

Exploring the lived experiences of the persons deprived of liberty enrolled in alternative learning system

Rufo A. Labarrete, Jocylen A. Tiopes

Professional Education Unit, Faculty of the College of Education, Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Philippines

Article Info

Article history:

Received Oct 10, 2023

Revised Aug 15, 2024

Accepted Aug 28, 2024

Keywords:

Alternative education
Behind Bars Program
Curricular landscape
Education for all
Mainstream society
Persons deprived of liberty

ABSTRACT

The Philippines government adheres to a system of Education for all (EFA). Thus, it created the alternative learning system (ALS) as an alternative system of education to reach out Filipinos who were unable to complete the prescribed basic education cycle for various reasons. This study explored the lived experiences of the persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) as enrollees of the ALS Behind Bars Program. It utilized the transcendental phenomenology as its design and employed eight purposively chosen participants through inclusion criterion. Data was gathered through focus group discussion and analyzed using Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen framework. Three themes emerged following the statement of problem: lived experiences of the PDLs as enrollees of the ALS behind bars program, meaning of the PDLs' attendance to the program, and their recommendations to further improve the delivery of the existing and prospective ALS programs intended for the PDLs. Taking things holistically, the current program is positively perceived by the PDLs. Thus, the need for the government to sustain the program to ensure the holistic transformation of the PDLs enrolled in the program through this alternative learning delivery, which, in turn, is direly needed as they eventually join the mainstream society.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



Corresponding Author:

Rufo A. Labarrete

Professional Education Unit, Faculty of the College of Education, Leyte Normal University

Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines

Email: rufo.labarrete@lnu.edu.ph

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the modalities the Philippine government employs in delivering its education goods and services is the alternative learning system (ALS). ALS is a community and learners-based system of education parallel to the formal basic education system of the Philippines. Its curricular landscape is framed based on the learners' actual needs and present circumstances. Learners mainstreamed in the ALS are diverse and resilient. They are usually early school leavers, out-of-school youths (OSYs), non-literate adults, abused children, the indigenous peoples (IPs), non-literate families, muslim migrants, depressed, deprived, and underserved groups (DDU), persons with disabilities (PWDs) and anyone whose education had been disrupted for various reasons but have the unwavering desire to finish the basic education cycle.

ALS has since been subjected for empirical investigations. Thematic analyses of the surveyed literature suggest that studies conducted point to three main directions. First, researches are focused on the positive impact of the various ALS programs on the lives of their takers. Findings of various studies conducted along this dimension suggest that attendance in their chosen program significantly benefitted the completers as evidenced in their gainful employment [1], completion of the basic education cycle and eventual enrollment in post-secondary schools [2], character formation [3], and passing in certification tests given by the national government [4]. The second direction is on developed instructional resources such as the Online DepEd-based ALS programs

for the accreditation and equivalency (A&E) learners anchored on the six learning strands of the new ALS K to 12 curriculum and was intended to develop multiple skills, specifically scientific and critical, problem-solving, communication, digital, and life and career skills [5], and that of the module series for the course modalities and assessment of learning in post-baccalaureate diploma in alternative learning system (PB-DALS) designed using the 4As: activity, analysis, abstraction; and application strategy for teaching and learning anchored on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory [6]. The third and final direction are researches about the pedagogic-related challenges. Findings reported from these academic undertakings point out a decline in enrolment [7], unavailability of teaching tools [8], poor choices of teaching strategies [9], poor reading comprehension skills [10], and the need to revisit practices in teaching writing and reading skills, [11]–[13] among others as core issues and concerns that need immediate and deliberate actions.

The persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) or those in conflict with laws serving their prison terms in government-controlled jail facilities are one of the groups of ALS learners under the DDU cluster. They are enrolled in ALS Behind Bars Programs and mainstreamed in basic literacy program (BLP) or A&E certifications. Usually, the PDLs receive instruction in a designated academic building inside the prison facilities delivered by ALS teachers in coordination with the jail personnel assigned to implement "Transformation," a facility program that uses education as a springboard to transform the PDLs and eventually become functional members of society after completing their prison terms [14].

Inarguably, a significant number of studies about ALS exist, as evident in the surveyed literature mentioned and discussed above. However, none of these studies was focused on exploring the lived experiences of the PDLs enrolled in ALS specifically in its program called Behind Bars Program. Lived experiences describe people's engagement and knowledge about their immediate community or environment. The PDLs, being deprived of liberty, are given penultimate chance of the government to still enjoy the many benefits of education. But, what does their attendance in the program really mean to them? Given these, the researchers argue that this glaring empirical gap necessitates a scientific investigation. As such, this study was conducted for the following purposes: i) to determine the lived experiences of the PDLs as enrollees of the ALS Behind Bars Program; ii) explore the meaning of the PDLs' attendance to the program; and, iii) generate baseline data as recommendations to further improve the delivery of the existing and prospective ALS programs intended for the PDLs.

