### From West to East: Insightful Learning Journey of Senior High School Language Teachers Through Chinese Mandarin Training Course

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#### ABSTRACT

This study explored the significant lifelong learning experiences of the senior high school language teachers who underwent Chinese Mandarin training and come up from their insights an enhanced Chinese Mandarin training plan model-framework. The qualitative-phenomelogical method was used to investigate the significant experience of the aforementioned participants, With the insights shared by the participants, 13 themes emerged: Blissful Feeling Actuality, Positive Learning Atmosphere, New Concepts Gateway, Vision for Success, Irrational Fear Experience, Displeasing Training Encounters, Self-restraint learning ways, Technology-based assist, Multifaceted review strategies, Fostering Progressive Attributes, Technology Driven Strategies, Increment training program, and Experiential learning. Through the emerging paradigm which underscores reinforcement and suggested that the training and development programs should be aligned with the organizational objectives and at the same time maximize human potentials.

#### Keywords

Chinese Mandarin, plan, direction, professional development, training design, model-framework, human potential, organizational objectives

#### Introduction

The status of the English language as the lingua franca of the global information society is beyond dispute (Smith, 2005). Modern English has become the dominant language or in some instances even the required international language of communications, science. information technology, business, seafaring, aviation, entertainment, radio, and diplomacy. A working knowledge of English is now a requirement in several fields, occupations, and professions such as medicine and computing.

Globalization has made English the most popular language to learn throughout the world. It is similarly a subject of interest for persons who study in English-speaking countries, travel internationally, are engaged in international business, or use the World Wide Web for a variety of purposes. It is generally recognized that language is a vehicle for the expression or exchanging of thoughts, concepts, knowledge, and information as well as the fixing and transmission of experience and knowledge (Bussmann cited in Liu, 2003). Now that language is communication, it naturally follows that the goal of language instruction is to equip the learners with the ability to use the language for communication, namely, communicative competence (Liu). For people who want to enrich their lives by expanding their

competence to communicate in more than their mother tongue, English is extensively taught in the English as the Second Language (ESL) setting.

The primary objective of ESL instruction is to assist people in communicating effectively in English, both in and out of school. Such communication is vital if learners are to avoid the negative social and economic consequences of low proficiency in English and are to participate as informed participants in the global community (ESL Handbook, 1999). in English is the goal of an ESL program if the limited English proficient student is to realize long-term personal, social, and economic success in an English-speaking society in the 21st century.

Looking at the other concepts' language learning. The power now a days is China, rising to power would mean increasing its global influence. In doing this, China has to assert efforts through introducing their language in the different part of world.

"The impact of a rising China on the countries of the world – both developed and developing – will be enormous, and so will be the need to develop strategies and responses to meet the challenge." (Oded Shenkar, The Chinese Century: The Rising Chinese Economy and Its Impact on the Global Economy, The Balance of Power and Your Job) And to keep us with this challenge "Many have stressed the importance of learning Mandarin as China's economy continues to grow." (Armbrecht, 2016). Aside from it being commonly spoken in the world by over a billion speakers, this language is also spoken by the majority of the population in the Asian "tigers" like Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan where thousands of Filipino migrant workers flock for greener pastures. It cannot therefore be overemphasized that Chinese Mandarin is now considered a very important tool in global communication.

Cognizant of the importance of learning a foreign language, the Department of Education issued DepEd Order 46, s. 2012 or the Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the Special Curricular Programs at the Secondary Level. One of these Special Curricular Programs is the Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL) which presently includes the Chinese Mandarin language.

### **Related Theory**

The theory of Reinforcement emphasizes on the learning behavior of a person and suggests that the learner will repeat that behavior which is attached with a positive outcome or result. Skinner an economist of behaviorist school of thought proposed the theory of reinforcement and suggested that the training and development programs aligned should be with the organizational objectives and a positive outcome should be expected with such training and development programs.

The reinforcement theory is related to present study due to fact that one of the strategic directions of the Division is to *"Fostering lifelong learning for educational leaders, facilitators of learning and support staff"*. With this, the divisions' goal of achieving better learning outcomes will be realized when educational leaders and facilitators are exposed to training and development.

