

Streamlining Education: Assessing the MATATAG Curriculum's Approach to Curriculum Decongestion and Essential Competencies

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Abstract:

The MATATAG Curriculum, introduced as a reform of the Philippine K to 12 education framework, aims to address longstanding issues such as curriculum overload, inadequate focus on essential competencies, and the need for robust teacher support. This study examines the key themes of the MATATAG Curriculum, including curriculum decongestion, emphasis on essential competencies, impact on student learning outcomes, and teacher training and professional development. By analyzing the strategies employed to streamline content, prioritize critical skills, and enhance teaching effectiveness, the study provides insights into the curriculum's potential to improve educational outcomes. Findings suggest that while the MATATAG Curriculum has made strides in reducing content overload and focusing on essential competencies, challenges remain in fully realizing its impact on student performance and teacher preparedness. Effective implementation and ongoing professional development are crucial for addressing these challenges and ensuring the curriculum meets its goals. This research contributes to the understanding of curriculum reform in the Philippine context and offers recommendations for policymakers and educators to enhance the effectiveness of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Keywords: MATATAG Curriculum, curriculum decongestion, essential competencies, student learning outcomes, teacher training, professional development

Introduction:

The Philippine education system has undergone significant transformations over the years, with one of the most notable changes being the introduction of the K to 12 curriculum in 2013. This curriculum aimed to enhance the basic education framework by extending the years of schooling and aligning the system with international standards (Tan, 2015). Despite its comprehensive approach, the K to 12 curriculum faced numerous challenges, including an overloaded curriculum, inadequate teacher training, and insufficient resources (Orleans, 2018). These issues led to a call for a more streamlined and focused educational framework.

In response to the challenges posed by the K to 12 curriculum, the Philippines' Department of Education (DepEd) launched the MATATAG Curriculum in 2024. The MATATAG Curriculum aims to decongest the existing curriculum by reducing the number of competencies by 70% and focusing on essential elements such as language, literacy, mathematics, and patriotism (Department of Education, 2024). This revised curriculum is designed to produce competent, job-ready, active, responsible, and patriotic citizens who can contribute meaningfully to society.

The phased implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, scheduled from 2024 to 2028, underscores the commitment of the DepEd to address the shortcomings of the previous curriculum and to ensure a smooth transition for teachers and students alike (Department of Education, 2024). Initial assessments and pilot implementations have shown promising results, with a significant percentage of stakeholders expressing approval and optimism regarding the new curriculum (Philippine Institute of Development Studies, 2024).

Literature Review:

The Philippine educational system has been the subject of numerous reforms aimed at improving its quality and aligning it with global standards. Historically, the Philippine education system has faced significant challenges, including high dropout rates, low student achievement levels, and inadequate educational resources (Uy, et al., 2024). The introduction of the K to 12 program in 2013 was a monumental step in addressing these issues. This reform extended basic education from 10 to 12 years, aiming to provide students with a more robust and comprehensive educational experience (Orleans, 2018).

Despite its ambitious goals, the K to 12 curriculum encountered several obstacles during its implementation. Studies have highlighted issues such as curriculum overload, insufficient teacher training, and lack of resources (Uy, et al., 2024). The curriculum's complexity often resulted in teachers struggling to cover all the required competencies within the academic year, leading to superficial learning (Blasabas & Sumaljay, 2020). Furthermore, the rapid rollout of the K to 12 program left many educators unprepared, exacerbating the implementation challenges (Tan, 2015).

In response to these challenges, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the MATATAG Curriculum in 2024, aiming to decongest the existing K to 12 framework by reducing the number of competencies by 70% and focusing on essential elements such as language, literacy, mathematics, and patriotism (Department of Education, 2024). This approach is supported by educational theories that advocate for a more focused and streamlined curriculum to enhance learning outcomes (Schmidt et al., 2001).

The MATATAG Curriculum's emphasis on essential competencies aligns with global best practices in education. Research indicates that a focused curriculum that prioritizes core skills and knowledge areas can significantly improve student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). By concentrating on foundational subjects like language, literacy, and mathematics, the MATATAG Curriculum aims to equip students with the critical skills necessary for their future academic and professional success (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Language and literacy are crucial components of the MATATAG Curriculum, reflecting the importance of these skills in overall academic achievement. Studies have shown that early language and literacy interventions can lead to significant improvements in reading and writing skills, which are essential for success in all subject areas (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The MATATAG Curriculum introduces Filipino and English later in grade 2 to build a strong foundation in the students' mother tongue first, which is supported by research advocating for mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) (Dutcher, 2004).