2. METHOD

The study was conducted in one prison facility in Eastern Visayas, Philippines, from August to December 2022. This qualitative research employs transcendental phenomenology, a systematic data analysis approach that aims to achieve a deeper understanding and depiction of the significance of lived experiences. The design depicts participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon rather than relying on the researcher's interpretation [15]. This research design allowed the study to discover more participants' experiences and perspectives attending the ALS Behind Bars Program. Guided by Moustakas' [15] principle in employing a few participants, the researchers purposively chose eight PDLs currently detained in one of the highly guarded penal colonies in the region as participants. Data was gathered through a focus group discussion to accumulate wealth and in-depth information from the participants. The guide questions were validated through content validation. Data from the focus group discussion transcript was analyzed using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen framework, which involved a series of processes including a description of the participant's experiences with the phenomenon, bracketing, identification, and listing of significant statements, coding and clustering to determine common themes, creation of textural description to capture the essences of the experiences, development of structural descriptions to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, and integration of this description to form a detailed description of the essences. The study findings were submitted for member checking to cross-examine the interpretation and validity of the gathered data [16]. Ethical issues were addressed by seeking permission from jail management to conduct the study, and the purposively chosen informants were asked to consent to their participation in the study. Subsequently, the study's nature, scope, and purpose were explained in detail to the informants. Both the jail management and informants were assured of data confidentiality and anonymity. During the actual data gathering, the researchers were accompanied by personnel from the jail facility. The informants were allowed to express themselves in their preferred vernacular and even code-switch. The questions asked were also translated into their preferred local language. All of the focus group discussion (FGD) sessions were tape-recorded for ease of reference. No personal information about the participants was asked to protect their privacy.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the results of the phenomenological analysis conducted based on the domains of inquiry: the lived experiences of the PDLs as enrollees of the ALS Behind Bars Program, meaning of the of the PDLs attendance to the program, and baseline data that could be anchored for policy direction to further improve

the delivery of the existing and prospective ALS programs intended for the PDLs. Table 1 (in Appendix) shows the codes, sample verbatim statements, subthemes, main themes, and corresponding descriptions. There were 11 significant statements derived from the participants, of which eight formulated meanings were derived, which, in turn, were grouped into three themes. Considerably, based on the responses of the PDLs, they have experienced the chance to enhance their knowledge in reading and writing, the opportunity to be out of the prison cell and continue learning reading and writing, and hone their skills in handicraft development. Meanwhile, to the PDLs, attendance in the ALS serves as a mechanism to earn a living that would bring a peaceful life and reminism of the undervalued importance of education, as a springboard to a better economic condition for oneself and the family, and as a mechanism for transformation beneficial to family members. Finally, the PDLs recommended a partnership between the ALS and the technical education skill development authority (TESDA), and extended learning hours and provision of school supplies to improve the implementation of the ALS Behind Bars Program.

3.1. Persons deprived of liberty lived experiences as enrollees of the alternative learning system Behind Bars Program

Lived experiences describe an individual's engagement and knowledge about their society. The PDLs have rich experiences while they are serving their respective prison terms in the jail facilities. Among these experiences include their interactions with their counterparts. Another will be their attendance in the ALS Behind Bars Program as this certainly has significant impact on their lives given their present conditions such as limited mobility and the need to complete their jail terms. These experiences will certainly play a critical space in course of redirecting their lives upon completion of prison terms.

3.1.1. Chance to enhance knowledge in reading and writing

The PDLs consider the ALS Behind Bars Program an opportunity to further learn reading and writing skills. The participants who participated in the program voiced that it had enhanced their knowledge of these two foundational skills, which they did not master when they were still members of mainstream society. Reading competence is an essential skill for academic survival and success. As a fundamental learning skill, it is defined as the process of interpreting written or printed text to understand its meaning, which allows learners to access and absorb information from various sources like books, articles, websites, and documents. It involves visually perceiving written symbols, recognizing and comprehending words, sentences, and paragraphs, and making sense of the overall message conveyed by the text. Reading also involves several cognitive processes, such as recognizing letters and words, understanding grammar and syntax, and forming mental representations of the information being read [17]. Several reading skills could help learners across grade levels succeed in their academic tasks and academic journey. First is decoding, the person's ability to convert written or printed symbols into sounds. This skill involves recognizing and understanding the relationship between letters and their corresponding sounds, which is critical for reading fluency. Second is word recognition, or the ability to understand and apply rules and patterns of letter-sound correspondences to decode words accurately. Third is vocabulary skills, or the ability to recognize and understand words, including their meanings, pronunciations, and how they are used in different contexts. Lst is fluency or the person's ability to read accurately, smoothly, and with appropriate speed. Fluent readers focus on understanding the meaning of the text rather than struggling with word recognition [18].