DepEd Division of City of San Fernando, an SPFL implementer offering Chinese Mandarin to Junior High School learners, has gone one step further in this regard. With its plan to enrich its Senior High School curriculum by offering this language to its learners, it envisions to produce 21<sup>st</sup> century Senior High School graduates who can effectively communicate in this language. This skill will further give them an edge over their peers as they enter the work force in this globally competitive labor market. And to realize this vision, Senior High School language teachers were tapped to undergo a training to learn Chinese Mandarin and in return affect change through the teaching of language to the SHS students. The study particularly aimed to propose an enhanced Chinese Mandarin training model-framework to guide the Schools Division in drafting their training design. Specifically, it sought to achieve the following objectives: (1) describe the significant experiences in the Chinese Mandarin language training of the Teacher-participants; (2) describe participants' view of the participants on the gains they acquired on the conduct of training; (3) define the challenges they encountered during the training; (4) outline the strategies the participants' employed to cope with the challenges of the training; (5) describe the attributes the participants' developed in them during the language training course; and (6) provide insights on the development of an enhanced training design?

#### Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

This study explored the experiences of the teachers who underwent the Chinese Mandarin language training.

A qualitative research using phenomenology was used in this study. Qualitative research is purposeful; participants are selected who can best research questions, inform the theoretical perspective, evidence informing which enhanced understanding of the phenomenon under study (Sergeant, 2012). It is also a method of inquiry; the emphasis is put on the natural setting and the point of view of the participants. Its objective is to seek and gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. Qualitative research comprises of different interpretative materials supported by series of representation involving natural setting and approach and give robust meaning to the phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). According to Ross (1999), a qualitative approached to research are based on the holistic view of the world and it changes over time based on the perception of the people involved on the

condition. In its distinctive character, Ritchie and Lewis (2003), define qualitative research by studying the different circumstances and perspective of the participants by providing a depth and profound understanding of the social world.

#### 2.2 Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study were the fifteen (15) identified English language teachers who underwent training in Chinese Mandarin language from October 2018 until July 2019.

The researcher employed purposive sampling in selecting the individuals who can shed light on the different concerns raised in the study.

Justifying the use of purposive sampling, Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) posited that purposive sampling is a non- probability sampling technique where the researcher used a sample of the participants. Purposive sampling is a technique where not all in the population were given the chance to be part of the study, because the researcher considered things in mind that determined the participants suited for the purpose of the study.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling in selecting a particular group or sample to represent the entire population. Non-probability sampling is a sampling wherein individuals are not given an equal opportunity of becoming part of a sample and the selection relies on the subjective judgment of the researcher, (Surbhi, 2016).

#### 2.3 Instrument

The researcher being the main instrument of the study utilized the semi-structured interview-guide questions for the gathering of data.

In the same manner, the interview-guide questions was developed by the researcher based on related literature to expand more insight from the participants.

Angus (2013) defines interview-guide questions as a list made by the researcher which will be utilized to ask the participants during the interview that leads and directs the conversation toward the relevant topics and issues. Moreover, interview-guide is a guided conversation with a purpose used in a qualitative research, an advantageous approach in steering semi-structure in-depth interview and gathering profound information correlating to the research questions and addressing the perilous points and aspects linked to the experiences and perspectives of the participants towards the topic (Knight, 2013). The interview-guide questionnaire was subjected through content validation by experts.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The processing of qualitative data gathered from the interviewees ran from verbatim transcription of participants' responses or stories to the extraction of themes. Significant statements from the three interviewees' transcripts were extracted. Identification was given for significant statements where "T" is for "Teacher-participant", small letter "a" as the assigned letter for the sequence of the participants and the numbers being the arrangement of the significant statements. Codes using a process that allowed organizations of the materials "into chunks or segment of text" was later utilized to come up with the emerging themes (Creswel, et.al, 2009 p. 186).

Qualitative data analysis is the processes and method which we shift the collected qualitative data constructed from an interpretative philosophy into more define exploration and justification to fully understand the problem (Lewins, Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). Moreover, it comprises of different techniques such as coding, categorizing and interpretation of the phenomenon (Kleiman, 2004). The purpose of data analysis is to interpret the data and the resulting themes, to simplify the information and understanding of the state of circumstance (Patton cited in Sargeant, 2012). Lastly, the similar codes and emerging themes were validated by experts for coherence a systematic matrix of evaluation.

