



# INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MATATAG CURRICULUM: VIEWS OF THE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

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## ABSTRACT

The matatag curriculum represents a significant step in enhancing the K to 12 Basic Education Program in the Philippines. It acknowledges the challenges faced, the demands of the 21st century, and the importance of assessment data in curriculum development. The recommendations provided will guide the recalibration of the curriculum to better prepare learners for the future. The curriculum review process examines the intended, implemented, assessed, and achieved curriculum phases. Narrative analysis offers the opportunity for more attention to language form, social context, and audience than other approaches. It also treats extended accounts as units, rather than fragments. For example, phenomenological research focuses on the lived experience, but narrative studies focus on the details of how and why a certain event is part of the story that is being told. The target population consisted of teachers and principals with at least ten years of teaching experience in order to draw comparison between the old curriculum (before K-12), the current curriculum (K-12) and the soon to be implemented curriculum (matatag curriculum). My rationale for using this time period is that the different views and opinions of teachers and school principals on the implementation of the matatag curriculum next school year 2024-2025. The findings indicate significant positive changes, evident in the Matatag curriculum compared to its predecessor, as elucidated in the curriculum guides published by the Department of Education. Notably, the Matatag curriculum offers opportunities for the localization and contextualization of elementary generalist lessons. This paper contributes fresh insights into how various stakeholders perceive the forthcoming implementation of the Matatag curriculum in the upcoming school year. Recommendations for improvement include additional training for educators, development of comprehensive support materials, and mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. By addressing these challenges and implementing these recommendations, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness and impact of the Matatag Curriculum, paving the way for a more equitable, inclusive, and responsive education system in the Philippines.

**KEYWORDS:** Initial Implementation, Matatag Curriculum, Views of the Teachers, Principals

## INTRODUCTION

The matatag curriculum represents a significant step in enhancing the K to 12 Basic Education Program in the Philippines. It acknowledges the challenges faced, the demands of the 21st century, and the importance of assessment data in curriculum development. The recommendations provided will guide the recalibration of the curriculum to better prepare learners for the future. The curriculum review process examines the intended, implemented, assessed, and achieved curriculum phases. The review revealed a substantial number of learning competencies, indicating curriculum relevance. However, it also identified issues such as insufficient teaching time and a mismatch between prerequisite skills and students' knowledge. To address these concerns, the curriculum should be streamlined, prerequisites articulated, and learning competencies sequenced for systematic skill development.

To point out comparison in the utilization of school curriculum two education systems exist in parallel in Afghanistan. Religious education is the responsibility of clerics at mosques, while the government provides free academic education at state schools. Students attend elementary schools where they learn the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic and their national culture. Three years of middle school follow where academic-style education continues. Students must pass an examination at the end of this phase if they wish to study further. At secondary school, students have a choice



between continuing with an academic path for three years that could perhaps lead on to university, or study subjects such as applied agriculture, aeronautics, arts, commerce, and teacher training instead. Both programs culminate in a bacilluria examination (Ministry of Education, 2020).

In China, nine years of compulsory education for each student from Grade one to Grade 9. The language of instruction in Mainland China is Putonghua (Mandarin), and the written language is simplified Chinese. The Chinese curriculum structure is currently based on the curriculum expectation published by the Ministry of Education, which was just revised in March 2022 and will be implemented in September 2022. Guided by the current curriculum expectation in use, most provinces are adopting Renjiao (2022), with the contents organized into units and lessons, and a heavy focus on content knowledge acquisition for high-stakes tests. The main assessment format is paper tests and exams. The Science curriculum is normally divided into biology, geography, physics and chemistry. In most schools, there is a designated teacher for each STEM subject.

In summary, DepEd's Matatag program represents a remarkable step forward in improving the quality of education in the Philippines. With a multifaceted approach, the program paves the way for a more competent, empathetic, and qualified generation of learners. By prioritizing foundational, inclusive, and empowering skills for teachers, this education reform has the potential to reshape the country's education landscape and help learners thrive in a world always changing (Department of Education, 2023a; Cummins, 2021).