The researchers argue that a dearth of studies conducted in the ALS about the PDLs. However, several studies involving other groups of learners, such as the OSYs, are available. These studies are concentrated on the literacy skills of the learners and the effectiveness of the implemented reading intervention projects. For example, a community extension project called care awareness service: an ALS uplifting project (CASAUP) implemented for a year by a higher education institution aimed at improving the functional reading skills of a group of OSYs showed a significant leap in the reading performance of the beneficiaries initially from being non-readers to proficient readers after the project completion [19]. In a separate study involving senior high school ALS learners, researchers utilized the Philippine-Informal Reading Inventory (PhilIRI) manual tool to determine the miscues in reading they frequently commit. Findings revealed that the learners committed mispronunciation, omission, substitution, insertion, repetition, transposition, and reversal as miscues when reading texts. Additionally, findings also showed that reading habits, strategies, psychological and cultural background, interest in reading, grammar, and vocabulary are among the factors that add to the difficulty of reading comprehension for these learners. Furthermore, they argued that these findings are alarming because functional reading literacy involves a tedious process of text comprehension and creating connections, utilization of prior knowledge, and extensive knowledge of grammar and word stock as indicators of comprehension. It was then recommended that teachers teach reading skills [20].

Meanwhile, writing is considered the most challenging macro language skill to learn compared to other macro language skills - reading, speaking, and listening. Learners of a country that regards the English language as a second language find the skill even more challenging due to knowledge of writing styles, learning resources, and familiarity with the language [21]. Writing also calls for organizing the emotions, thoughts, and

information in the mind and consequently putting them on paper using symbols to form a meaningful structure. The process is complex because it requires coordinating various cognitive skills, including planning, gathering, editing, and reviewing. Nevertheless, completing the process leads to high-level thinking [22]. Scholars opined that writing has three fundamental steps. These are planning, translating, and reviewing. During the planning phase, students must define the activity, know the audience, be clear about the goal, select the text type, organize ideas, and modify the draft. Meanwhile, during the translating phase, students must put the generated ideas into sentences and coherent paragraphs by considering the rules on coherence, the audience, and the wordings used within the drafted paragraphs. Then, if necessary, phase one is revisited. The final phase is reviewing, considered the assessment and improvement phase. Activities like re-reading, grammatical and semantic organizing, meaning and relevance checking, Studies revealed that students with proficient writing skills could apply planning, translating, and reviewing stages [23].

Scholars contended that quality writing necessitates careful planning, translation and review and the good writers in English language devote ample time to pre-writing, listing ideas before combining them in a diagram, and creating a final draft of the composition [24], [25]. Studies about writing skills involving ALS learners are limited. Findings of a study conducted by [26] reported on the need to re-engineer existing practices in teaching writing to address the learners' challenges in written expression, as evident in the respondents' poor content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics as specific domains subjected to investigation. Similarly, findings of another study revealed that a group of ALS learners lacks skills in idea generation, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and spelling, as shown in statistically treated data based on the analyzed sample compositions [27].

3.1.2. Opportunity to be out of the prison cell and continue learning reading and writing

Attendance in the ALS behind bars program paved the way for the PDLs to experience a temporary relief from prison cell. The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) of the Philippines initiated a reform program dubbed the Reformation of National Inmates. The program is focused on the upliftment and development of the PDLs in five clusters, including moral and spiritual, education and training, work and livelihood, sports and recreation, and health and welfare. All these programs are institutionalized in partnership with various government agencies, such as the DepEd through the ALS. Basically, the ALS program implementers spearhead the inmates' "transformation," using education as a medium to help them become functional members of society upon completion of their prison terms. Similarly, the partnership is hailed to embody the ideals of education for all (EFA), which guarantees equal access to education regardless of race, gender, and social circumstances. The "transformation" program also intends to make the PDLs reformed individuals after their attendance and eventual completion. In this context, reformation means correcting, educating, re-orientating, and rehabilitating the PDLs. Studies suggest that education in penal colonies is beneficial to the PDLs. Among its benefits are opportunities for enlightenment, broadening one's perspectives, building self-confidence, providing fresh orientation for reshaping one's life, and engagement in legitimate activities. All these paves the way towards achieving success, reducing recidivism, temporary relief from their "kubol" or assigned cell cubicle, and lifelong learning [28].

3.1.3. Avenue to hone skills in handicraft development

The third and final experience reported by the PDLs in their attendance to the ALS Behind Bars Program was an opportunity to learn and hone their skill in handicraft making. Several studies suggest that education services provided to PDLs yielded a positive impact. A study reported that alternative literacy practices such as general education and vocational training made the PDLs engaged, creative, and critically self-aware learners [29]. Meanwhile, another study also reported that strength-based practices can affect change and growth among youths in correctional facilities. It paved the way for developing the juvenile youths' foundational knowledge and skills in reading, writing, numeracy, and skills development such as pot making [30], [31]. Similarly, a separate study also proved that education programs help promote inmates' welfare, extending their social impact on society. Similarly, a separate study also reported that inmates who enrolled in vocational training or academic classes at either high school or college level are less likely to return to prison within the first three years of release. Finally, the PDL beneficiaries positively perceived the extension project on literacy and skills development conducted by a group of faculty members of a state-funded university based in the Philippines [32], [33].