#### Findings

This chapter contains the discussions on the findings derived from the responses of the participants considering the specific problems raised in the study.

#### Objective No.1 Significant experiences in the Chinese Mandarin language training

Below are the themes that emerged from the views given buy the participants.

Theme 1: Blissful Feeling Actuality. One of the experiences that the participants came across is

blissful feeling that led them to enjoy the duration of the training. To substantiate, below are the actual responses of the informants.

"I am so excited, because the thought of learning a new language tickles my imagination of communicating with other Asian Nations" (Tb4).

"I think this Chinese-Mandarin will be fun and exciting with the help of our teachers and Sir Lawrence" (Td3).

"It's really enjoyable to learn the Chinese Mandarin and we are learning a lot" (Te6).

"I felt really delighted that I volunteered in taking the course or training" (Til).

"I have the feeling of enthusiasm and positive anticipation looking forward to the implementation proper of the Chinese Mandarin language to Senior High School" (Tm10).

Happy life according to hedonic approach implies doing what is morally right and virtuous, growing, give mean to life one's self, pursing important goals and developing and using skills and talents independently independent of how one may fell at any time (Sheldon and Elliot 1999; Seligman 2002; Warr 2007; Fisher 2010). In relation to the research of Cropanzano, and Wright (1999), showed that happy employees have a superior performance also they are more sensitive to the opportunities in the workplace, more open and help fellow workers and more positive and confident.

**Theme 2: Positive Learning Atmosphere.** Contributory to the meaningful learning experience of the participants is a positive learning climate during. This analysis was supported by the responses of the participants:

"The teacher is very accommodating as well with the questions we ask, and the teacher provides us answers helpful for our queries" (Tb11).

"We were also given module ad hand-outs that can help us in learning. However, if videos and audios could be provided, it will very much appreciated" (Tc12).

"The session started with basic utterances and common conversations which makes it easier for beginning learners like me to grasp the fundamentals of this language" (T7). "The class has been showing evident progress, thanks to the enthusiasm and undivided attention that our mentor has been providing us" (T12).

*"I appropriate learning materials – Since we are novice Mandarin learners" (Ta10).* 

The Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist 1984) states that satisfaction occurs when the work environment meets the employee's requirements. According to Maenapothi (2007) and Januwarsono (2015), happiness at work is when someone enjoy his work and loves what he does at work.

# **Objective No. 2. Views on the gains acquired on the conduct of the training**

The following themes below emerged from the participants' views.

**Theme 1: New Concept Gateway.** Another significant learning that the participants appreciated during the training was the acquisition of knowledge and skills in Chinese-Mandarin. As shared and mentioned by the participants:

"The Chinese Mandarin Language training opens us to different opportunities in learning a foreign language. It is a good chance to develop our communication skills across other cultures as well" (Tb9).

"I learned a lot about the language. Before the training, I only know "ni hao", but now, my Mandarin vocabulary widened. This learning, I guess, will open many doors for more opportunities outside my subject of specialized (math) I consider this as an edge among others" (Tc14).

"I even boost my self-confidence, because truthfully at first I felt like it's embarrassing to have mistaken because your classmates are all professional teachers, and then I realize that it doesn't matter if you will fail because it is more important that you will still give your best to learn a lot in the learning" (Te20).

"Learning Mandarin also paves way for being globally competitive professional in the teaching field" (Tf15).

Knowledge is the outcome of learning or knowledge acquisition (Al-Khatib, 2011). When we learn or acquire knowledge about something we can assume that we know something new (Chisholm, 1982). Psychologists mostly use the term "learning" instead of "knowledge acquisition" and they are among first scholars to formulate theories of knowledge acquisition. While Nonaka (1994) believes that the creation of knowledge takes place through the process of conversion between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge.

**Theme 2: Vision for Success.** More than the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the participants are expecting success in their endeavour once the Chinese Mandarin is integrated in the curriculum of senior high school. Given more clarification, the following were some of the responses of the participants:

"I am envisioning myself as a successful foreign language teacher providing students with varied, engaging and interesting activities throughout the language learning" (Tn11).

"I know that it's going to be really tough but this is the excitement that my students will learn something from us that they wouldn't possibly learn by themselves or from other teachers/people" (Tn6).

