

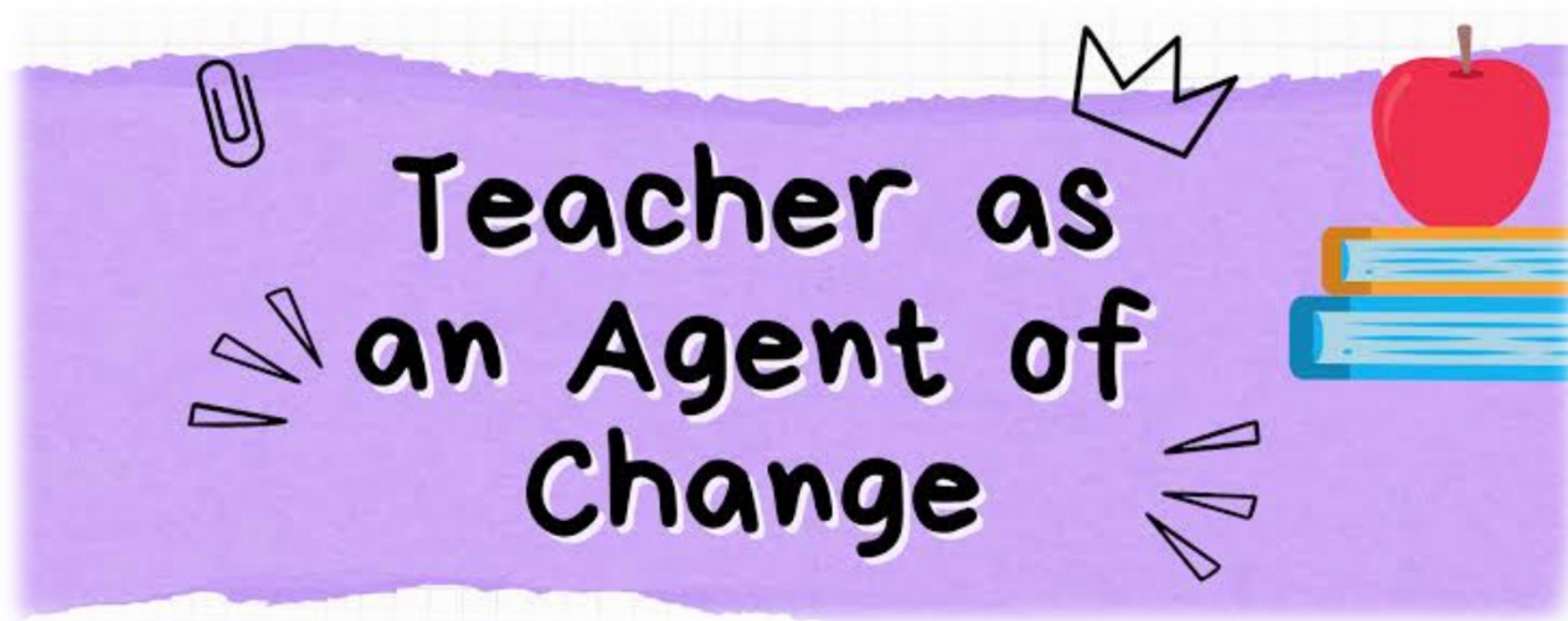
Teacher Agency in the Appropriation of an MTB-MLE Literacy Instruction Program in Remote Islands: Insights for Learning Recovery Initiatives

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“Inspiring Reforms that Transform Philippine Education”

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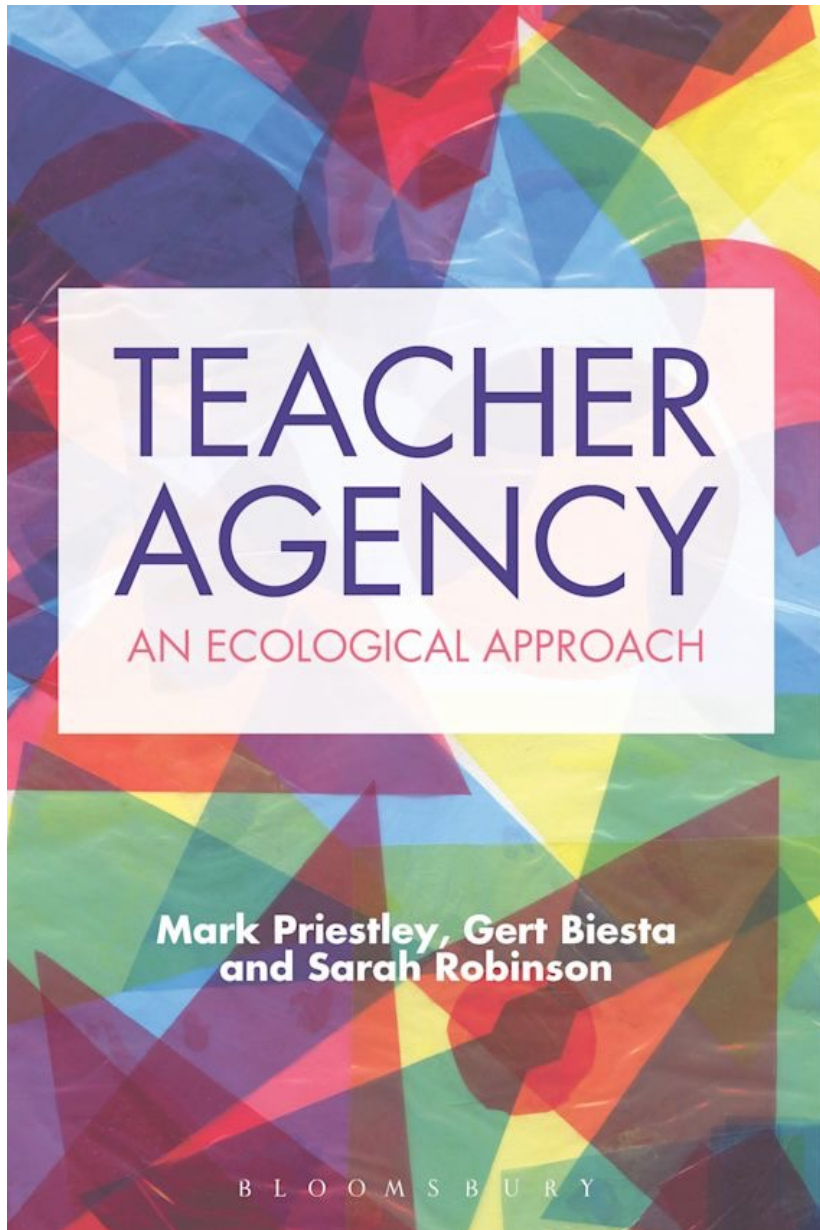
ginafbonior@su.edu.ph