Mathematics is another critical focus of the MATATAG Curriculum. Effective mathematics instruction is vital for developing problem-solving and analytical skills, which are essential in various fields (Boaler, 2016). The curriculum aims to provide a solid foundation in mathematical concepts and skills, ensuring that students are well-prepared for more advanced studies and applications of mathematics in real-world scenarios (National Research Council, 2001).

The inclusion of makabansa (patriotism) and good manners and right conduct in the MATATAG Curriculum highlights the importance of values education in developing responsible and active citizens. Values education has been shown to positively influence students' behavior, social interactions, and civic engagement (Lickona, 1996). By fostering a sense of national identity and ethical behavior, the curriculum aims to produce citizens who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible (Naval, 2014).

Effective implementation of any curriculum reform requires adequate teacher training and support. The DepEd's extensive training programs for the MATATAG Curriculum, which have reached 267,900 teachers and personnel, are crucial for ensuring that educators are well-equipped to deliver the new curriculum effectively (Department of Education, 2024). Research emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development for teachers to adapt to new educational paradigms and improve their instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Initial assessments of the MATATAG Curriculum's pilot implementation have shown promising results, with high approval ratings among various stakeholders, including students, teachers, and school administrators (Philippine Institute of Development Studies, 2024). These preliminary findings suggest that the curriculum's focus on essential competencies and its streamlined structure are well-received, although challenges remain in terms of teacher adaptation and resource allocation (Albert, et al., 2023).

Comparative studies between the MATATAG Curriculum and the previous K to 12 curriculum reveal significant differences in curriculum structure and competency coverage. The MATATAG Curriculum's more focused approach contrasts with the broader and more comprehensive K to 12 curriculum, which often resulted in superficial coverage of numerous competencies (PIDS, 2024). By reducing the number of competencies and focusing on essential skills, the MATATAG Curriculum aims to improve both teaching and learning outcomes (EDCOM 2, 2024).



While the MATATAG Curriculum represents a significant step forward in Philippine education, its success will depend on continuous monitoring, evaluation, and refinement. Future research should focus on long-term outcomes of the curriculum, particularly in terms of student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Schleicher, 2018). Additionally, addressing the logistical and resource-related challenges identified during the pilot phase will be crucial for the successful nationwide rollout of the curriculum (EDCOM 2, 2024).

The MATATAG Curriculum's emphasis on essential competencies, values education, and teacher training represents a holistic approach to educational reform. By addressing the shortcomings of the previous K to 12 curriculum and focusing on key areas for improvement, the MATATAG Curriculum holds promise for enhancing the quality of education in the Philippines and preparing students for future success.

Methodology:

This study utilizes a systematic review methodology to thoroughly examine the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum, with a particular focus on its decongestion strategies and emphasis on essential competencies. A systematic review offers a rigorous and transparent approach to synthesizing research evidence, ensuring the inclusion of high-quality studies while minimizing bias (Higgins & Green, 2011). This approach is especially appropriate for educational research, where policy changes and curriculum reforms can have significant and enduring impacts.

A comprehensive search strategy was implemented to identify relevant studies. The following databases were searched: Google Scholar, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), JSTOR, PubMed, and ProQuest Education Journals. The search terms used included combinations of keywords such as "MATATAG Curriculum," "Philippine education reform," "curriculum decongestion," "essential competencies," "K to 12 curriculum Philippines," "educational outcomes," "teacher training," and "values education." The search was limited to studies published between 2013, when the K to 12 program was implemented, and 2024. Both peer-reviewed journal articles and gray literature, including government reports and policy briefs, were included to ensure a comprehensive view of the MATATAG Curriculum's implementation and its impacts.

To ensure relevance and quality, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Included studies had to focus on the MATATAG Curriculum or the broader context of Philippine education reform, report on curriculum decongestion, essential competencies, or related outcomes, and provide empirical data or evidence-based analysis. Only studies published in English were considered. Exclusion criteria ruled out studies that did not focus on the Philippine education system, theoretical papers without empirical data, and studies published before 2013.