"What we learn from this training will be transferred to them for the sake of their own advancement in their personal and professional life" (Tj11).

"They will enjoy learning this subject and I think they will make fun of the language. Overall, I will enjoy teaching Chinese Mandarin subject" (Th11).

Shipley (2002) attempts to develop visioning theory provide several clues about performance variables. Foremost, a vision must be specific and challenging. Setting high goals will result in high performance. Support for the vision depends on the projected result but also the way it is proposed that leads up to that result. Helling (1998) mentions the danger of devising utopias instead of strategies for action, which is also the main message of Peel and Lloyd (2005) mentions, but she warns against his suggestion to set 'challenging goals.' Goals must not be set too high.

#### **Objective No. 3. Challenges encountered during the course of training**

The following emerging themes surfaced based from the participants' sights.

**Theme 1: Irrational Fear Experience.** Part of the significant encounters of the participants during the conduct of the training are their struggles. As shared by the participants.

"I feel nervous because I'm not sure if they will take the course seriously or if they may learn something about Mandarin when I teach them" (Tf12).

"But still I felt nervous about the Mandarin classes we're going to take" (Tn1).

"I feel nervous because I am not confident enough to teach them this language" (Te4).

"I felt a little bit nervous because we'll be studying a different language. I

am also praying to pass" (Td1)

There are three main components to fear, which do not always correspond with each other. These components of fear are described as "the subjective experience of apprehension, associated psychophysiological changes, and attempts to avoid or escape from fearful situations" (Rachman, 1990, p. 3). These three components of fear can affect how individuals perceive and respond to fearful situations, how physical and psychological states change when one is frightened, and how people may attempt to avoid or escape from a threatening situation. The personal construct theory of George Kelly provides an analysis of how fears can develop and be resolved. According to the personal construct individuals develop certain theory. belief constructs to anticipate and deal with events that may occur in their lives. These constructs help individuals interpret and respond to life's experiences. When an individual's personal construct does not support the expected interpretation or response, the individual will feel threatened and may become fearful.

**Theme 2. Displeasing Training Encounters.** Other than the irrational fear they experienced; the participants also encountered unpleasant encounters during the training. As shared by them. *"The sad experience I had in the training is when I was not able to attend* 

one session on my Mandarin class because of conflict in schedule" (Tk7).

"Yes. I feel sad every time we have activity in speaking the language" (Tel3).

"There is a feeling inside of me which is sad because I was so attached with my subject and I cannot imagine myself leaving it" (Tg15).

"I was a little bit frustrated when I was not able to get 85% of one of the

tests given due to tardiness of about 8 minutes" (*Tf10*).

Henry, Rehwaldt and Vineyard (2001), by identifying internship problems, attempted to explain how internship programs can be carried out efficiently and effectively. Whether positive or negative, the images acquired during this period will affect future years spent in the profession. Trainees' negative experiences during an internship will thus undermine their plans to work in the tourism sector (Zheng, 2008).

## **Objective No. 4. Strategies to cope with the challenges**

The themes bellow emerged from the participants' views.

**Theme 1: Self-restrain Learning Ways.** The participants have shown resiliency and were able to cope with the following challenges of the training. As shared by them, the following responses are as follows:

"I employed wise time management and prioritizing strategies during the training to cope up with challenges" (Tb1).

"I downloaded applications like Chinese dictionary and other electronic reviewers" (Td1).

"Another strategy is by listening and watching Youtube reviewers like HSK 1 review" (Td4).

"There were also peer consultation especially to those who can cope up well enough" (Tc2).

Self-direction in adult learning has been referred to as self teaching, self-planned learning, independent adult learning, self-directed learning, and self-initiated learning. Candy (1991) pointed out about 30 different terms used confusedly with SDL. The list includes: autodidaxy, autonomous, learning, independent learning, learnercontrolled/directed instruction, non-traditional learning, open learning, participatory learning, self-study, and self-teaching.

**Theme 2: Technology-based Assist.** Technology had great contribution on the participants' struggles. They manage to hurdle the challenges through technology-based assist. Substantiating this are the actual responses of the informants.