<https://prepwithharshita.com/teacher-as-an-agent-of-change/>

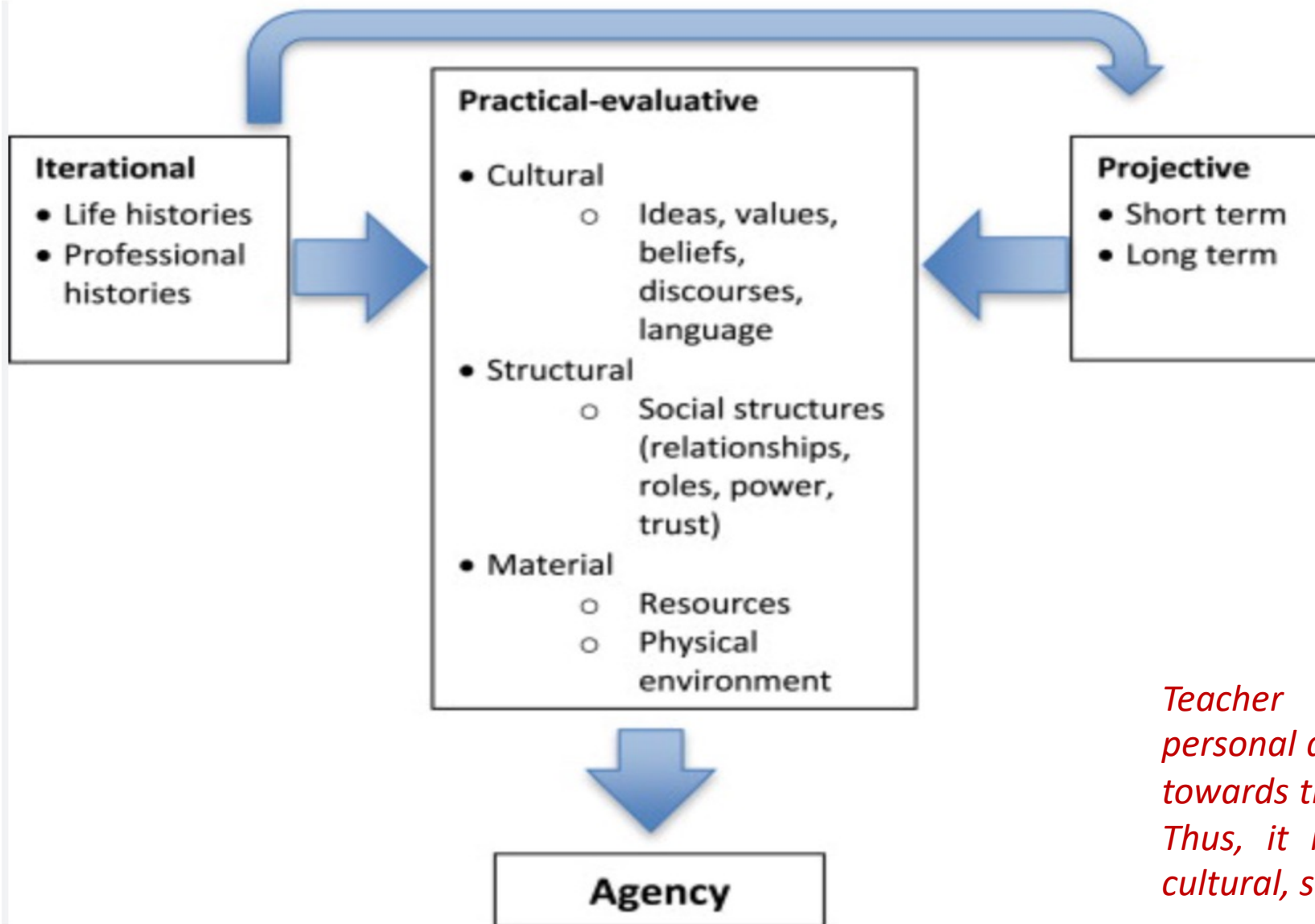




“Teacher agency is not something teachers can have; it is something they do – something achieved within “cultural and structural domains which frame teachers’ work” (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015).

Socially-mediated capacity of teachers to “critically shape their responses to problematic situations” (Biesta & Tedder, 2006).

“Actions people take **by means of their environment** rather than simply just acting in their environment.” These actions are the result an **interplay between individual effort, resources one has access to, and contextual or institutional influences** (Biesta & Tedder, 2007)



Teacher agency is informed by teachers' personal and professional experiences, oriented towards the future, and enacted in the present. Thus, it is constrained and/or supported by cultural, structural, and material resources.

Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. (2015).

Diskarte

creative problem-solving that emerges in the context of situational limitations, such as social constraints and inequality of power, in order to transcend these (Morales, 2017)



10,875 GIDAs

25.85% of all barangays

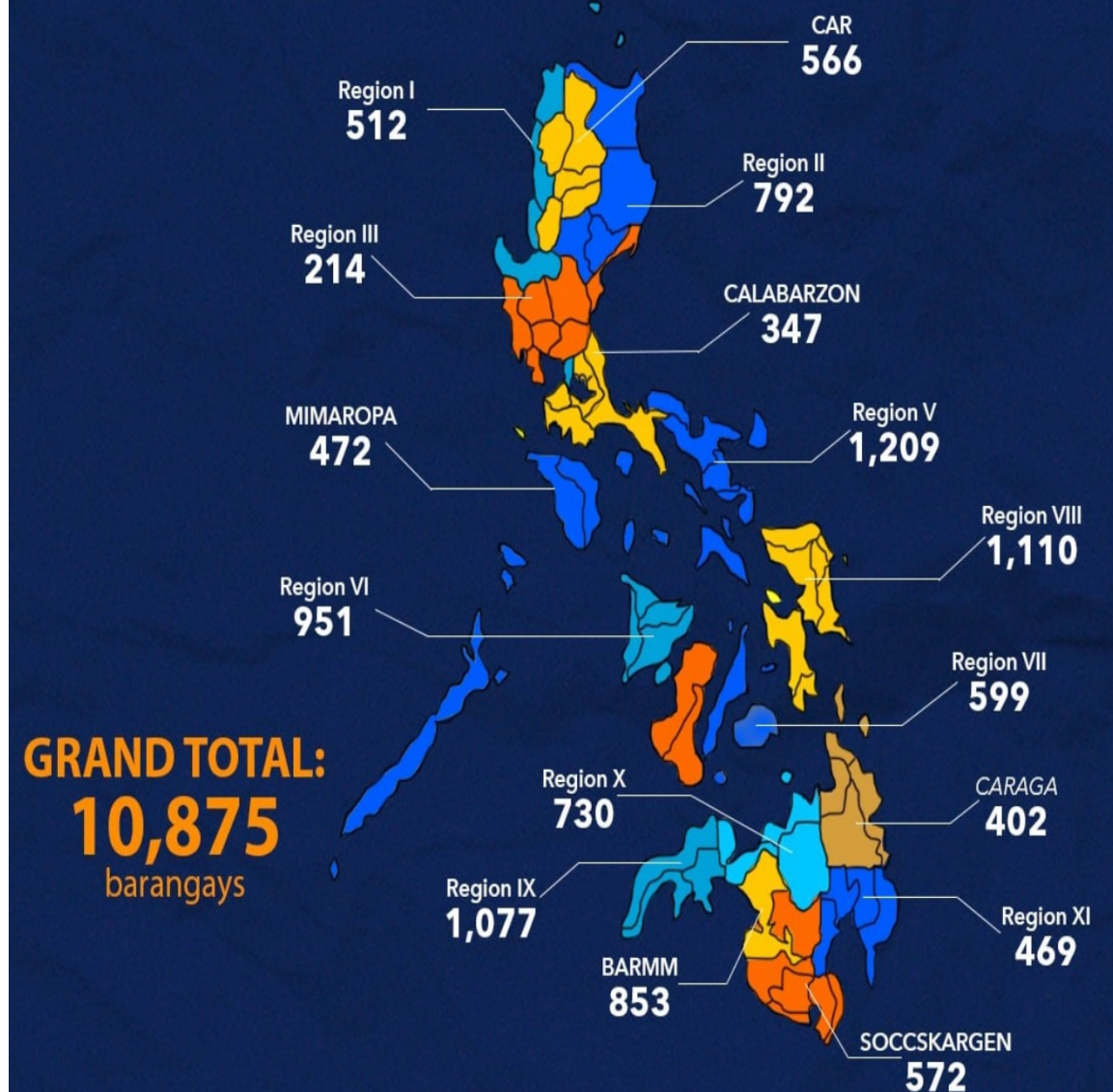
1,044 remote schools

86 extremely remote schools

Source: Basic Education
Development Plan 2030, p.51

Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA)