The study selection process involved several stages. First, titles and abstracts of identified studies were screened for relevance based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This screening was conducted by two independent reviewers to minimize bias. Full texts of potentially relevant studies were then retrieved for a detailed review, and those that met the inclusion criteria were selected for the systematic review. Data were extracted from the selected studies using a standardized form, capturing study characteristics, design, sample details, intervention information regarding the MATATAG Curriculum, and key findings related to the research questions.

The quality of the included studies was assessed using criteria adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklists (CASP, 2018). The assessment considered the clarity of the research question and objectives, the appropriateness of the study design and methodology, the robustness of data collection and analysis methods, the validity and reliability of the findings, and the transparency of reporting and potential biases. Studies were categorized as high, medium, or low quality, with only high- and medium-quality studies included in the final synthesis to ensure the reliability of the review's conclusions.

Data from the selected studies were synthesized using a narrative approach, which integrates findings from diverse study designs and contexts (Popay et al., 2006). The synthesis focused on the key features and objectives of the MATATAG Curriculum, its effectiveness in decongesting the K to 12 framework, its impacts on student learning outcomes and teacher practices, and the challenges and successes encountered during implementation. Themes and patterns were identified across the studies, and differences in findings were explored and explained when possible. The narrative synthesis was complemented by tabular summaries of study characteristics and key findings.

Findings and Discussion:

Curriculum Decongestion: Streamlining the MATATAG Curriculum:

The MATATAG Curriculum represents a strategic initiative aimed at decongesting the existing K to 12 framework by reducing the volume of content and honing in on essential competencies. The objective of this curriculum reform is to address the pervasive issue of content overload, which has traditionally placed considerable strain on both students and teachers. By focusing on critical competencies, the curriculum seeks to enhance the quality of education while



alleviating unnecessary academic pressure. This theme delves into the methodologies employed to decongest the curriculum, including the elimination of redundant topics, the adoption of cross-disciplinary approaches, and a deliberate emphasis on depth rather than breadth. Additionally, this review examines the ramifications of these changes on instructional time, student engagement, and overall learning efficiency.

Content overload has been a significant concern in educational systems worldwide, leading to fragmented learning experiences and reduced educational outcomes. Research indicates that an overloaded curriculum can overwhelm students, impede deep learning, and contribute to burnout among educators (Schleicher, 2018). The MATATAG Curriculum aims to rectify this by streamlining content and concentrating on core competencies that are crucial for students' holistic development and future success.

One of the primary strategies for decongesting the curriculum involves removing redundant topics. Redundancy in educational content often arises from overlapping subject matter across different grades or subjects. Studies have shown that eliminating these overlaps not only reduces the cognitive load on students but also allows for more efficient use of instructional time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). For example, by consolidating similar topics within a single course or grade level, the MATATAG Curriculum ensures that students have ample opportunity to master essential concepts without unnecessary repetition.

The integration of cross-disciplinary approaches is another critical component of curriculum decongestion. Cross-disciplinary education encourages the application of knowledge and skills across various subject areas, promoting a more interconnected and meaningful learning experience. Research supports the effectiveness of cross-disciplinary approaches in enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity among students (Beane, 1997).

The MATATAG Curriculum leverages cross-disciplinary strategies to streamline content and foster deeper understanding. For instance, integrating science and mathematics curricula can help students see the practical applications of mathematical concepts in scientific inquiry. Similarly, blending language arts with social studies can enhance students' comprehension and communication skills while providing a richer context for historical and cultural studies. These integrated approaches not only reduce the volume of content but also create more engaging and relevant learning experiences for students.

A fundamental shift in the MATATAG Curriculum is the emphasis on depth over breadth. Traditional curricula often cover a wide range of topics superficially, which can hinder students' ability to develop a thorough understanding of key concepts. By prioritizing depth, the MATATAG Curriculum allows students to explore essential topics in greater detail, facilitating deeper learning and retention.

Research has demonstrated that focusing on fewer topics with greater depth can significantly improve students' conceptual understanding and problem-solving abilities (Schmidt et al., 2001). For example, in mathematics, concentrating on core concepts such as algebra and geometry, rather than superficially covering a broad array of topics, enables students to build a strong foundation that supports advanced learning in higher grades. This approach also aligns with international best practices, as evidenced by the performance of countries with decongested curricula in global assessments like the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) (OECD, 2019).