Higgins et al (2012) found that digital learning has a greater impact on writing than on reading or spelling. For example, Torgenson and Zhu (2003) reviewed the impact of using digital technology on the literacy competences of 5-16-year-olds in English and found effect sizes on spelling (0.2)and reading (0.28) much lower than the high effect size for writing (0.89). The studies by Lee et al (2009) and Biagi and Loi (2013) found similar results for mathematics as they did for reading and literacy in relation to the use of digital equipment. Learners who used a computer at least one hour a day for both schoolwork and other activities had significantly better mathematics test scores and more positive teacher evaluations for their classroom behaviour in mathematics classes than those who did not use the computer.

"This review includes watching videos, rereading notes and downloading cellphone applications" (Ta2).

"To cope up, some strategies were employed like additional reading online" (Tc1).

"I downloaded applications like Chinese dictionary and other electronic reviewers" (Td1).

"Another strategy is by listening and watching Youtube reviewers like HSK 1 review" (Td4).

**Theme 3: Multifaceted review strategies.** Aside from the technology-based assist that the participants employed during their training, they also used the traditional approach in learning the language. Confirming this are the actual statements from them.

"I also have a notebook in which I write the words which I have learned/mastered" (Td3).

"I employed self-review" (Tal).

"There were also peer consultation especially to those who can cope up well enough" (Tc2). *"memorization, repetition, grouping of words through index cards and peer teaching" (Tc1).* 

Another characteristic of self-study research that we discovered is that it is multiple and multifaceted (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Loughran (2007) explains "there is no one way, or correct way, of doing self-study. Rather, how a self-study might be done depends on what is sought to be better understood" (p. 15). LaBoskey emphasizes the multiple characteristics of self-study as follows: "it is self-initiated and focused; it is improvement-aimed; it is interactive; it includes multiple, mainly qualitative, methods; and it defines validity as a validation process based in trustworthiness" (LaBoskey, 2004a, p. 817).

# **Objective No. 5. Attributes developed to the participants during the language training.**

Below is the theme emerged from the participants' sights.

**Theme 1: Fostering Progressive Attributes.** Aside from the knowledge and skills of the participants developed in them, they also imbibed desirable qualities that boost their morale and character. As shared by them, the following responses:

"I also learned values along with the training like being always responsible to read in advance" (Tb24).

"I even boost my self-confidence, because truthfully at first I felt like it's embarrassing to have mistaken because your classmates are all professional teachers, and then I realize that it doesn't matter if you will fail because it is more important that you will still give your best to learn a lot in the learning" (Te20).

"But with a dash of effort and a pinch of patience, I am positive that I may be able to be successful with it" (Tk15).

*"I developed patience and determination to learn the language" (To12).* 

Gagne and Medsker (1996) classified learning outcomes into five types such as verbal information, intellectual skills, motor skills, attitudes, and cognitive strategies. Attitudes are more or less positive and encompass emotions, beliefs, values and behavior and 4 hence affect individual way of thinking, acting and behaving which has a lot of implications to teaching and learning (Mensah et al, 2013). Consequently, the student exhibit low motivation, decreased level of participation, boredom and behaviour problems including class or lesson avoidance. This is in fact evident when the teacher is doing his best presentation in class, but the student may seem to be alienated and aloof (Furinghetti and Perkhonen, 2002). Relative this, Duckworth and Seligman's research (2006) identifies the character strength of self-discipline as giving girls the performance edge over boys.

# **Objective No. 6. Proposed enhancement plan** based from the participants insights.

The following emerging themes surfaced based from the participants' sights.

**Theme 1: Technology Driven Strategy.** The participants outline the methodologies on how improve the delivery of concepts of the Chinese Mandarin Training and this is through the integration of ICT. To substantiate the findings are the statement of the participants:

"Enhancement program can be with the use of ICT and virtual learning of Mandarin language which the participants could use even in the comforts of their home" (Td1).

"In addition, I would like to see some incorporation of other ICT tools in the delivery of the training" (Ta2).

"To be more effective, I suggest that we increase the use of different technology driven gadgets" (Tc1).

"Introduce more strategies that is driven by technology" (Tg2).