Number of barangays per region in the Philippines as of April 30, 2019



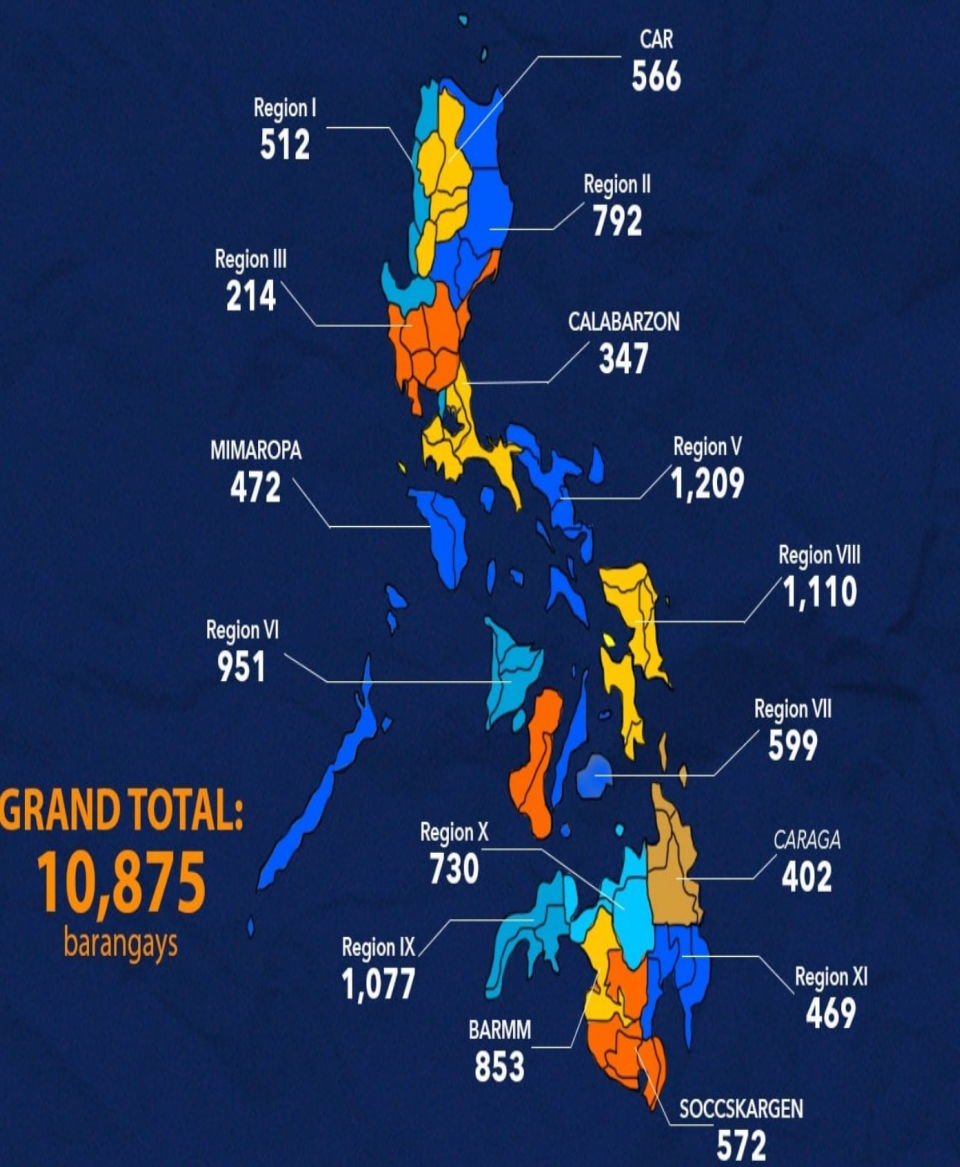
www.foi.gov.ph inquiry@foi.gov.ph

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Data from Department of Health (DOH)

Geographically-Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA)

Number of barangays per region in the Philippines as of April 30, 2019



GRAND TOTAL:
10,875
barangays

The remote island schools





REMOTENESS: High in one variable, i.e., either travel cost, or the travel time, or distance (Pante, Umali, & Ongkiko, 2015)



My Positionality

Program consultant

Have lived in an island all my life

Speak Sinugbuanong Binisaya

PhD Ed (Reading Education) student, UP Diliman

(Advisers: Dr. Eufrazio Abaya and Dr. Romylyn Metila, UP College of Education)



Why MTBMLE Literacy Instruction Program

COVERAGE: reached “over 1.8 million students from Kindergarten to Grade 3, trained over 19,000 teachers and school heads and provided over 10 million units of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) to 3,000 public elementary schools in the Philippines” (EDC, 2018, p.1).

CONCEPT: 1) teacher training on effective literacy instruction, 2) the provision of curriculum-based Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and quality supplementary reading materials, and 3) further capacitating school administrators and DepEd officials

COST: Estimated at PhP 1.9 billion at the completion of the five-year program (Lee-Brago, 2018)

CAUSE: In support of ECARP & MTB-MLE Program

CONTEXT: My region, my language, my engagement as consultant; Ease of entry

889,865

Priority schools of DepEd's Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) Program

1,803,429
Total Number of Students

53%
956,322
Male



47%
847,097
Female

Sources:

Basa Pilipinas Final Evaluation Report, 2018

Basa Pilipinas M&E Reports, 2013–2018

DepEd Basic Education Information System

BASA PILIPINAS RESULTS AT A GLANCE

IMPROVED READING SKILLS

Four years after Basa, Grade 2 learners have shown significant improvements in their oral reading fluency and reading comprehension skills in Filipino.

53% of Grade 2 learners met the DepEd fluency benchmark (40 wcpm), up from 45% before Basa intervention



The percentage of Grade 2 learners who met the comprehension benchmark or can answer 3 out of 5 questions correctly almost doubled to 40%



Grade 2 learners were able to read an additional 4.7 words correct per minute, correctly identify 5.9 more letter sounds and answer 14% more comprehension questions compared to other Grade 2 learners tested before Basa

IMPROVED READING INSTRUCTION

16,000 K–3 teachers trained on effective literacy practices



6,300 K–3 teachers and school heads received online post-training support on early grade reading

IMPROVED READING DELIVERY SYSTEMS

More than 3,400 school administrators equipped with tools and training to provide better instructional supervision to teachers



1,200 parents reached through community engagement seminars to support children's literacy

Strengthened local capacity of more than 500 DepEd personnel trained as K–3 language and literacy trainers

IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY READING MATERIALS

10.4 million units of teacher's guides, leveled readers, storybooks and other education aids developed, procured and distributed to nearly 16,000 K–3 classrooms

More than 2 million teaching and learning materials produced in two Mother Tongue languages—Ilokano and Sinugbuanong Binisaya



USD\$5 million leveraged from private sector partners to support provision of supplementary reading materials and school kits for K–3 students

Figure 3. Results at a Glance

USAID/PHILIPPINES BASA PILIPINAS PROGRAM FINAL PROJECT REPORT JANUARY 1, 2013 – JULY 31, 2018. Retrieved from [https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/3_USAID%20Basa%20Pilipinas%20Final%20Report%20\(Digital%20Version,%200LowRes-Quality\)_23JUL2018.pdf](https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/3_USAID%20Basa%20Pilipinas%20Final%20Report%20(Digital%20Version,%200LowRes-Quality)_23JUL2018.pdf)

If:



Teachers master effective literacy instruction practices



Schools have more books and high-quality materials to support learning



These practices are supported by a strong management system



Then:

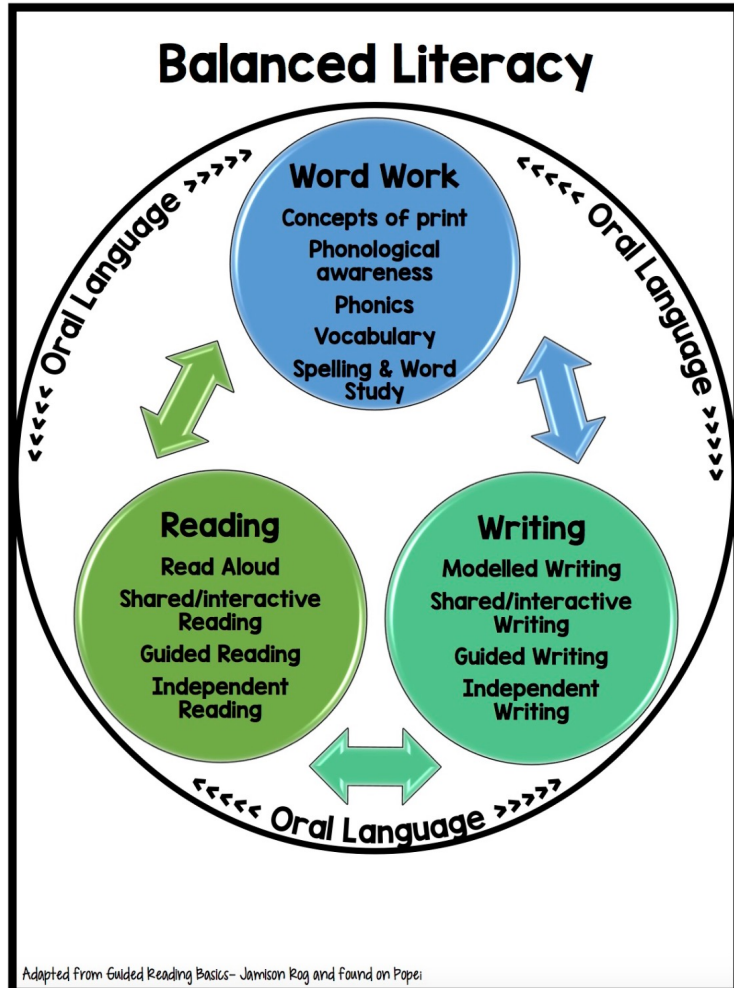


Early grade students in the Philippines will acquire better reading skills in their mother tongue, Filipino and English

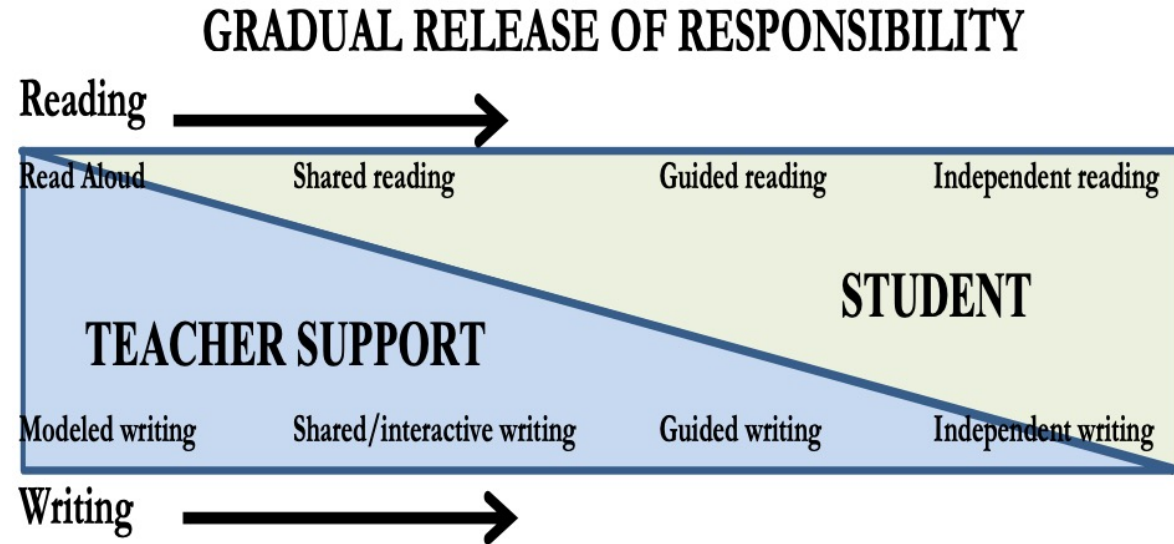
Theory of Change of the Literacy Instruction Program

Note: Reprinted from Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), retrieved from [https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/3_USAID%20Basa%20Pilipinas%20Final%20Report%20\(Digital%20Version,%20LowRes-Quality\)_23JUL2018.pdf](https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/3_USAID%20Basa%20Pilipinas%20Final%20Report%20(Digital%20Version,%20LowRes-Quality)_23JUL2018.pdf).

Literacy Instruction Approach of the Program



Balanced approach to literacy,
<https://instructionalservices.sd35.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/76/2017/06/Balanced-Literacy.jpg>



Pearson & Gallagher, 1983

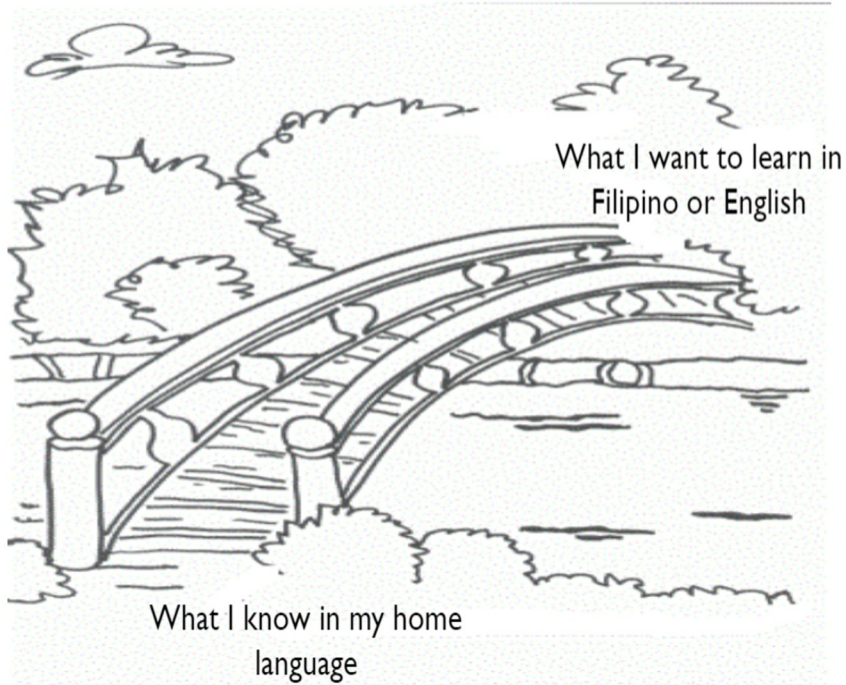
Comprehensive Reading Program

- Read Aloud:** Pupils listen as the teacher read aloud a story
- Shared Reading:** Teacher and pupils read together
- Guided Reading:** Pupils read text appropriate to their level and teacher steps in when needed
- Independent Reading:** Pupils read their chosen text individually or in pairs

↓ Gradual Release of Responsibility

https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T6HK.pdf

Bridging between languages



Bridging Framework

Domain	Grade 1			Grade 2			Grade 3		
	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3	L1	L2	L3
Oral language	→								
Phonological awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Book and print knowledge	→								
Alphabet knowledge	X	X		X	X	X			
Phonics and word recognition	X	X			X	X			X
Fluency	→								
Spelling	X	X		X	X	X			X
Writing and composition	→								
Grammar awareness and structure	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Vocabulary development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reading comprehension	→								
Listening comprehension	→								
Attitude towards language, literacy and literature	→								
Study skills	→								



- Specific to each language
- Common to all/most – introduce once and review differences
- Transfers from one language to another
- X Bridging opportunities
- Continuous/on-going development of skills bridging between languages

What I wondered about...

