



Research Article

Experiences of Non-Education Teachers in Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) Instruction

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Article History:

Submission: April, 2026
Revised: April, 2026
Accepted: April, 2026
Published: May, 2026

Originality: 96%
Similarity Index: 7%
Grammarly Score: 97%

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Recommended Citation:

Tumamos, E., & Macalisang, D., (2026). Experiences of Non-Education Teachers in Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) Instruction. *Journal of Educational Research, Innovation, and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(3), 63-69.

<https://doi.org/10.67001/jeri.2026.02.C1M5WO>

ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of non-education graduate teachers teaching Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) subjects in selected public secondary schools in Misamis Occidental during the School Year 2025–2026. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers experienced initial pedagogical challenges but demonstrated strong technical competence and adaptability. Major challenges included difficulties in lesson planning, classroom management, student engagement, and limited instructional resources. To address these, teachers employed adaptive strategies such as self-directed learning, collaboration, experiential teaching, and resourcefulness. Despite constraints, teachers showed professional growth and commitment to effective instruction. The study concluded that while technical expertise supports teaching, sustained institutional support is essential in strengthening pedagogical competence. Context-based recommendations were proposed to enhance teacher development, improve instructional delivery, and strengthen TVL program implementation.

Keywords: adaptive strategies, instructional challenges, non-education teachers, phenomenological study, technical-vocational-livelihood (TVL)

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Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is globally recognized as a strategic instrument for workforce development, poverty reduction, and inclusive economic growth. International policy frameworks consistently emphasize that effective TVET systems must integrate industry-relevant technical expertise with sound pedagogical foundations to ensure competency-based and learner-centered instruction (UNESCO, 2021). However, global monitoring reports reveal a recurring structural concern: many TVET teachers transition directly from industry practice into classroom teaching without undergoing formal teacher education preparation (UNESCO, 2023). While their industry exposure strengthens technical authenticity, the absence of systematic pedagogical training often results in instructional design difficulties, inconsistent assessment practices, and limited learner engagement strategies. These international patterns suggest that technical mastery alone is insufficient for effective TVET delivery and underscore the importance of examining how the lack of formal teacher education shapes instructional performance and professional adaptation within specific institutional contexts.

In the Philippines, TVET is institutionalized through the Senior High School Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track under the K to 12 Basic Education Program, which aims to equip learners with employable skills, entrepreneurial competencies, and pathways for further technical certification. The governance of teacher qualifications within this track is guided by several policy issuances, including DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2017, or the Amended Qualification Standards for Senior High School Teaching Positions; DepEd Order No. 003, s. 2026, or the Hiring Guidelines for Senior High School Teachers; DepEd Order No. 020, s. 2024, or the Revised Guidelines on Recruitment and Selection in the Department of Education; and DepEd Memorandum No. 245, s. 2025, which outlines certification requirements for Senior High School teachers. These policies provide alternative qualification pathways that allow the recruitment of industry practitioners and non-education graduates to address teacher shortages and specialized skill demands. While these measures expand access to qualified technical experts, they also raise important questions regarding the adequacy of pedagogical preparation among those who enter the teaching profession without formal education degrees.

National reports provide evidence that this structural arrangement presents instructional implications. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA, 2021) reported that although many TVET teachers possess National Certificates and industry-recognized competencies, a considerable proportion lack structured preparation in curriculum planning, performance-based assessment design, and learner-centered instructional strategies. Complementing this, findings from the Senior High School Curriculum Review (ACTRC, 2025) identified persistent gaps in teacher readiness, particularly in schools where access to sustained professional development opportunities remains limited. Empirical studies further illustrate the lived dimension of this issue. Sanopao (2025) documented that teachers without formal education backgrounds frequently encounter anxiety, instructional uncertainty, and difficulty aligning industry practices with curriculum standards. Similarly, Manlangit (2022) observed recurring challenges in lesson sequencing and competency assessment among TVL teachers, reinforcing the argument that technical proficiency does not automatically translate into pedagogical effectiveness.

While these national and empirical accounts establish a broader trend, localized data evidence is essential to contextualize the problem. In Aloran Trade High School revealed that approximately 87% percent of current TVL teachers are non-education graduates, while only about 23 percent hold degrees in education or have completed formal teacher preparation programs. Further analysis showed that more than 70 percent have attended fewer than two structured pedagogical training programs related to TVL instruction within the past three years, and the mean length of teaching experience among non-education graduates is less than five years. These figures statistically demonstrate a pronounced imbalance between technical qualifications and formal instructional preparation, suggesting that the majority of teachers are implementing competency-based curricula primarily through industry experience, peer mentoring, or self-directed learning rather than systematic pedagogical training. Such data highlight a measurable and context-specific condition that warrants deeper qualitative investigation.