3.2. Meaning of the alternative learning system Behind Bars Program to the persons deprived of liberty

This section presents the themes that have emerged from the responses of the PDLs as regard the meaning of their attendance in the ALS Behind Bars Program. These themes are given meaning and discussed in detail by providing support literature. These themes reflect the different lived experiences of the PDLs from their attendance in the ALS program which attests the many benefits they have acquired and the experiences that their present observations leading to their recommendations on how the program can be further improved. Thus, ultimately benefit other program takers.

3.2.1. Mechanism to earn a living towards a peaceful life and reminder of the undervalued importance of education

The ALS Behind Bars Program curriculum reminds the PDLs of their neglectful regard and unvalued commitment to education. This shadow of their academic past reminds them of how their lives would have become had they pursued an academic track when they were still members of mainstream society. Similarly, the ALS Behind Bars Program is perceived by the PDLs as a life-changer because it liberates them from the stigma of being lawbreakers with no chance of availing themselves of all forms of educational goods and services from the government. Thus, they anticipate becoming illiterate for a lifetime. All these point to the fact that they are motivated to attain the best knowledge possible and acquire skills for the benefit of the people waiting when they are to complete their prison terms. According to Ucab and Luzano [34], motivation is a strong desire or passion in a person that drives him to strive to attain success. Indeed, motivation that comes from the person himself or herself helps him or her face any obstacles and pass through them to achieve their goals and dreams in life. The ALS through the ALS Behind Bars Programs offers an opportunity to the PDLs be able to attain their much desired specifically earning a living and be able to attain a peaceful life. The learning environment also reminds them of the grandest value of education they have wasted.

3.2.2. Springboard for life transformation

The PDLs consider the ALS Behind Bars Program as the flashpoint that ultimately brings them back to the academic stream. To the PDLs, the program is the grandest opportunity to transform themselves. The curricular landscape of the ALS addresses issues and concerns with the literacy of its target learners by promoting holistic functional literacy through its curriculum package contained in its six learning strands including communication skills (English and Filipino languages streams, scientific literacy and critical thinking, mathematical and problem-solving skills, life and career skills, understanding the self and society, and digital citizenship [35]. Literacy is conventionally equated in academic parlance to reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Today, however, it is viewed as a mechanism for identifying, understanding, interpreting, creating, and communicating in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich, and fast-changing world. Thus, this perspective becomes a sustainable development enabler that aids mass participation in the market workforce, improves child and family health and nutrition, reduces poverty, expands life opportunities, and contributes to improved livelihoods [36]. As such, a person's ability to read and write serves as a prerequisite in meeting the demands mentioned above to becoming literate individuals. It is important to note that governments across nations strive to make all their citizens literate regardless of their economic status, gender, race, and social circumstances, emphasizing the inclusivity of literacy initiatives and the role that everyone can play in promoting functional literacy. The literature points to the fact that literate individuals, or those who can read and communicate in written expression, are functional members of society who are able to get gainful employment and address their economic needs, able to enroll in higher education and participate in both domestic and global social issues that matter to their lives [37].

3.3. Recommendations to further improve the delivery of the existing and prospective alternative learning system programs intended for the persons deprived of liberty

This section presents the themes that have emerged from the responses of the PDLs as regard the meaning of their recommendations to further improve the delivery of the existing and prospective ALS programs intended for the PDLs. These themes are given meaning and discussed in detail by providing support literature. Results from the analyses conducted revealed two main directions as regard their recommendations. These are partnership between the ALS and TESDA and extended learning hours and provisions of school materials or supplies. These recommendations are foreseen to be doable given the fact that part of the training given to the PDLs by the ALS is on livelihood skills and that concerned government agencies has available fundings for this group of learners in the society. In addition, the researchers likewise argue that these recommendations strongly suggest the desire of the PDLs to receive quality education and training that they could utilize upon completion of the PDLs-learners jail terms. Thus, make them functional members of the society.

3.3.1. Partnership between the alternative learning system and the technical education skill development authority

Partnership strategies are the approaches that guide how two or more entities work together in a collaboratively. In the context of the recommendation provided by the PDLs, partnership means their desire for the ALS to partner with the TESDA as a way to further improve the delivery of the skills related training and expose them more skills training. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or UNESCO [38] emphasizes the crucial role of local stakeholders in ensuring the sustainability of literacy programs. The government provides financial support and resources, while NGOs, community leaders, volunteers, and other government agencies contribute additional services and resources that align with the program's goals. This partnership ensures the efficient and effective implementation of the program, with each stakeholder's

contribution being invaluable. According to Cayabas *et al.* [39], a partnership entered into by an ALS District learning center in Northern Philippines with TESDA was seen as valuable asset that yielded positive impact to the skills training and eventual acquisition of these skills of its enrollees.