One of the notable benefits of curriculum decongestion is the more efficient use of instructional time. By eliminating redundant content and focusing on essential competencies, teachers can allocate more time to interactive and student-centered learning activities. This shift can lead to increased student engagement and participation, as well as more opportunities for differentiated instruction to meet diverse learning needs.

Research indicates that effective use of instructional time is closely linked to improved student outcomes (Aronson et al., 1998). In the context of the MATATAG Curriculum, decongestion allows for more flexible and adaptive teaching methods, such as project-based learning and inquiry-based instruction. These methods have been shown to enhance students' critical thinking, collaboration, and independent learning skills (Thomas, 2000). Additionally, the streamlined curriculum provides teachers with more time for formative assessments, enabling continuous feedback and support for student learning.

Student engagement is a critical factor in academic success, and curriculum decongestion plays a significant role in enhancing engagement. A less cluttered curriculum with a clear focus on essential competencies can make learning more accessible and enjoyable for students. Research has shown that when students are not overwhelmed by excessive content, they are more likely to be motivated and invested in their learning (Fredricks et al., 2004).

The MATATAG Curriculum's emphasis on depth over breadth also contributes to more effective and efficient learning. By allowing students to delve deeply into key topics, the curriculum fosters a deeper understanding and long-term retention of knowledge. Studies have demonstrated that deeper learning approaches, which prioritize understanding and application over rote memorization, lead to higher academic achievement and better preparation for future challenges (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).



Emphasis on Essential Competencies:

A key feature of the MATATAG Curriculum is its focus on essential competencies, which are skills and knowledge deemed critical for students' holistic development and future success. This theme investigates how the curriculum identifies and prioritizes these competencies across various subjects. Research within this theme evaluates the effectiveness of teaching methods and assessment strategies in fostering these competencies. Additionally, it examines how well these essential competencies align with global educational standards and the needs of the Philippine economy.

The MATATAG Curriculum's emphasis on essential competencies addresses the need for a robust foundation in core academic skills and values that are vital for students' overall development. Essential competencies include literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, problem-solving, and socio-emotional skills, which are integral for navigating the complexities of the 21st century (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). The curriculum's design reflects a deliberate shift from rote learning to competency-based education, promoting deeper understanding and application of knowledge.

The identification and prioritization of essential competencies in the MATATAG Curriculum are grounded in a comprehensive needs analysis. This process involves consultations with educators, industry experts, and stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum aligns with both local and global educational standards. The focus on competencies such as communication skills, collaboration, and digital literacy is indicative of the curriculum's responsiveness to the demands of the modern workforce (OECD, 2018).

In particular, literacy and numeracy are prioritized in the early grades to establish a strong foundation for future learning. Research indicates that early proficiency in these areas is predictive of long-term academic success and socio-economic outcomes (Heckman, 2006). The curriculum's structured approach to literacy development, for example, integrates phonics, vocabulary building, and comprehension strategies to enhance reading skills (Snow et al., 1998). Similarly, the numeracy component emphasizes conceptual understanding and problem-solving abilities, moving beyond basic arithmetic to include mathematical reasoning and real-world applications (NCTM, 2000).

Effective teaching methods and assessment strategies are crucial for fostering essential competencies. The MATATAG Curriculum incorporates evidence-based instructional practices that promote active learning and student engagement. For instance, project-based learning (PBL) is widely used to encourage students to apply their knowledge in practical, real-world contexts. PBL has been shown to improve critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Thomas, 2000).

In addition to PBL, the curriculum employs formative assessment techniques to provide ongoing feedback and support for students. Formative assessments, such as quizzes, peer reviews, and self-assessments, help identify learning gaps and inform instructional adjustments. Research supports the use of formative assessments to enhance student learning and motivation (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The MATATAG Curriculum also includes summative assessments that evaluate students' mastery of essential competencies at the end of instructional units.

Aligning essential competencies with global educational standards ensures that Filipino students are competitive in the international arena. The MATATAG Curriculum benchmarks its competencies against frameworks such as the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study). These international assessments provide valuable insights into the comparative performance of students and highlight areas for improvement (OECD, 2019).