More research confirmed this by stating that teacher attitude with technology integration and successful implementation of technology in the classroom can be more significant than any other factor when incorporating technology into the curriculum (Nicholas & Ng, 2012). Administrators, curriculum leaders, and teachers need 298 Murphy to have professional training in technology, be supportive of the process of technology integration, and be willing to assist others in the use of technology throughout the curriculum since "technology cannot be grafted onto existing curricula; it must be integrated thoughtfully" (Parkay, Anctil, & Hass, 2014, p. 49).

**Theme 2: Increment Training Program.** Another way to enhance the delivery of the training according to the participants is increase the time allotment provided in the training. Here are some of the suggestion excerpts of the participants:

"I guess the only enhancement I can suggest is having 2 sessions per week" (Tf1).

"The programs that can help the participants is additional training session" (Te1).

"Exposure time is of the essence in learning the language. If more hours were allotted for every interaction, mastery may have been improved" (Tc3).

"I guess the only enhancement I can suggest is having 2 sessions per week" (Tf1).

According to (P. Subba Rao, "Essentials of Human Resource management and Industrial Relations" Himalaya Publication House, 3rd Revised & Enlarged Edition 2009, Pg-199-203) Training should be conducted in a systematic order so as to derive expected benefits from it. The training system involves four stages, namely: a. Assessment of training and development program needs; b. Designing the training and development programs; c. Implementation of the training program; and, d. Evaluation of the training program.

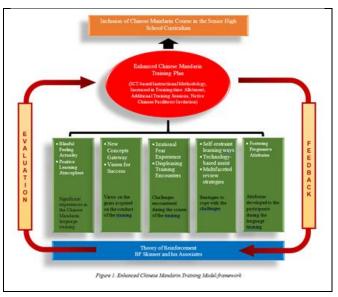
**Theme 3: Experiential Learning.** The participants have thought of maximizing the learning of the Chinese Mandarin concepts and pointed out that experiencing a native Chinese instructor and traveling to china will further developed their competencies in speaking the language. Here are some of the experiences shared:

"It is better to study Chinese Mandarin every day for retention of the lesson and to have a visitation in China" (TG1).

"we could invite a native Mandarin speaker to give a talk, to get the sense of conversational Mandarin being spoken" (Tb2).

An example of experiential learning is taking students to the zoo to observe or interact with it instead of reading about animals from a book. Thus, students discover knowledge and have their own experience instead of hearing or reading about others' experiences (William, 2010). In experiential learning, the immediate personal experience is the central point for learning since it gives life and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts and at the same time allows learners to test the validity of the ideas that were created during the learning process (Nunan, 1993). Similarly, Goode and Bronhein (2012) clarified that experiential learning exists when responsible participant cognitively, behaviourally, and effectively processes knowledge, skills and attitude in a learning situation that is characterized by a high level of active involvement.

#### **Emerging Paradigm**



The framework presents the key components in the Chinese Mandarin Training Journey of Senior High School Language Teachers. The theory of reinforcement which served as the foundation which support and organize relevant empirical facts related to the study. It is color blue as the theory suggest stability. Above the theory are the bonded emerging themes which emerged from the significant insights of the participants. Green was used for rendering as it suggests growth and fertility. The participants journey in the Chinese Mandarin training manifested in them growth, thus, making them volatile individuals for the quest of knowledge. The arrows pointing at the next component, the enhanced Chinese Mandarin Training Plan which was developed through processing the accounts of the participants. Moreover, the plan bears a resemblance to possible outcome when implemented. The red color was adopted as it symbolizes action. Realizing the plan will affect offering of Chinese

Mandarin Course in the Senior High School Curriculum as being the ultimate outcome of the emerging framework. The blue color embodies success and balance. Finally, continuous evaluation and feedback of the plan and strategies evaluated for adjustment or relevance.

#### Conclusions

Undergoing a language training specifically Chinese Mandarin is a huge trial from the teacherparticipants primarily of some language concept technicalities and not even part of our native languages. However, they remain steadfast during their training journey because of the support systems and excitement brought about by the training. The teacher-participants have developed in them knowledge, skills in attitude during the training. Thus, transfer of these acquired concepts is expected to result better learning outcomes. Also, the challenges' end results took part in the responsive dispositions in them during and after the training. Overall, the phenomenon of experience has equipped the teacher-participants essential advancement given the right resources and attitude for their quest of knowledge.

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