3.3.2. Extended learning hours and provision of school supplies

With the myriad of benefits the PDLs enjoy from attending the ALS, they have recommended that their contact hours with the ALS program implementers be extended. Additionally, they also appealed that they be given school supplies. The researchers argue that this appeal could ultimately pave the way for them to acquire 21st century skills. Additionally, Isidro *et al.* [40] reported that incarcerated mothers felt valued and appreciate that there's still life even in prison when provided with activities through the ALS as these give them hope freedom despite their dreadful situation inside the prison bars.

4. CONCLUSION

The ALS Behind Bars Program, with its positive impact on the PDLs, is a testament to the government's commitment to providing EFA, even those outside the formal school system. This program not only upholds the fundamental right to EFA Filipinos, regardless of their circumstances, but also empowers PDLs to pave their own path towards gainful employment and social integration after their prison terms. As such, the DepEd must exert all its efforts to ensure that these gains are sustained so that those in conflict with the laws currently serving their respective prison terms will be afforded essential knowledge and skills direly needed in a fast-changing and competitive world and their self-reformation. Thus, they become functional members of society and help themselves and the important people around them. One of several ways to do this is to expand the agency's partnership with various non-government and government organizations, including the jail facilities, as mechanisms to ensure program continuity and success. The attendance and engagement of PDLs in the ALS Behind Bars Program curriculum have significantly improved their lives. This state-funded program has undeniably made a positive impact, demonstrating the prudent use of government resources. However, to ensure the program's continued success, further studies involving a broader range of PDLs are recommended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact and areas for improvement.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Codes, sample verbatim responses, and clustering of themes

Codes and sample verbatim responses	Subthemes	Main themes	Description of themes
<p>“Dako an bulig an ALS kay sugad han akon nga waray paka eskwela han sibilyan pa ako, natagan ako utro hin higayon para maka eskwela utro ngan mas mapaupay pa an akon pagbasa ngan pagsurat kay deri gud ako nakakabasa ngan nakakasurat hin maupay”. [ALS is a big help to a person like me who was unable to get education when I was still a civilian. Through this program, I was given a chance to learn more about reading and writing]. PDL₈</p> <p>“Mas nakatuun ako ug pagbasa ug pagsurat. Dako kayo nga bulig sa akoo ang ALS” [I learned to read and write. ALS is really a big help]. PDL₂</p> <p>“An amon programa ha ALS in maupay para ha amon nga mga aadi ha prisohan. Tungod hini nakakagawas kami ha amon silda nagn nakaka abat panalagsa nga deri ako aadi sulod prisuhan”. [Our program in the ALS is beneficial to prisoners like me because I can go out of our prison cell and feel that I am not a prisoner]. PDL₇</p> <p>“Makatalwas panagsa ug gawas sa among kubol kay ngitingit kayo ug init” [Offers relief to temporarily be out of the assigned cell that is so hot and dark]. PDL₆</p> <p>“An ALS Behind Bars program in gin kakalipay ko kay napapaupay pa an akon skill hin pag himo magkadurudilain nga handicraft nga pwede maging kabuhi ko paka gawas ko nganhi” [I am proud of the ALS Behind Bars Program because my skill in handicraft making is enhanced which I could use as a source of livelihood whenever I am able to complete my prison term]. PDL₄</p> <p>“Nakatuun ako sa handicraft making na magagamit ko paglabas dito sa prisohan” [I learned handicraft making useful when I complete my prison terms]. PDL₁</p>	<p>Chance to enhance knowledge in reading and writing</p> <p>Opportunity to be out of the prison cell and continue learning reading and writing</p> <p>Avenue to hone skills in handicraft development</p>	<p>Theme 1: Lived experiences of the ALS learners enrolled in the ALS Behind Bars Program</p>	<p>Attendance in the ALS is perceived by the PDLs as an opportunity to further learn reading and writing skills</p> <p>Attendance in the ALS means temporary relief from prison cell</p> <p>ALS offers the PDLs opportunity to learn handicraft skill</p>

Table 1. Codes, sample verbatim responses, and clustering of themes (*continue*)