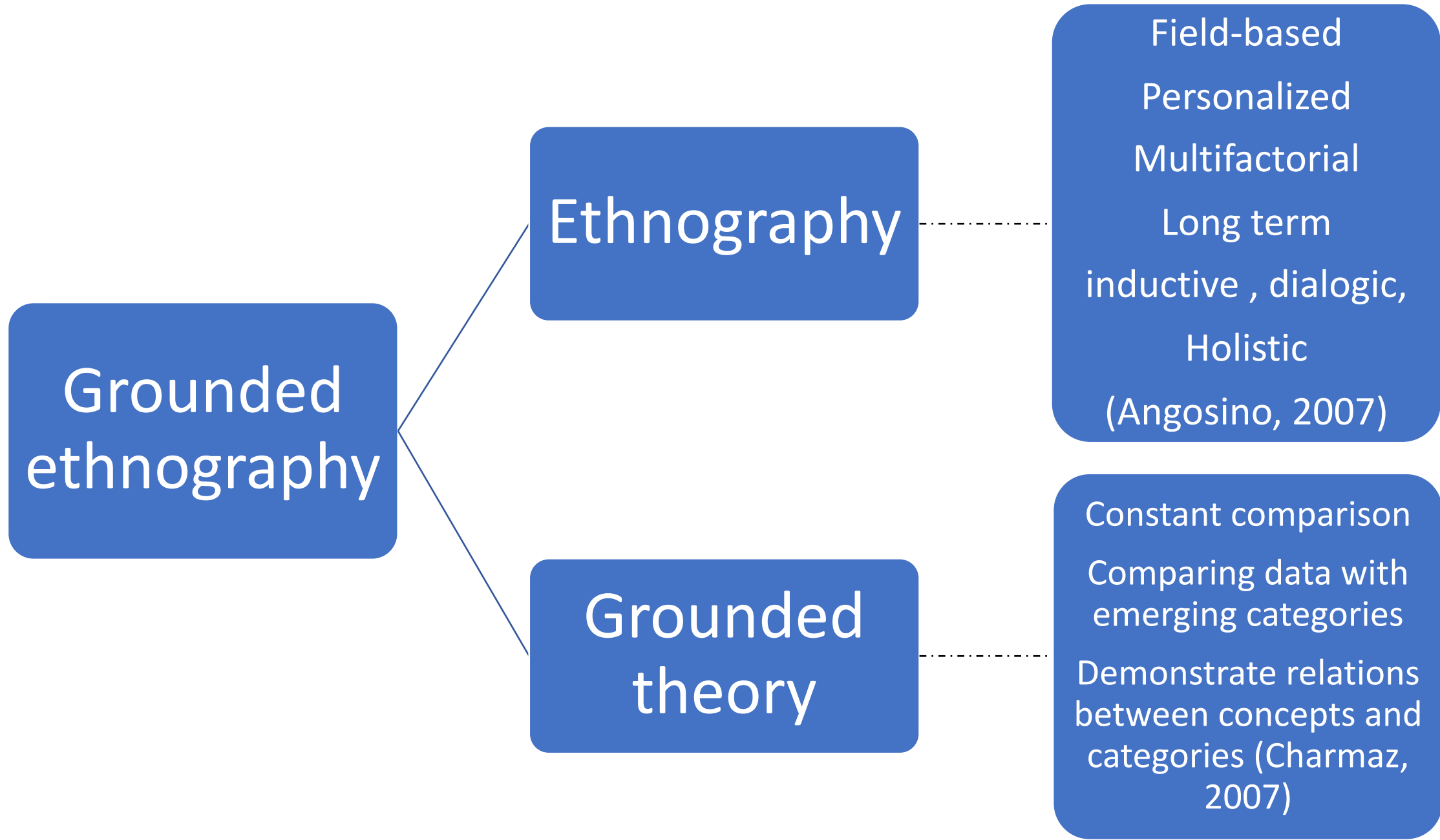
What **mediations** impact the appropriation of the MTB-Literacy Instruction Program (M-LIP) in multigrade schools located in remote island communities?

How do multigrade teachers appropriate the literacy instruction program as they negotiate with these mediations?

What are the **consequences** of these appropriations in relation to the literacy instruction program goals and objectives?

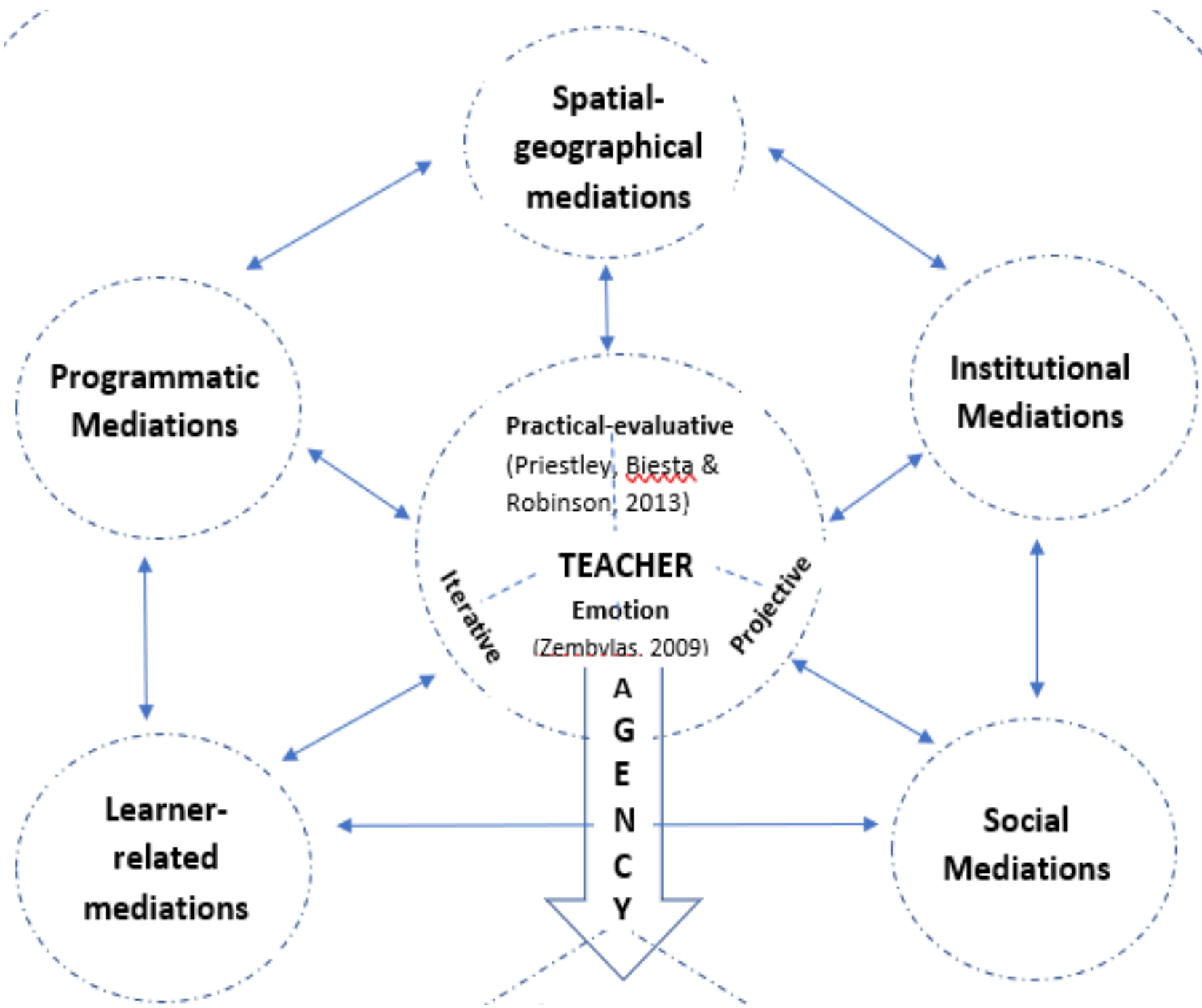


What I did...



What I observed...

MEDIATIONS



What I observed...

Mediations that are personal



Teacher prior experiences with K to 12 teacher trainings and its impact on teacher attitude towards M-LIP trainings.



Teacher emotion (*Haskang hangaka! Ngana ag mga bata!*)



Teachers' felt responsibility to the students' literacy skill development.

“

..mahug jug isa ka semana nya inig human seminar, nay mga report as SIC. Aw, pastilan na na-impas! Isa ka semana lagi inig human nako! Paita. Way klasi pila ka semana nya di na lagi kaila'g mga estudyante! ... Samot na jud silang way makamaho- an ani!”

[It was about one week. Then, after the training, I had to prepare the reports as the SIC. So there. That was the end of it! That was a whole week gone! It was so bad. We did not have classes for weeks. The students no longer recognize me!... They learned nothing!]

(Personal Interview with Teacher Habagat, March 8, 2017).

”

“

“Paninglan jud ta sa Ginoo kun gi-unsa nato pagtudlo ag mga bata,” [We will give an account before God of how we taught the children].