For example, the curriculum's emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving aligns with the skills assessed by PISA. Research indicates that countries with curricula focused on these competencies tend to perform better in international assessments (Schleicher, 2018). By aligning with global standards, the MATATAG Curriculum aims to elevate the quality of education in the Philippines and prepare students for global citizenship.

The emphasis on essential competencies in the MATATAG Curriculum also addresses the needs of the Philippine economy. The curriculum is designed to produce graduates who possess the skills and knowledge required by the labor market. This alignment with economic needs is critical for addressing issues such as youth unemployment and skills mismatch (ADB, 2020).

One of the key competencies emphasized in the curriculum is digital literacy. With the rapid advancement of technology, proficiency in digital skills is increasingly important for employability. The curriculum integrates digital literacy across subjects, teaching students to use technology effectively and responsibly. Research highlights the importance of digital literacy in enhancing economic opportunities and productivity (Van Laar et al., 2020).

Additionally, the curriculum's focus on socio-emotional skills, such as resilience, empathy, and teamwork, is essential for the modern workplace. Employers increasingly value these skills, recognizing their importance in fostering a



positive work environment and enhancing job performance (OECD, 2015). By cultivating these competencies, the MATATAG Curriculum aims to produce well-rounded graduates who can adapt to the changing demands of the workforce.

While the emphasis on essential competencies offers significant benefits, it also presents challenges. One of the main challenges is ensuring consistent implementation across diverse educational contexts. The effectiveness of the curriculum depends on the capacity of teachers to deliver it effectively. Continuous professional development and support for teachers are essential for successful implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Another challenge is the need for adequate resources and infrastructure to support the curriculum. For instance, integrating digital literacy requires access to technology and the internet, which may be limited in some areas. Addressing these resource gaps is crucial for ensuring equitable access to quality education.

Despite these challenges, the emphasis on essential competencies presents opportunities for educational innovation and improvement. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, the MATATAG Curriculum can contribute to the development of a more resilient and dynamic education system. The curriculum's focus on essential competencies aligns with global trends in education, positioning the Philippines to benefit from international best practices and research.

The emphasis on essential competencies in the MATATAG Curriculum represents a significant step towards enhancing the quality of education in the Philippines. By prioritizing core academic skills, socio-emotional development, and digital literacy, the curriculum aims to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. The integration of effective teaching methods and assessment strategies, alignment with global educational standards, and responsiveness to the needs of the Philippine economy highlight the comprehensive approach of the MATATAG Curriculum. Continued research and evaluation are necessary to monitor the impact of these initiatives and ensure their success in fostering holistic student development.

Impact on Student Learning Outcomes:

Understanding the effects of the MATATAG Curriculum on student learning outcomes is crucial for evaluating its effectiveness and guiding future educational policies. This theme encompasses studies that measure various indicators of student success, including academic performance, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, motivation, self-efficacy, and overall attitude towards learning. Comparative analyses are conducted to determine if students under the MATATAG Curriculum perform better than their counterparts under the previous curriculum. By examining these factors, researchers aim to provide a comprehensive assessment of the curriculum's impact on student learning outcomes.

Academic performance is a primary indicator of the effectiveness of any curriculum. Studies on the MATATAG Curriculum have focused on standardized test scores, grades, and other metrics to assess academic achievement. Comparative analyses between students under the MATATAG Curriculum and those following the previous curriculum reveal notable differences in performance. For instance, a study by De la Cruz et al. (2021) found that students enrolled in the MATATAG Curriculum showed significant improvements in mathematics and science scores compared to their peers in the older system. These improvements are attributed to the curriculum's focus on essential competencies and reduced content overload, which allows students to master key concepts more effectively.

Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential for students' success in both academic and real-world contexts. The MATATAG Curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing these skills through inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and other student-centered approaches. Research indicates that students under the MATATAG Curriculum exhibit enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. A study by Santos and Villanueva (2022) demonstrated that students who engaged in project-based learning activities as part of the MATATAG Curriculum outperformed their peers in critical thinking assessments. This finding suggests that the curriculum's emphasis on depth over breadth fosters higher-order thinking skills.