Codes and sample verbatim responses	Subthemes	Main themes	Description of themes
<p>"Ang ALS ang nag papa alala sa akin ng aking hindi inayos na pag-aaral nung ako ay malaya pa. Ngayon napagtantu kona na ang kahalaganahn ng pag aaral. Ang aking pagsali sa ALS ay nakikita ko na paraan upang mabago ang aking buhay sakaling makalaya na ako. Marami akong natutunan na makakatulong para kumita ako at makatulong sa aking pamilya at mamuhay ng mapayapa" [ALS reminds me of the time that I never give importance to education when I was still in the mainstream society. Now, I realize the essence of education. I feel my attendance in the ALS as a way to transform my life when I am able to complete my prison terms. I am learning a lot that could ultimately help me earn for a living that would help mme and my family and consequently be able to get a descent job and live a peaceful life]. PDL₂</p> <p>"An ALS in nag pahinumdum ha akon han akon pag eskwela. Nagbabsul gud ako kun kay anu nga waray ako pag tuhay pag eskwela han deri pa ako priso. Dako an akon pag tapod nga tungod hini nga programa namon ha ALS mababag-o pa an amon kinabuhi labi na kun mahuman kami pag serbisyo nganhi ha prisohan. Tungod han ALS damu an amon nabaruan nga mga skills na magagamit namon pag pakabuhin kun gumawas na kami nganhi ha prisuhan. Ini nga amon mga pakabuhin in mag papaupay liwat hit amon mga kinabuhin upod na an amon mga pamilya" [The ALS reminded me of my school days. I extremely regret not to have done well in school while I am still in the mainstream society. I am hopeful that through this ALS program, our lives will change especially when we are able to complete our prison terms. Because of the ALS, all skills that we have learnt will be useful to answer our economic needs upon prison terms completion. This job will be helpful to me and my family]. PDL₂</p> <p>"Ang akong ika sulti sa programa nga ALS sa gobyerno nindot siya kay katong wala naka experience ug eskwela parehas naku na na involve ug crime, lisod kayo kay wala pa jud ko ka Eskwela katong naa pako sa gawas ug sibilyan pa ako. Salamat kayo sa gobyerno kay bisan naa naku sa prisohan, nakatagamitan pa gihapon ko ug serbisyo na maka pa unlad sa akong kalugaringon. Unya naningkamot jud ko na makatuun sa pagbasa ug pagsurat kay inig tapos naku sa akong sentensiya kay gusto ko na jud magbag o aron ka tabang ko sa akong mga anak na nahibuwag sa ako tungond sa krimen na akong naguhat". [The ALS program of the government is good especially to all those who had been involved in a crime like me. It is really difficult on my end to a person like me who have not finished education when I was still a civilian and an ordinary individual. Thank you to our government because even if I am a prisoner, I am still able to avail its services that are intended for my transformation and eventual learning. I am really optimistic and is persevering to learn reading and writing because I am convinced that whenever I am able to finish my prison term, I would change so that I would be able to help my children who have been away from me due to the crime I committed]. PDL₉</p> <p>"Para ha akon mas maupay pa an ALS kun mayda mga taga TESDA nga mag tutudo ha amon hin mga skills labot lan handicraft making" [I think that the ALS program would be much better if there will be people from the Technical Skills Development Authority who will teach us more skills aside from handicraft making]. PDL₁₁</p> <p>"Nalilipay gud ako hin duro hini nga programa han ALS. Mas pahalawigun pa unta nira an amon contact hours ngan tagan kami mga gamit pan eskwela han mga taga BuCor" [I am extremely on this ALS program. I suggest that the contact be extended and we be given school supplies by the Bureau of Corrections]. PDL₁₀</p>	<p>As mechanism to earn for a living that would bring a peaceful life</p> <p>Reminism of the undervalued importance of education and springboard to a better economic condition foroneself and the family</p> <p>ALS as a mecahnis, for transformation beneficial to family members</p> <p>Agency partnership</p> <p>Extended learning hours and provision of school supply</p>	<p>Theme 2: Meaning of the PDLs' attendance to the program</p> <p>Theme 3: Recommendations of the PDLs on the implementation of the ALS Behind Bars Program</p>	<p>Attendance in the ALS is an economic opportunity</p> <p>ALS is a reminder of the value or importance of education</p> <p>ALS is an agent for transforming ones' life in consideration of their loved ones</p> <p>ALS should have a tie up with TESDA That would allow the PDLs learn more skills</p> <p>More academic time be granted to the PDLs and availment of school supply and material from the Burau of Corrections.</p>