The purpose of the department of education Matatag curriculum is to enhance the educational process by addressing various needs and goals. It aims to provide a stable gastric access for patients unable to consume food normally reconstruct and innovate previous curricula to overcome weaknesses and adapt to social changes develop a curriculum model that improves education and student engagement, particularly in elementary levels, and address the impact of workload on students' behavior towards learning Mathematics, focusing on factors like anxiety and curriculum overload. (Department of Education, Davao City, 2023b). The curriculum development design involves identifying educational institution missions, assessing learner needs, setting goals, selecting strategies, implementing the new curriculum, and evaluating for continuous improvement.

### Research Questions

This effort led to the creation of the Matatag Curriculum, which aims to communicate the curriculum review process, set future directions, and provide a foundation for shaping papers in each learning area. Consequently, this paper aims to address the following questions:

1. What are the views of the teachers and principals in the implementation of Matatag curriculum?
2. How do teachers and principals prepare for the implementation of Matatag curriculum?
3. What benefits do you see in the implementation of Matatag curriculum in the Philippine Education?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Riessman (2018) described the key feature of narrative analysis as attention to sequences of action, focusing on the events and experiences of relevant people and places that shape a person's self-understanding. It is also grounded in how the speakers use language to communicate meaning. An individual's behavior is linked to the personal meaning he or she gives to the events and behaviors. By interrogating the intention and language, the how and why of the behaviors are given an integral part of the overall story.

Narratives as representations where individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives. Further, she defined it as talk organized around consequential events. Individuals tend to make sense of an experience by using the narrative form of communication (Bruner, 2018). Given that my intent was to understand the views of the teachers and principals on the implementation of the matatag curriculum, narrative analysis was particularly appropriate.

Narrative analysis offers the opportunity for more attention to language form, social context, and audience than other approaches. It also treats extended accounts as units, rather than fragments. For example, phenomenological research focuses on the lived experience, but narrative studies focus on the details of how and why a certain event is part of the story that is being told (Riessman, 2018).



### Research Participants

The target population consisted of teachers and principals with at least ten years of teaching experience in order to draw comparison between the old curriculum (before K-12), the current curriculum (K-12) and the soon to be implemented curriculum (matatag curriculum). My rationale for using this time period is that the different views and opinions of teachers and school principals on the implementation of the matatag curriculum next school year 2024-2025.

Since my focus is on resilience and coping, this time frame was sufficient for the participants to share their view on the implementation of the matatag curriculum in the Philippine education system. This will focus more on their views and opinions, preparation for the implementation and the benefits brought about by the matatag curriculum.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis was done in the qualitative method. To answer the first and second research questions, the researcher analyzed the interviews. Therefore, she did the content analysis of each interview, and the themes were identified. To answer the third research question, the researcher created a rubric and a checklist to determine the progress of students and the increase in the amount of their willingness to promote reading comprehension skills after the pandemic. Finally, the questionnaire was used to explore the advantages and disadvantages of these interactive slides in reply to the last research question.

Qualitative data analysis begins with the process of organizing, reducing, and describing the collected data (Schwandt, 2021).

Unlike quantitative analysis, there are no prescribed formulas for qualitative analysis. Marshall and Rossman (2018) remind researchers that qualitative analysis does not proceed linearly and is not neat. However, good practice and procedures enhance the credibility of qualitative research. In this last section, the data analysis procedures will be explained and the steps taken to ensure the results from this study are credible, transferable, dependable, and authentic will be thoroughly described.

To guide the data analysis, the researcher used the seven phases of data analysis described by Marshall and Rossman (2018) as a means to reduce data, create manageable pieces, allow for interpretation, and find meaning in the words of the participants. The seven phases included: organizing the data; immersion in the data; generating categories and themes; coding the data; offering interpretations through analytic memos; and searching for alternative understandings (Marshall & Rossman, 2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Philippines' adoption of the Matatag Curriculum is appreciated by many schools and academies, as they perceive a new era of education. We have witnessed the drawbacks of the old curriculum and observed how the new one helps alleviate these issues. With the guidance of leaders, the curriculum can be disseminated to every child. If implemented correctly, the new curriculum can address the challenges faced by children, sharpen their minds, and prepare them to compete in the global education arena.