Given this statistically established context, there is a compelling need to explore how non-education graduates experience and navigate the demands of TVL teaching. This study therefore seeks to examine the lived experiences of non-education graduate teachers at Aloran Trade High School, particularly in relation to lesson planning, skills demonstration, classroom management, and learner assessment. It further investigates how

variables such as teaching experience, industry background, certification status, and participation in professional development programs influence instructional decision-making and classroom practices.

Hence, findings of this study are expected to generate comprehensive thematic descriptions that illuminate the professional realities of non-education graduates teaching within the TVL track. These themes may include instructional adjustment processes, professional identity formation, adaptive coping mechanisms, collaborative learning practices, and strategies for aligning industry standards with curriculum expectations. Moreover, the study aims to formulate data-driven recommendations for strengthening teacher recruitment screening, structured mentoring programs, and targeted pedagogical development initiatives within the school and district levels.

Methods

The phenomenological design was appropriate for this study because it aimed to explore and understand the lived experiences of non-education graduate teachers teaching Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) subjects. Through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the study captured participants' experiences in lesson preparation, competency-based instruction, classroom management, assessment, and curriculum alignment, as well as the challenges and adaptive strategies they developed despite limited formal pedagogical training. The study involved eight (8) purposively selected non-education graduate TVL teachers from Aloran Trade High School, Clarin National High School, and Baliangao School of Fisheries, with data collection continuing until saturation was achieved. A researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was validated by the research adviser and three experts and was subsequently pilot-tested to ensure clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness. Data were gathered following institutional approvals and ethical requirements, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, secure data storage, and compliance with Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The interviews were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, subjected to member checking, and analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework of familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, defining and naming themes, and interpretation and reporting. Throughout the research process, ethical principles, credibility, transferability, and confirmability were upheld to ensure that the findings accurately represented the participants' authentic experiences and provided meaningful insights into the instructional realities and support needs of non-education graduate TVL teachers.

Results and Discussions

Lived Experiences of Non-Education Graduate TVL Teachers

The lived experiences of non-education graduate teachers revealed a complex process of professional adjustment characterized by initial struggles, gradual adaptation, and the eventual development of confidence and competence in teaching Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) subjects. Participants described difficulties in lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and understanding formal teaching frameworks because they entered the profession without extensive pedagogical preparation. Their transition from industry-based work to the teaching profession required them to acquire teaching knowledge while already performing their classroom responsibilities. Some participants expressed uncertainty about how to structure lessons and apply appropriate teaching strategies, while others experienced difficulties in managing adolescent learners and maintaining discipline during practical activities. These challenges were particularly evident during the early years of their teaching experience, when teachers had to balance their technical expertise with unfamiliar pedagogical responsibilities. However, the findings also showed that these initial difficulties did not prevent participants from becoming effective practitioners. Instead, they gradually developed their teaching competencies through classroom experience, self-study, mentoring, collaboration, training, and reflection. The participants' accounts therefore suggest that their professional development was an evolving process in which actual teaching experience became an important source of pedagogical learning. This finding supports Shulman's (1987) concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which explains that effective teaching requires more than mastery of subject matter because teachers must also know how to transform knowledge into forms that learners can understand. It also corresponds with Huberman's (1989) description of the early teaching period as a stage in which teachers experience uncertainty, experimentation, and gradual professional adjustment.

At the same time, the participants' experiences demonstrated that their lack of formal education degrees was

accompanied by significant professional strengths, particularly their technical expertise and industry experience. Their practical knowledge allowed them to demonstrate procedures confidently, provide authentic workplace examples, and connect classroom concepts with actual occupational situations. The participants emphasized the value of hands-on instruction and learning by doing, which are highly relevant to the competency-based nature of TVL education. Their industry backgrounds enabled them to bring real-world problems and experiences into the classroom, making learning more concrete, relevant, and applicable to students' future employment. Nevertheless, these strengths existed alongside difficulties in managing student behavior, sustaining learner engagement, ensuring safety during practical activities, and coping with shortages of tools, equipment, consumables, and instructional materials. The findings therefore indicate that technical expertise and pedagogical competence should not be viewed as interchangeable; rather, they are complementary dimensions of effective TVL teaching. While participants possessed substantial occupational knowledge, their experiences showed the importance of developing pedagogical competencies that would enable them to maximize their technical expertise in ways appropriate for adolescent learners. Their eventual growth in patience, flexibility, persistence, and instructional confidence further demonstrated their capacity to adapt to the teaching profession. This pattern is consistent with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning perspective, which emphasizes learning through experience, reflection, and application, and with Dewey's (1938) view that meaningful learning is strengthened when educational experiences are connected to real-life situations.