REFERENCES

- [1] L. T. Apao, F. T. Dayagbil, and E. L. Abao, "Alternative learning system accreditation and equivalency (ALS A&E) program: quality of life beyond poverty," *ISSN International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovations ISSN*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 2348–1218, 2018.
- [2] C. Dayon, J. Garcines, and M. Sael, "Alternative learning system literacy program: the badjaos' standpoints," *International Journal of Education Research for Higher Learning*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 203–213, 2016.
- [3] D. Flores, "Performance of young mothers in the alternative learning system," Conference: Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines, 2019.
- [4] R. A. Labarrete, "An evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of alternative learning system education and skills training (ALS-EST) program," *International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 1–11, 2020.
- [5] M. C. Melgar, "ALS online program for life skills: a way forward," Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines, 2019.
- [6] R. A. A. Labarrete, "A proposed module for the course modalities and assessment of learning in post-baccalaureate diploma in alternative learning system (PB-DALS)," *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 56–62, 2021, doi: 10.24018/ejedu.2021.2.3.42.
- [7] World Bank Group, "A second chance to develop the human capital of out-of-school youth and adults," World Bank. Accessed: Mar. 01, 2024. [Online]. Available: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/53%0A9131530792186404/A-second-chance-to-develop-the-human-capital-of-out-of-school-youth-and-adults-the-Philippines-alternative-%0A-learning-system%0A>
- [8] M. M. Arzadon and R. Nato, "the Philippine alternative learning system: expanding the educational future of the deprived, depressed, and underserved," *The 9th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning (RWL9)*, pp. 1–15, 2015.
- [9] E. C. Pinca, "The mobile teachers profile competencies performance and problems in the department of education division of northern samar Philippines," *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, vol. 4, no. 8, pp. 45–50, 2015.
- [10] B. R. M. Fernandez, "Teachers' competence and learners' performance in the alternative learning system towards an enriched instructional program," *International Journal*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 33–46, 2015.
- [11] A. C. Abasolo, "Developing a scheme of action for enhanced alternative learning system," Cebu Technological University, Cebu City, Philippines., 2017.
- [12] R. A. Labarrete, "Facilitating instruction in the alternative learning system (ALS)," *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1–10, 2021, [Online]. Available: <https://ijehss.com/link2.php?id=108>
- [13] R. A. Labarrete, "Assessment for learning in the alternative learning system-education and skills training (ALS-EST)," *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 46–53, 2021, [Online]. Available: <files/3600/Labarrete-2021-Assessment-for-learning-in-the-alternative-learnin.pdf>
- [14] Department of Education, "ALS programs," GOVPH. Accessed: Mar. 01, 2024. [Online]. Available: <http://www.deped.gov.ph/k-to-12/inclusive-education/als-programs/>
- [15] C. Moustakas, *Phenomenological research methods*. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320 United States of America: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1994. doi: 10.4135/9781412995658.
- [16] G. D. Perestroika, D. A. Prastika, N. S. Raras, R. A. Risqi, R. W. Utami, and S. R. Sari, "Evaluation of adolescent-friendly health services (PKRR) programme in early adolescent reproductive health education (in Indonesian: Evaluasi program pelayanan kesehatan ramah remaja (PKRR) dalam pendidikan kesehatan reproduksi remaja awal)," *Jurnal Ilmu Kebidanan (Journal of Midwifery Science)*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 47–56, 2022, doi: 10.36307/jik.v10i2.197.
- [17] E. A. Suminto and O. T. Ena, "The implementation of reflective pedagogy in advanced critical reading and writing class," *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 203–210, 2020, doi: 10.15294/lc.v14i2.23675.
- [18] B. Moss, D. Lapp, and M. O'Shea, "Tiered texts: supporting knowledge and language learning for english learners and struggling readers," *English Journal*, vol. 100, no. 5, pp. 54–60, 2011, doi: 10.58680/ej201114915.
- [19] R. T. Galang, J. Arrozal, C. B. Batu, and L. Cortez, "Improving reading literacy rate of ALS (alternative learning system) students through casaup-literacy program," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, vol. 4, no. 12, pp. 4473–4480, 2023, doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.04.12.23.
- [20] D. J. E. Tambis, D. V. P. Jr, K. V. D. Mococho, M. M. Gozon, and J. B. Diadula, "Assessment of reading comprehension skills of senior high school ALS learners: basis for school reading progress program," *International Journal of Research and Review*, vol. 10, no. 7, pp. 41–52, 2023, doi: 10.52403/ijrr.20230708.
- [21] T. Turkben, "Examination of classroom writing practices in the context of process-based approach to teaching writing," *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, vol. 17, pp. 619–644, 2021, doi: 10.17263/jlls.903525.
- [22] A. Chaudhary and S. Al Zahrani, "Error analysis in the written compositions of EFL students: a classroom study," *International Journal of English Linguistics*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 357–366, 2020, doi: 10.5539/ijel.v10n2p357.
- [23] C. S. L. Fluminhan, C. S. Murgo, and A. Fluminhan, "Feedback as an evaluative and motivational tool in the process of acquisition of a foreign language," *Cadernos de Linguagem e Sociedade*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 43–58, 2018, doi: 10.26512/lc.v19i2.16810.
- [24] C. Sabio, "Recast and explicit corrective feedback among language teachers and learners," *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, vol. 7, no. 8, pp. 682–692, 2023, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.7750452.
- [25] C. Jaime and M. Limpot, "Constructivist learning environment and communication competence of college students: mediating effect of language learning motivation," *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 321–328, 2023, doi: doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8325960.
- [26] R. A. Labarrete, "Scaffolding writing skill in the K-12 curriculum," *PUPIL: International Journal of Teaching, Education and Learning*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 205–219, 2019, doi: 10.20319/pijtel.2019.31.205219.
- [27] N. Aktaş and H. Akşol, "Effect of digital writing workshop activities on writing motivation and development of story writing skills," *International Journal of Progressive Education*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 270–287, Jun. 2020, doi: 10.29329/ijpe.2020.248.20.
- [28] O. L. Chidiebele, E. J. Nnadi, and A. Anthony, "Utilization of educational programmes in reformation of prison inmates in Nigeria," *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 86–91, 2017, doi: 10.20448/journal.522.2017.32.86.91.
- [29] T. Jacobi, "Writing for change: engaging juveniles through alternative literacy education," *Journal of Correctional Education*, vol. 59, no. 2, pp. 71–93, 2008, [Online]. Available: http://oxfordsfh.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/oxford?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=article&sid=ProQ:ProQ%253Aeric&atitle=Writing+for+Change%253A+Engaging+Juveniles+through+Alternative+Literacy+Education&title=Journal+of+Co
- [30] H. A. Oesterreich and S. McNie Flores, "Learning to c: visual arts education as strengths based practice in juvenile correction facilities," *Journal of Correctional Education*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 146–163, 2009.