”

Mediations
that are
Programmatic

Five conditions related to program rollout

- Accommodation and training venue
- Lead instructors working collaboratively with local DepEd trainers
- Prompt provision of Program-related IMs (RTGs, big books, leveled readers and other instructional materials) during the trainings or in time for use during a specified quarter
- Conduct of reinforcement trainings and coaching & mentoring sessions
- Sustained School/Cluster Learning Action Cells
- Program identity (DepEd-owned)

“

Sa wa pa ang MTB-MLE LIP wa man god koy ka-idea-idea ingon ana diay na. Basta kay magbasa ra. Unya kanang vocab sa-una, wa pa ko ana. Kanang magpabasa ra ko. Ug unsa ra toy naa's libro, mao ra to akong sundon sa-una. Wala pa nang, vocab- vocab. Mao to pag-abot na sa M-LIP, "Ah, ingon ana diay. I-vocab pa nimo, nya while nagbasa ka, imong pangutan-on.... Unya, kinahanglan ang bata mo-speak gyod siya. Bahala'g gamay basta naa gyod siya'y gamayng idea ba. Ang importante nga maka-estorya sila, unsay ilahang ku-an. Basta naka-speak sila. Mao toy akong nakat-unan....

”

“

[Prior to the MTB-MLE LIP, I did not have any idea that this is how you teach [reading]. I would just make the children read. I did not unlock vocabulary. I just follow what is in the book. There was nothing there on vocabulary. So, when MTB-MLE LIP was introduced, I said to myself, “Oh, so this is how we do it. You have to unlock the vocabulary first, and then, when the students are reading, you engage them through questioning... Then, the children must express their ideas, no matter how little it is. What is important is that they had the chance to speak. That’s what I learned.]

(Personal Interview, March 8, 2017).

”

“

“Nagbago-od jud mi sa mga big books, ma’am. Mora mi’g nagshopping og mga mahalon nga mga libro para sa mga bata. Nindot kaayong paminawon.”

[We went home with lots of big books, ma’am. It was like we came from a shopping spree of expensive books for the children. It felt so good!] (Teacher Kayo, Informal conversation, February 22, 2017).

”

Mediations
that are
learner-related

The students exercised their agency to make the literacy instruction work for them considering their contextual limitations.

The reading ability of the learners conditioned teacher appropriation of M-LIP.

Mediations that are Institutional



Way paper: The Workload and worries of M-LIP-trained MG teachers and School-in-charge.



Fast turnover of teachers



School leadership: The case of the missing principal

“

I like teaching MG. The problem is that as school head, I have to make all the reports. Sometimes, I ask my teachers to help, especially if it requires the use of the internet. In the evening, the Grade 6 teacher and I work on the reports, especially with the SMEA (School Monitoring and Evaluation) ... Then, there's the children's nutritional status, early enrollment data, Brigade Eskwela activities, school plant report, etc. *Kapoy na kayo.*

(Personal Interview, Teacher Kayo, January 2017)

”

“

Kanang, morag... sama in-ani, morag kanang nag-implement kunuhay silag bag-ong... ay kana bang naay imong mga kahago, unya, morag dili bitaw ma-count? [It's like this... the government wants to implement something new... it is us who bear the burden, but it seems that our efforts are not recognized.]

Nya mora rag wa. Unya, naghago baya ka. Unya, morag way kwenta. [It feels like our efforts are worth nothing. We have been exerting much effort. But it looks like all this is worth nothing.]

”

“

example...

Kanang mag da kag eskwelahan. Mao man jud ni arang hagu-a. [Running a school is so taxing.] OK ra unta'g magtudlo sa mga bata. Kaning mag da kag eskwelahan, ang imong kahago... mora bitawg wa nakita sa uban. Ingon ana ba. [I am fine with teaching the children. It is managing the school that is so taxing... and it seems like our efforts are not even acknowledged.]

”

Mediations that are **social**

The “go to” teacher as more knowledgeable other

The lack of LAC as venue for discourses on MLIP implementation.

Mediations
that are
Spatial-Geographical

Because of the smallness and remoteness of the school,

- monitoring from officially-designated DepEd leadership was infrequent;
- mechanisms for teachers to meet with others to engage in discourses relevant to program implementation such as the LAC sessions were not sustained; and
- literacy materials were not readily available in the community and literacy practices in the homes of the students were poor or non-existent.

FORMS OF APPROPRIATION



Forms of Appropriation in Program Implementation



HYBRIDIZING. Combining M-LIP-espoused literature-based literacy instruction the protocol with a heavy dose of phonics exercise



Reasons: 1) Students' reading ability; 2) Teacher's preparedness; 3) Availability of Phonics IMs

Forms of Appropriation in Program Implementation

FINESSING. “Teachers review available options and make purposeful decisions to attend to some things while ignoring others” (Kersten & Pardo, 2006).

Teachers decided to forego the following: 1) writing activities when they felt that the students were not yet prepared to do the task; 2) reading passages that they believe were too long for the students or were too difficult for students to understand; and 3) activities that they themselves did not understand or did not view as useful

“

Usahay di nako gamiton kay di man pud ko kasabot. Maglibog man pud ko daghanang objectives. Or usahay mag pick up rako'g objective isulod nako didto maoy ra poy iyahang i-kuan. Hinoon mo-follow ko sa katong kuan sa BASA pero ang akong focusan kato rang objectives nga akong gikuan sa akong DLL. ... Pilion ra namo ang mga activities.

[Sometimes, I would not use it because I myself do not understand it. I get confused because several objectives had to be achieved in a lesson. Sometimes, I just select one objective and use only the activities that focus on achieving the objective that I specified in the DLL.... We just choose the activities to use.]

(Personal Interview, February 2017).

”

Forms of Appropriation in Program Implementation

BRICOLAGING. “Spontaneously adapting to the situation, creatively employing the available tools and materials to come up with unique solutions to a problem,” rather than “developing a logically consistent plan in advance (Maxwell, 2013)

Jama-jama lang

REASONS:

Lack of understanding of program
principals and practices

Resource limitations and availability

Forms of Appropriation in Program Implementation



RESTRUCTURING. 1) Foregoing some subjects to prioritize reading; 2) shifting from Division-recommended MTW schedule to daily sessions



REASONS: 1) Belief that reading and writing are prerequisite skills to succeeding in other subjects; 2) The need for students to perform well in standardized tests; 3) efficiency; and 4) students' reading ability/level

Teachers would often skip teaching *Araling Panlipunan (AP)*; *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP)*; and Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) so they could use the time for language and literacy instruction. This was because the teachers believed that

- the competencies in the aforementioned subjects could be incorporated in the MTB-MLE LIP lessons; and
- reading skill development is critical to students' success in all other subjects.



Forms of Appropriation in Program Implementation

AVOIDING. Temporarily suspending program implementation: The case of novice teachers