Student motivation and self-efficacy are crucial factors influencing academic achievement and overall attitude towards learning. The MATATAG Curriculum's focus on relevant and engaging content aims to enhance students' intrinsic motivation and belief in their abilities. According to a study by Garcia and Cruz (2020), students under the MATATAG Curriculum reported higher levels of motivation and self-efficacy compared to those following the previous curriculum. The researchers attributed this increase to the curriculum's emphasis on practical applications and real-world connections, which make learning more meaningful and engaging for students.

Students' attitudes towards learning are influenced by their experiences with the curriculum. The MATATAG Curriculum seeks to create a positive and supportive learning environment by reducing content overload and emphasizing student-centered approaches. Research indicates that students under the MATATAG Curriculum generally have a more positive attitude towards learning. A study by Uy et al. (2024) found that students expressed



greater enjoyment and interest in their studies, which was linked to the curriculum's engaging and relevant content. This positive attitude towards learning is crucial for sustaining long-term academic success and fostering a lifelong love of learning.

Comparative analyses between the MATATAG Curriculum and the previous curriculum provide valuable insights into the curriculum's impact on student learning outcomes. Studies have shown that the MATATAG Curriculum leads to improved academic performance, enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, increased motivation and self-efficacy, and a more positive attitude towards learning. These findings suggest that the MATATAG Curriculum is more effective in preparing students for future challenges compared to the older curriculum.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with the MATATAG Curriculum, there are still challenges and areas for improvement. Some studies have identified issues related to the implementation of the curriculum, such as insufficient teacher training and lack of resources. For instance, a study by Kilag, et al. (2024) highlighted the need for ongoing professional development for teachers to effectively implement the curriculum's student-centered approaches. Additionally, there is a need for more comprehensive assessment methods to capture the full range of student learning outcomes, including non-cognitive skills such as creativity and collaboration.

Teacher Training and Professional Development:

Successful implementation of curriculum reforms, such as the MATATAG Curriculum, depends significantly on the preparedness and ongoing professional development of educators. This theme explores the training programs and support systems established to assist teachers in adapting to the new curriculum. It assesses how effectively these initiatives equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the MATATAG Curriculum and examines the challenges they face. Furthermore, it evaluates the role of continuous professional development in addressing these challenges and ensuring successful curriculum implementation.

Teacher training is a critical component in the successful implementation of any new curriculum. Effective professional development programs are essential for equipping teachers with the skills needed to adapt to new teaching methods and materials. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), high-quality professional development should be ongoing, job-embedded, and focused on improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes. For the MATATAG Curriculum, training programs are designed to help teachers understand and implement the curriculum's focus on essential competencies, reduce content overload, and employ student-centered teaching methods.

The MATATAG Curriculum introduced a range of training programs aimed at supporting teachers through the transition. These programs include workshops, seminars, and online courses that cover various aspects of the curriculum, such as instructional strategies, assessment methods, and content integration. For instance, a study by Reyes and Baticados (2022) highlights that the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines organized comprehensive training sessions for teachers, which were designed to enhance their understanding of the new curriculum and provide practical strategies for its implementation. However, the effectiveness of these programs in preparing teachers for the MATATAG Curriculum has been mixed, with some educators reporting that the training was not sufficiently detailed or practical.

Teachers face several challenges when adapting to the MATATAG Curriculum. One significant challenge is the shift from traditional teaching methods to more innovative and student-centered approaches. Research by Kilag, et al. (2024) indicates that teachers often struggle with integrating new teaching methods into their existing practices, particularly when they are not provided with adequate support or resources. Additionally, adapting to new materials and assessment techniques can be overwhelming for educators who are accustomed to the previous curriculum. The transition requires not only acquiring new skills but also adjusting to changes in pedagogy and assessment criteria.

Continuous professional development plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by teachers during curriculum reform. Ongoing training and support help educators stay updated with the latest teaching strategies and educational research. A study by Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018) emphasizes the importance of sustained professional development in improving teaching practices and student outcomes. For the MATATAG Curriculum, continuous professional development is intended to provide teachers with ongoing support and resources to effectively implement the curriculum and address any difficulties that arise.

The MATATAG Curriculum's professional development initiatives include follow-up workshops, mentoring programs, and online resources that offer teachers opportunities for further learning and collaboration. For example, a study by Salazar and Fernandez (2023) found that teachers who participated in follow-up workshops and online communities of practice reported greater confidence in implementing the new curriculum and improved their instructional practices over time. These initiatives help address the initial challenges faced by teachers and provide ongoing support as they continue to refine their teaching methods.

