjustment and monitoring. Lui and Andrade (2022) emphasized that effective feedback involves processes through which learners interpret information and make decisions concerning their learning. Pastore (2023) similarly highlighted teachers' ability to use assessment evidence to guide instructional practice. The participants' modular adjustments and repeated assessments reflect an effort to sustain learning progression despite interruptions and differences in competency levels.

3.3.5 Affective-Sensitive and Learner-Focused Assessment

Teachers addressed learners' emotional difficulties by providing encouragement, constructive feedback, individualized assistance, and supportive interactions. Participants described using patient explanations, one-on-one consultations, and assessment activities adjusted to learners' confidence and readiness. These approaches helped create less intimidating opportunities for learners to participate in English communication tasks. The findings emphasize the importance of emotional support in maintaining learner engagement during assessment. Alrabai and Algazzaz (2024) demonstrated the contribution of emotionally supportive teaching to positive language-learning experiences and engagement. Francisco and Buri (2024) also emphasized the emotional and professional demands involved in ALS English literacy instruction. These studies

are consistent with the participants' efforts to combine assessment implementation with encouragement and learner-centered assistance.

3.4 Teachers' Insights and Reflections on Improving English Assessment

3.4.1 Responsive and Learner-Centered Assessment Practices

Participants emphasized the need to strengthen learner-centered, contextualized, and flexible assessment approaches. They recommended designing English evaluation activities based on learners' actual abilities, life experiences, educational backgrounds, and learning circumstances. Teachers also highlighted the importance of adjusting assessment methods to support different proficiency levels rather than applying uniform expectations without considering learners' needs. These insights demonstrate teachers' recognition that effective assessment requires appropriate learning opportunities for diverse learners. CAST (2024) emphasized inclusive learning design that provides multiple opportunities for demonstrating competence. Quiñones (2024) similarly recommended individualized instruction and culturally responsive approaches to addressing literacy difficulties in ALS. These perspectives support the participants' recommendations for more adaptable and learner-sensitive assessment practices.

3.4.2 Structured Yet Flexible Assessment Frameworks

Teachers recommended clearer assessment guidelines, more consistent evaluation criteria, and standardized rubrics that could be adapted to different learning contexts. Participants expressed concern about inconsistencies in assessment practices across ALS centers and suggested establishing clearer procedures for measuring English competencies. However, they emphasized that standardized frameworks should still permit contextual adjustments based on learners' abilities and circumstances. The findings indicate a need to balance assessment consistency with professional flexibility. Pastore (2023) emphasized that effective assessment practices involve both technical competence and context-sensitive professional judgment. Paez (2024) likewise identified the importance of clear assessment policies and strengthened institutional support in ALS implementation. These studies support the participants' proposal for common assessment standards accompanied by adaptable implementation strategies.

3.4.3 Meaningful and Mastery-Oriented English Assessment

Participants recommended greater emphasis on authentic language use, practical communication, and progressive competency development. They suggested that English assessments should evaluate learners' ability to communicate in everyday situations rather than focus exclusively on written examinations or completed requirements. Teachers also emphasized recognizing individual improvement and mastery of competencies instead of relying solely on grades or task submission. These recommendations reflect the importance of meaningful assessment and continuous learning development. Vlachopoulos and Makri (2024) highlighted the contribution of authentic assessment to applying knowledge and skills in realistic situations. Yan and Yang (2022) discussed assessment as a learning-oriented process that can support learner development and achievement. These perspectives reinforce the participants' emphasis on functional language proficiency, learning progress, and mastery-oriented assessment.

3.4.4 Modernizing English Assessment Through Digital Innovation

Teachers identified opportunities to improve assessment practices through digital portfolios, audio recordings, interactive activities, technology-assisted evaluation, and project-based tasks. Participants suggested that digital tools could facilitate the collection of learner outputs, monitoring of progress, and provision of feedback. However, their recommendations were expressed within the context of existing limitations in instructional resources and technological accessibility. These insights indicate that digital innovation may complement conventional

assessment methods when appropriately matched with learners' circumstances. UNESCO (2023) emphasized that educational technology should be adopted according to its relevance, accessibility, equity, and educational value. Martin et al. (2026) also identified socioeconomic, geographic, and technological factors affecting digital equity in education. These perspectives suggest that technology-assisted ALS assessment requires consideration of digital access, teacher preparedness, and learner support.

3.4.5 Building a Supportive and Empowered Educational Environment

Participants emphasized the need for continuous professional development, adequate instructional materials, administrative assistance, and clearer institutional support mechanisms. They recommended training in assessment design, contextualized evaluation, technology-assisted assessment, and learner-centered practices. Teachers also highlighted the importance of sufficient learning resources, reasonable workload arrangements, and opportunities to share effective assessment strategies with colleagues. These insights demonstrate that improving English assessment requires institutional support alongside individual teacher adaptability. Pastore (2023) identified the importance of developing teachers' assessment literacy through appropriate professional preparation and continuing learning. Paez (2024) likewise recommended targeted professional development, improved instructional resources, and clearer assessment policies for ALS implementation. The findings therefore emphasize the need for coordinated professional and institutional efforts to strengthen assessment delivery in nonformal education.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This phenomenological study found that twelve Alternative Learning System (ALS) English teachers in the Division of Malaybalay City used authentic, formative, and context-responsive assessment to evaluate learners with differing literacy levels and circumstances. Performance activities, written outputs, portfolios, oral tasks, and modules allowed teachers to monitor progress and assess practical communication competencies. Assessment implementation was complicated by uneven readiness, irregular attendance linked to work and family obligations, limited materials and facilities, time and documentation demands, and learners' anxiety or low confidence. In response, teachers differentiated activities, adjusted schedules and task difficulty, contextualized assessment, and offered constructive feedback and individual support. Across these experiences, assessment emerged as both a means of evaluating competencies and an ongoing process of supporting participation and learning. The study contributes a situated account of teachers' professional judgment and adaptability, indicating the importance of balancing consistent assessment expectations with flexibility in nonformal education.

The Department of Education may strengthen ALS assessment guidance by providing clear competency-aligned rubrics, adaptable tools, and monitoring procedures that permit appropriate adjustments for learners' literacy and circumstances. ALS coordinators and education program specialists may prioritize training in assessment literacy, differentiated and authentic assessment, portfolio documentation, and constructive feedback, supported by mentoring and collaborative development of localized materials. Administrators may address shortages in instructional resources and suitable assessment spaces and consider teachers' time and reporting demands when organizing support. ALS English teachers may maintain diagnostic, formative, oral, written, and performance-based approaches, offer alternative schedules for learners with competing responsibilities, and use supportive feedback to reduce assessment anxiety. Where resources allow, they may trial accessible digital assessment and progress-monitoring tools without replacing practical non-digital options. Families and community partners may encourage attendance and opportunities to practice English in

everyday settings. Future studies may examine learner perspectives and assessment practices in other ALS contexts.

The study drew on purposively selected accounts of twelve ALS English teachers from a single division, Malaybalay City. Its qualitative phenomenological design was intended to illuminate lived experiences rather than estimate how frequently assessment practices or challenges occur across the wider ALS system. Findings were based on teachers' interview descriptions, not direct measurements of learners' English achievement or comparative tests of assessment effectiveness. Their transferability therefore depends on similarities between the study setting and other ALS contexts. Further research involving learners and other stakeholders, additional divisions, and complementary qualitative or quantitative approaches could examine whether the identified patterns appear elsewhere.

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