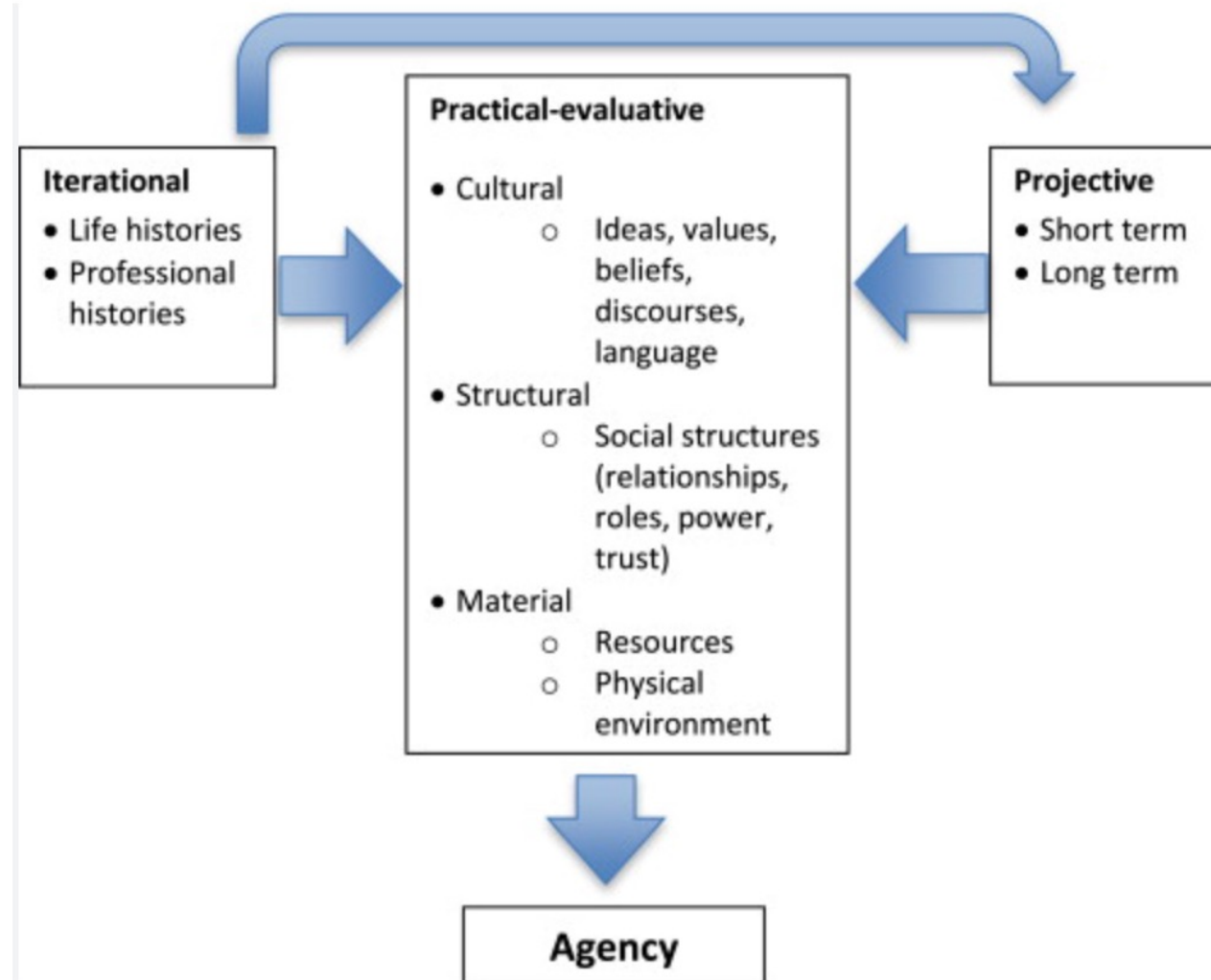
REASONS: 1) Lack of confidence to enact M-LIP; 2) Lack of technical support/assistance; 3) Lack of understanding on how to use the materials because they have NOT attended the trainings (fast turn-over of teachers)

The agency of colorful big books

The agency of the big book was so strong that it was considered as a reward for good classroom behavior. In fact, according to Teacher Amihan, loss of privilege to freely access the books was an effective deterrent to misbehavior. I observed that she would tell her class:

Ag di magpuyo di nako pabasahon unya sa basa unyang hapon [Those who will keep moving around will not be allowed to read later.]





Charteris, J., & Smardon, D. (2015). Teacher agency and dialogic feedback: Using classroom data for practitioner inquiry. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X15000852>

CONSEQUENCES

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graph LR; C[CONSEQUENCES] --- I[Intended]; C --- U[Unintended]; I --- I1[Improved literacy instruction processes; Improved access to quality reading materials; strengthened professional networks; improved teacher confidence in their ability to contextualize the lessons; improved reading performance of students in Filipino.]; U --- U1[Critical reflective thinking; emergence of a key scaffold or "go to" teacher; performativity; added workload; non-compliance with DepEd mandates; subject integration and marginalization];
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Intended

Improved literacy instruction processes; Improved access to quality reading materials; strengthened professional networks; improved teacher confidence in their ability to contextualize the lessons; improved reading performance of students in Filipino.

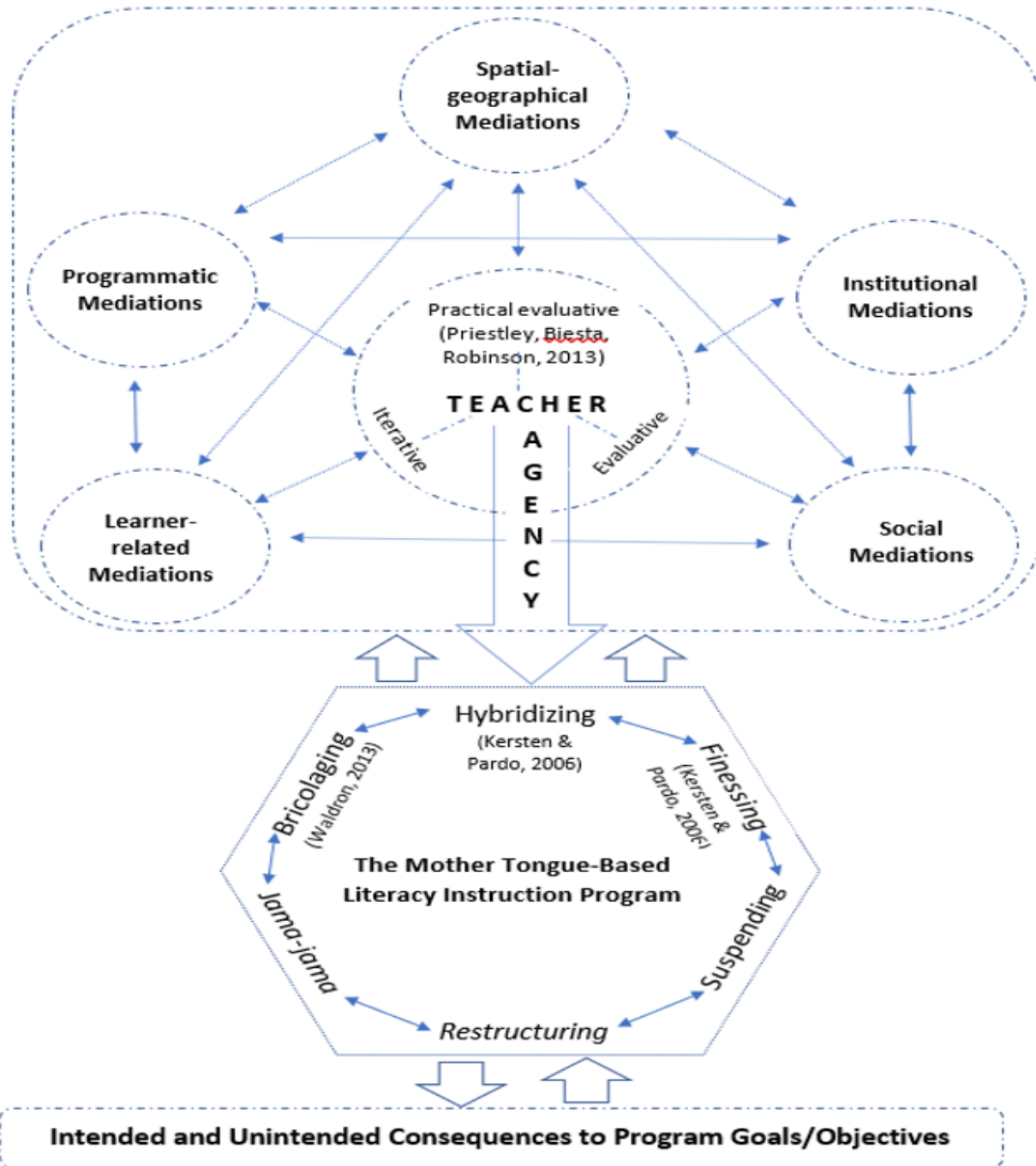
Unintended

Critical reflective thinking; emergence of a key scaffold or “go to” teacher; performativity; added workload; non-compliance with DepEd mandates; subject integration and marginalization