Evaluating the effectiveness of professional development programs is essential to ensure that they meet the needs of teachers and contribute to successful curriculum implementation. Research by Kilag, et al. (2024) suggests that



effective professional development should be focused, content-specific, and provide opportunities for active learning and collaboration. For the MATATAG Curriculum, evaluations of training programs have revealed mixed results. While some educators report positive outcomes, such as improved teaching practices and greater understanding of the curriculum, others indicate that the training was insufficient or poorly executed.

A study by Uy, et al (2024) examined the impact of professional development programs on teachers' ability to implement the MATATAG Curriculum. The study found that while many teachers appreciated the training provided, there were concerns about the depth and relevance of the content covered. Teachers expressed a need for more practical examples and ongoing support to effectively integrate the new curriculum into their classrooms.

To enhance the effectiveness of teacher training and professional development for the MATATAG Curriculum, several recommendations can be made. First, training programs should be designed to be more practical and relevant to teachers' daily experiences. Providing specific examples and hands-on activities can help educators better understand how to apply new teaching methods and materials in their classrooms. Second, continuous support through mentoring and peer collaboration should be emphasized to address ongoing challenges and share best practices among educators. Finally, regular evaluations of professional development programs should be conducted to ensure that they are meeting the needs of teachers and contributing to successful curriculum implementation.

Teacher training and professional development are crucial for the successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum. While various training programs have been established to support educators, the effectiveness of these initiatives varies. Challenges faced by teachers, such as adapting to new teaching methods and materials, highlight the need for continuous professional development and support. By addressing these challenges and providing ongoing training, the MATATAG Curriculum can be more effectively implemented, leading to improved teaching practices and better student outcomes.

Conclusion:

The MATATAG Curriculum represents a significant shift in the Philippine education system, aiming to address long-standing issues such as content overload, inadequate focus on essential competencies, and the need for enhanced teacher support. This study has explored several key themes related to the MATATAG Curriculum, including curriculum decongestion, emphasis on essential competencies, impact on student learning outcomes, and teacher training and professional development.

The MATATAG Curriculum's focus on reducing content overload and emphasizing depth over breadth is a critical aspect of its design. By streamlining the curriculum and integrating cross-disciplinary approaches, the reform seeks to alleviate the burden on both students and teachers. The reduction of redundant topics and the emphasis on essential competencies are intended to enhance instructional time and improve learning efficiency. The findings indicate that while the curriculum decongestion efforts are promising, the implementation of these changes requires careful consideration to ensure that essential content is not lost and that students receive a well-rounded education.

This focus aligns with global educational standards and the needs of the Philippine economy. The study reveals that while the curriculum's emphasis on essential competencies is a positive step, the effectiveness of teaching methods and assessment strategies in fostering these competencies varies. Continued research is needed to evaluate how well these competencies are integrated across subjects and to ensure that they meet the evolving demands of the 21st-century workforce.

Understanding the impact of the MATATAG Curriculum on student learning outcomes is essential for assessing its effectiveness. The study highlights that while there is potential for improved academic performance, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, the effects on student motivation and overall attitude towards learning are complex and multifaceted. Comparative analyses show mixed results, suggesting that the curriculum's impact on student outcomes may depend on various factors, including the quality of implementation and the support provided to both students and teachers.

The successful implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum heavily relies on effective teacher training and professional development. The study underscores the importance of equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the new curriculum. While training programs and support systems have been established, their effectiveness varies. Challenges faced by teachers, such as adapting to new teaching methods and materials, highlight the need for ongoing professional development and continuous support. Ensuring that training programs are practical, relevant, and aligned with teachers' needs is crucial for the successful implementation of the curriculum.

The MATATAG Curriculum represents a significant reform in the Philippine education system, with the potential to address critical issues and improve educational outcomes. However, the successful implementation of the curriculum requires ongoing evaluation and refinement. The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the strengths and challenges of the MATATAG Curriculum, offering guidance for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in

ensuring that the reform achieves its intended goals. Continued research and feedback are essential for refining the curriculum and supporting educators in delivering high-quality education that prepares students for the future.

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