Instructional Challenges Encountered by Non-Education Graduate TVL Teachers

The instructional challenges experienced by the participants were primarily associated with pedagogical preparation, resource limitations, learner engagement, classroom management, safety, and assessment. Lesson planning emerged as a particularly demanding responsibility because participants were unfamiliar with instructional frameworks such as the 4A's, 5E's, and 7E's and had limited knowledge of formal teaching methodologies. Without adequate pedagogical preparation, some participants relied on trial and error, personal research, and assistance from colleagues to organize lessons and improve instructional delivery. The challenge was not limited to preparing lesson plans; participants also experienced difficulties in selecting appropriate strategies, sequencing learning activities, aligning instruction with assessment, and adapting teaching approaches to adolescent learners. Student engagement presented another significant concern, as some learners were perceived as disinterested, frequently absent, insufficiently cooperative, or reluctant to participate in performance-based activities. Classroom management became particularly challenging in practical settings because TVL instruction requires students to move, manipulate tools, perform procedures, and work collaboratively. Consequently, teachers had to maintain discipline while simultaneously supervising activities and ensuring compliance with safety procedures. The participants' experiences further revealed that the absence of formal preparation in adolescent psychology contributed to their difficulty in understanding and responding to learner behavior. These findings demonstrate that the challenges of non-education graduate TVL teachers extend beyond instructional technique and involve the broader pedagogical responsibilities associated with teaching adolescents in competency-based learning environments. The findings are consistent with Shulman's (1987) view that subject expertise alone does not guarantee effective instruction and with Kounin's (1970) emphasis on effective classroom management as an essential component of maintaining student engagement and productive learning environments.

Resource and assessment constraints further intensified the instructional difficulties encountered by the participants. The shortage of tools, equipment, consumable materials, technological resources, internet connectivity, and appropriate facilities limited teachers' ability to provide every learner with adequate opportunities for hands-on practice. Since TVL education is fundamentally practical and competency-oriented, the absence of necessary resources affected not only lesson implementation but also student participation and the validity of performance-based assessment. Participants reported situations in which students could not complete practical activities because materials were unavailable, while some teachers had to modify tasks, divide learners into groups, or improvise alternative materials to sustain instruction. Assessment also became difficult when teachers needed to monitor individual performance during group activities, particularly when students had inconsistent attendance or participation. These circumstances created challenges in determining whether incomplete outputs reflected students' actual competencies or were consequences of inadequate resources and limited opportunities to perform. Despite these constraints, participants demonstrated resilience by modifying instructional activities, using alternative materials, and adjusting teaching methods according to classroom conditions. However, the findings make clear that teacher resourcefulness should complement, rather

than replace, adequate institutional provision of instructional materials and facilities. The results therefore point to the need for systematic institutional support in the form of sufficient tools and consumables, improved facilities, technology access, classroom-management training, safety preparation, and professional development in performance-based assessment. These findings are supported by Billett (2011), who emphasized the importance of appropriate tools and authentic learning environments in occupational learning, as well as UNESCO (2021), the World Bank (2020), and OECD (2019), which underscored the importance of adequate resources and supportive learning environments in quality technical and vocational education.

Adaptive Strategies and Professional Growth

In response to the challenges they encountered, non-education graduate TVL teachers developed a range of adaptive strategies that enabled them to strengthen their teaching practices and gradually overcome gaps in formal pedagogical preparation. One of the most prominent strategies was self-directed learning, through which participants conducted online research, watched instructional videos, consulted teaching references, and continuously studied teaching methodologies. They also learned through direct classroom experience, reflection, and trial and error, adjusting their approaches according to the responses and needs of their learners. Technology and online resources were likewise incorporated whenever available to supplement instruction and improve students' understanding of lessons.