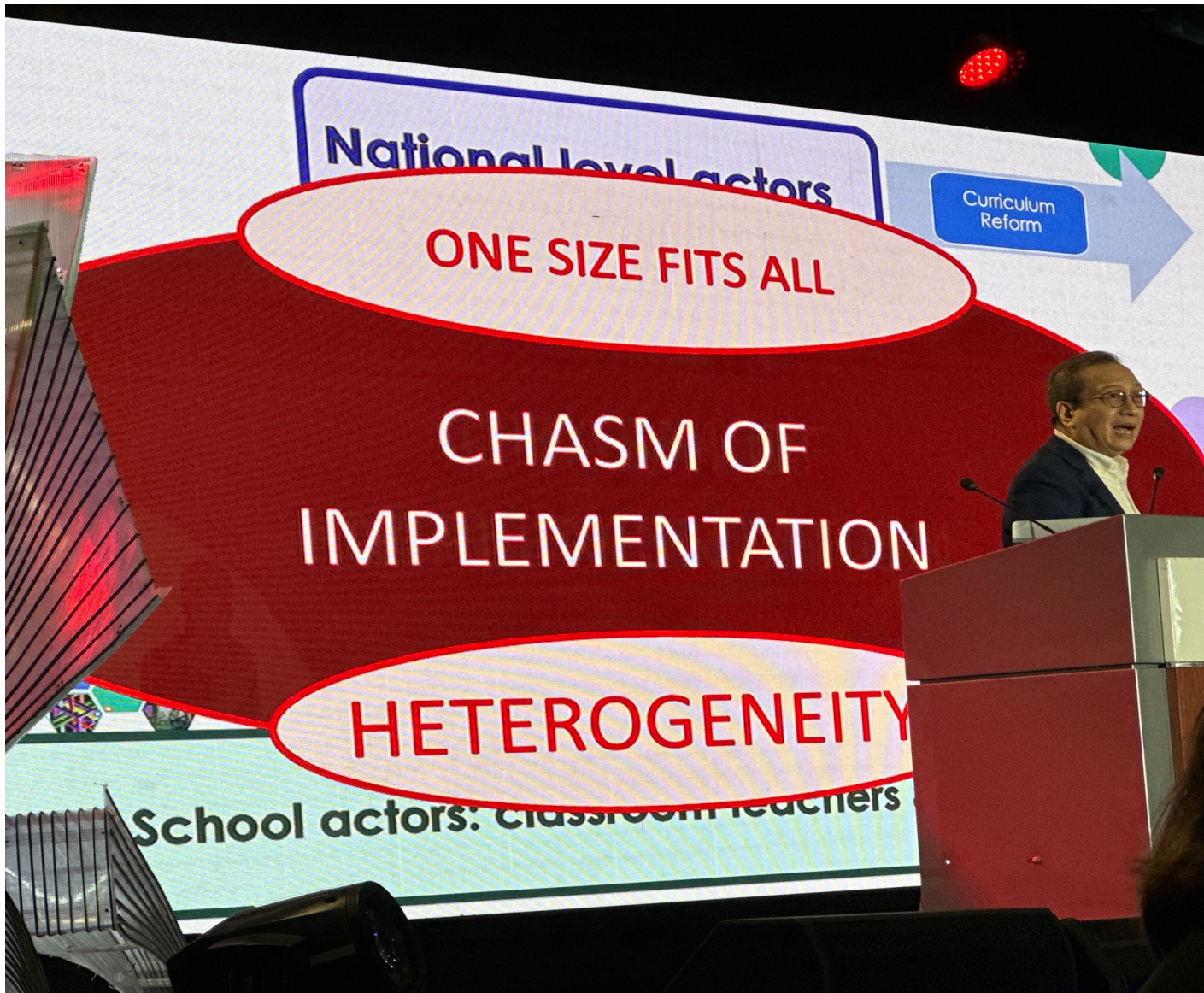
The Theory of Change

Note: Reprinted from Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), retrieved from [https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/3_USAID%20Basa%20Pilipinas%20Final%20Report%20\(Digital%20Version,%20LowRes-Quality\)_23JUL2018.pdf](https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/3_USAID%20Basa%20Pilipinas%20Final%20Report%20(Digital%20Version,%20LowRes-Quality)_23JUL2018.pdf).



The Complexity of Teacher Agency

Bonior, G.F. (July 2020). MTB-MLE Literacy Instruction in Multigrade Schools in Remote Islands of Bohol: A Model of Mediations and Appropriations. Dissertation, UP Diliman.



Screengrab from <https://www.facebook.com/PEACOfficial>
https://fb.watch/pnc_lq9hLr/ (Dec 6, 2023)



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Insights for Learning Recovery Programs

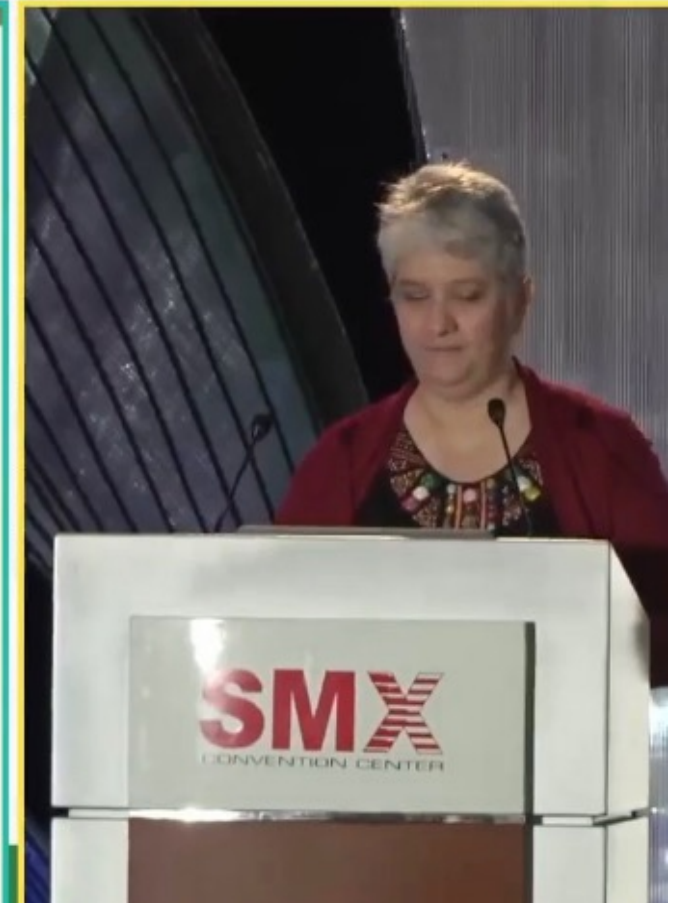
Teachers are at the heart of any learning recovery program. Have we listened to their stories and engaged them in decision-making? Have we acknowledged their agency?

Teacher “diskarte” or “mugna” is mediated by contextual circumstance, including personal, programmatic, institutional, and spatial-geographical factors. Have we checked in on our teachers to examine the complexities of navigating and negotiating with these mediations so we may better understand and support them? For example, have we created peer support groups to mitigate signs of teacher burnout?

Have we supported teachers in implementing learning recovery programs through systematic, well-designed and implemented trainings, and sustained mentoring and coaching mechanisms?

Quality Education means that

- teachers realize that their instructional decisions bring about learning in their students.
- teachers are engaged and committed to their own professional development so they can teach better.
- teachers are supported by leaders so they can teach well



Screengrab from <https://www.facebook.com/PEACOfficial>
https://fb.watch/pnc_lq9hLr/ (Dec 6, 2023)



**2023 PhilEd
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Insights for Learning Recovery Programs

Teaching is a caring profession. Caring begets caring. How have we demonstrated to our teachers (through government policies, practices, and processes) that we care about their well-being?

Colorful big books on content with local flavor and fervor have strong agency in drawing children into the act of reading. Have we invested on the equipping of our teachers, students, and other local writers to write stories anchored on local experiences, values, and traditions and have them illustrated by local artists and published as colorful literacy resources for local consumption?

Teachers are “dilemma managers”
(Britzman, 2003). Have we documented
not only best practices, but also effective
processes demonstrating how teachers
exercise their agency to make the
program work in their contexts? Have
we listened to our teachers’ voices?



For the list of references, email me at
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