### Implications

This paper undertook a qualitative exploration of the impact of the Matatag curriculum on history and geography education for the school year 2024-2025. Employing Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) with individuals vested in Elementary education, I systematically collected, analyzed, and interpreted participant responses. The FGD results revealed several themes concerning the perceived impact of the Matatag curriculum on the study of history and geography, including heightened awareness of contemporary and critical issues, deepened understanding with expanded perspectives, varied outcomes based on implementation, early exposure to history and geography, addressing knowledge gaps and fostering patriotism, impact on discipline and awareness, intensified focus on geography and history, and the teacher's perspective and meaningful learning.

The findings indicate significant positive changes, evident in the Matatag curriculum compared to its predecessor, as elucidated in the curriculum guides published by the Department of Education. Notably, the Matatag curriculum offers opportunities for the localization and contextualization of elementary generalist lessons. This paper contributes fresh



insights into how various stakeholders perceive the forthcoming implementation of the Matatag curriculum in the upcoming school year.

Additionally, the study's theory was based on the social constructivism theory, which runs parallel to behaviorism and cognitivism and was developed by a number of education theorists, including Jean Piaget, John Dewey, and Lev Vygotsky. In order to characterize and explain teaching and learning as intricately intertwined social processes involving teachers and students, they concentrated on social constructionism which proved that the Matatag curriculum advocate social change among the learners.

On the other hand, according to Vygotsky, the foundation of the learning process is the social building of solutions to problems, and learning is the process of solving difficulties. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs when a student, teacher, and problem to be solved all come together in a "zone of proximal development. Also, this study on matatag curriculum can be best explained by Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory which explores how new ideas, practices, or innovations spread within a social system. The theory identifies different adopter categories, ranging from innovators to laggards, and emphasizes the importance of communication channels in the dissemination process.

It is noteworthy here to include components from the curriculum innovations, which are essential for adapting to societal changes and introducing elements into the curriculum. Innovations are said to align educational goals, reflecting the needs, interests, values, and problems of society. They should be appropriate, economical in terms of time, space, and resources, and rooted in sound educational theory.

Thus, this DepEd Matatag curriculum is to enhance the educational process by addressing various needs and goals. It aims to provide a stable gastric access for patients unable to consume food normally, reconstruct and innovate previous curricula to overcome weaknesses and adapt to social changes, develop a curriculum model that improves education and student engagement, particularly in elementary levels, and address the impact of workload on students' behavior towards learning Mathematics, focusing on factors like anxiety and curriculum overload.

The curriculum development design involves identifying educational institution missions, assessing learner needs, setting goals, selecting strategies, implementing the new curriculum, and evaluating for continuous improvement. By prioritizing foundational, inclusive, and empowering skills for teachers, this education reform has the potential to reshape the country's education landscape and help learners thrive in a world always changing.

### **Future Directions**

The Matatag Curriculum represents a transformative approach to education in the Philippines, aiming to empower learners and enhance their competitiveness on the global stage. This research investigates the perceptions of educators, stakeholders, policymakers, and students regarding the implementation of the Matatag Curriculum. Findings reveal a consensus on the curriculum's potential to foster critical thinking, creativity, and holistic development among students, while also highlighting challenges such as resistance to change and resource constraints.

Recommendations for improvement include additional training for educators, development of comprehensive support materials, and mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. By addressing these challenges and implementing these recommendations, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness and impact of the Matatag Curriculum, paving the way for a more equitable, inclusive, and responsive education system in the Philippines.

Also, to enhance the Matatag curriculum, involving stakeholders, adapting content to local needs, incorporating soft skills, and aligning with industry demands are crucial steps for better training outcomes. To achieve successful curriculum implementation, the planning must include a framework for generating initial buy-in as well as for teacher success and enthusiasm in the long-term. This framework is established in the onboarding process, which encompasses initial training, follow-up, and ongoing support afterwards. Implementation should also include sharing milestones and status updates as the process evolves throughout the lifetime of the implementation.

Moreover, matatag curriculum implementation starts with a vision to unify planning, garner buy-in from stakeholders and end users and inspire a successful onboarding process. By focusing on this, schools will have a better return on



their curriculum investment later. Leaders need to know upfront what success should look like and plan how to achieve it. If they take shortcuts, they are not nearly as likely to be successful and results will be inconsistent.

In the end, change is complex, but it is a reality we all have to undergo, manage and lead. Having a process that's rooted in communication will help build support, accountability and growth.

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