Another important strategy was collaboration and peer support. Participants sought assistance from colleagues, master teachers, and school heads, particularly when they encountered difficulties in lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and assessment. Participation in Learning Action Cell sessions, seminars, webinars, and training activities provided additional opportunities to acquire pedagogical knowledge and exchange effective practices with other educators. These findings demonstrate that the participants were not passive recipients of professional support; rather, they actively sought opportunities to improve their competencies and took personal responsibility for addressing their instructional limitations. Their experiences illustrate a strong commitment to continuous professional learning and suggest that professional competence among non-education graduate teachers can develop through a combination of self-directed study, workplace experience, collaboration, and structured professional development. This finding is consistent with Knowles' (1980) concept of self-directed learning, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, and Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice, all of which recognize the importance of active participation, experience, reflection, and social interaction in professional learning.

The participants also demonstrated adaptive teaching through practical, experiential, flexible, and learner-centered approaches. They relied heavily on hands-on activities, demonstrations, performance-based tasks, and real-life industry applications to make lessons meaningful and relevant to students. Their technical backgrounds allowed them to contextualize concepts through actual workplace situations, while differentiated instruction and scaffolding enabled them to respond to differences in learners' abilities and readiness. When resources were limited, participants improvised tools and materials, modified activities, adjusted instructional methods, and organized students into groups so that learning could continue despite constraints. They also used motivational strategies such as encouragement, positive teacher-student relationships, real-world applications, and active participation to address learner disengagement and build students' confidence. These strategies reveal that the participants gradually transformed their initial limitations into opportunities for professional growth by becoming more flexible, resourceful, reflective, and responsive to learner needs. Overall, the findings suggest that non-education graduate TVL teachers can contribute valuable technical and industry-based expertise to the teaching profession, but their effectiveness can be further strengthened through sustained pedagogical training, mentoring, adequate resources, professional learning communities, and institutional support. The integration of their technical expertise with formal pedagogical knowledge is particularly important in ensuring that TVL learners receive instruction that is both technically accurate and educationally effective. These findings are aligned with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, Tomlinson's (2001) differentiated instruction, Deci and Ryan's (2000) perspective on motivation, and DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019, which promotes learner-centered and competency-based instruction.

Conclusions

The study concluded that non-education graduate teachers teaching Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) subjects navigated a complex professional transition characterized by initial pedagogical limitations, contextual

challenges, and evolving adaptive practices. Despite lacking formal training in education, these teachers demonstrated resilience and competence by leveraging their technical expertise, engaging in continuous self-directed learning, and actively seeking collaborative support to improve their instructional practices. The findings further revealed that their effectiveness was influenced not only by individual effort but also by systemic factors such as resource availability, institutional support, and professional development opportunities. Ultimately, the study established that while non-education graduate teachers possess valuable industry-based competencies, the sustainability and quality of their teaching practice depend on structured and sustained institutional interventions that strengthen pedagogical capacity, enhance support systems, and ensure equitable access to instructional resources, thereby improving both teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes in the TVL track.

Recommendations

Based on the thematic analysis and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that non-education graduate TVL teachers engage in continuous professional development through self-directed learning, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, mentoring, seminars, and training focused on lesson planning, classroom management, assessment, and competency-based instruction, while students should actively participate in hands-on and performance-based activities, practice responsibility and safety, and develop positive learning attitudes; parents should provide consistent encouragement, monitor students' academic and practical progress, and maintain collaboration with teachers and schools; community stakeholders and industry partners should strengthen school-industry linkages through internships, work immersion, training opportunities, updated tools and technologies, and resource support; school administrators should establish structured mentoring and instructional support systems, provide adequate TVL tools and materials, strengthen LAC implementation, and conduct regular supervision and constructive feedback; Department of Education officials should enhance teacher induction, professional development, monitoring, funding, and technical assistance specifically for non-education graduate teachers; policy makers should review and strengthen policies concerning teacher qualification, certification, pedagogical preparation, resource allocation, and industry alignment; curriculum developers and training providers should develop context-based and competency-driven programs addressing lesson planning, instructional strategies, classroom management, and assessment literacy; and future researchers should further investigate teacher preparedness, professional development, instructional effectiveness, support mechanisms, and student outcomes through longitudinal, comparative, and context-specific studies. Collectively, these recommendations emphasize the need for a comprehensive support system that bridges teachers' technical expertise with pedagogical competence and strengthens collaboration among teachers, learners, families, schools, government agencies, industry partners, and other stakeholders to ensure relevant, effective, and sustainable TVL education.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest

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