- [31] R. G. S. Jr *et al.*, "Sa likod sang rehas: educational needs of persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) as the basis for an extension program," *International Journal of Innovation Scientific Research and Review*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 3851–3855, 2023.
- [32] D. Macomber *et al.*, "Education in juvenile detention facilities in the state of connecticut: a glance at the system.," *Journal of correctional education (Glen Mills, Pa.)*, vol. 61, no. 3, pp. 223–261, 2010. [Online]. Available: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26379367%0Ahttp://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=PMC4569007>
- [33] R. O. Azar and R. O. Azarcon, "Education behind bars: an analysis of the ALS program of the BulSU extension services office education behind bars: an analysis of the alternative learning system program of the bulacan state university extension services office," *Joint AARE-NZARE Conference*, pp. 1–11, 2014.
- [34] M. B. Ucab and R. A. Luzano, "Lived experiences of alternative learning system (ALS) completers," *International Journal of Research Publications*, vol. 125, no. 1, May 2023, doi: 10.47119/ijrp1001251520234987.
- [35] Department of Education, "ALS for lifelong learning," govph. Accessed: Mar. 01, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.deped.gov.ph/als-programs/>
- [36] United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural, Organization (UNESCO), "New methodology shows that 258 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school," unesco. Accessed: Mar. 01, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://uis.unesco.org/>
- [37] M. P. Vito, A. E. Niones, and D. V. Dellosa, "Factors Influencing out-of-school youth in municipality of clarin, bohol," *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 6, pp. 1023–1025, 2018, doi: 10.22161/ijels.3.6.16.
- [38] UNESCO, "Global alliance for literacy within the framework of lifelong learning (GAL)," unesco. Accessed: Mar. 01, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/literacy/global-alliance>
- [39] J. P. Cayabas, C. L. C. Codod, D. A. Sumeg-Ang, and E. P. Lacaben, "Contributions and partnership strategies of external stakeholders in the implementation of the alternative learning system in bontoc district: insights from teachers," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, vol. 22, no. 7, pp. 454–472, 2023, doi: 10.26803/ijlter.22.7.24.
- [40] R. V. Isidro, R. Oberio, and J. P. J. Petrola, "Conquering the experiences of pain, boredom and despair among selected incarcerated mothers through alternative learning system activities," *International Journal of Public Health Science*, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 303–309, 2022, doi: 10.11591/ijphs.v11i1.21067.

BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Rufo A. Labarrete     is an associate professor of the College of Education of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Leyte, the Philippines where he teaches Professional Education courses such as The Teacher and the School Curriculum and Assessment in Learning. He obtained his baccalaureate degree in secondary education major in English language from the Leyte Normal University in 2001 and completed his master's degree in English Language Arts from the Philippine Normal University in 2006. In 2020, he graduated his Doctor of Philosophy in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, the Philippines. He has written several papers in the areas of alternative learning delivery and pedagogy. He can be contacted at email: rufo.labarrete@lnu.edu.ph.



Jocylen A. Tiopes     is an assistant professor of the College of Education of the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City, Leyte, the Philippines where she teaches Professional Education courses such as The Teaching Profession and Field Study courses. She earned her master's degree major in reading at the Holy Infant College, Tacloban City, Leyte, the Philippines and her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Programs Management from the Eastern Visayas State University, Tacloban City, Leyte, the Philippines. She had presented numerous papers in various international conferences and is interested in conducting studies on pedagogy and reading. She can be contacted at email: tiopesjocylen@lnu.edu.ph.