

**Implementing inquiry-based teaching in Araling Panlipunan 8:
Teacher practices, challenges, and perceived effectiveness**

Princess Lyn J. Yamson*

Northeastern College, Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Araling Panlipunan 8 requires teaching approaches that engage learners in examining historical events, social issues, evidence, and different perspectives. However, limited evidence on how inquiry-based methods are implemented and supported in secondary schools in Legislative District 5, Isabela, creates a need to examine their classroom use, perceived effects, curriculum alignment, challenges, and coping mechanisms. This study examined inquiry-based methods in Araling Panlipunan 8 among 40 teachers in public secondary schools in the district. Using a descriptive-normative design, purposive sampling, a structured questionnaire, interviews, and documentary analysis, data were analyzed through frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. Inquiry-based methods were used very often (4.51) and were perceived as very effective (4.42). Learning competencies were fully realized (4.40), while implementation challenges were very serious (4.38). Coping mechanisms were very effective (4.41). The findings indicate that inquiry-based teaching is promising, but sustained teacher development, mentoring, flexible time, student readiness, and adequate resources are needed.

Keywords: Araling Panlipunan 8, inquiry-based learning, MATATAG Curriculum, teacher challenges, instructional strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a central and transformative role in the classroom, serving not only as sources of knowledge but also as facilitators of learning and student development. As key agents in the educational process, teachers are expected to be competent, adaptable, and knowledgeable in both subject matter and instructional strategies to effectively address the diverse needs of learners. Kunter et al. (2013) emphasized that teachers' professional competence is closely associated with instructional quality and student development. Teaching is likewise a dynamic process that requires sensitivity to learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and levels of motivation. According to Ofiaza (2023), teachers' instructional styles can influence students' motivation and engagement, making the use of appropriate and varied teaching approaches important in sustaining learners' interest and promoting understanding.

*Corresponding author

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Motivating students is one of the most challenging yet essential responsibilities of teachers because learner engagement directly influences the effectiveness of instruction. Skinner (2016) emphasized the importance of maintaining learners' interest in the learning process. However, learners are motivated by different factors. Some may respond positively to recognition, while others may be motivated by challenges, curiosity, or opportunities to explore. As explained by Aronson (2017), cultural, linguistic, and social differences can influence classroom experiences and reinforce the need for inclusive and learner-centered pedagogical approaches. Teachers therefore need to employ strategies that provide learners with meaningful and varied opportunities to participate in the learning process.

One approach that has gained considerable attention is Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), a student-centered teaching approach grounded in constructivist perspectives of learning. IBL emphasizes learners' active participation in constructing knowledge by asking questions, investigating evidence, analyzing information, and drawing reasoned conclusions. Rather than depending primarily on rote memorization, learners are encouraged to explore problems and develop explanations based on evidence. In this approach, the teacher assumes the role of a facilitator who provides guidance, scaffolding, feedback, and opportunities for learners to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Pedaste et al. (2015) explained that inquiry-based learning involves a cycle of processes that may include orientation, conceptualization, investigation, conclusion, and discussion.

Research has demonstrated the potential of inquiry-based learning to promote meaningful learning across various educational contexts. Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) explained that inquiry-based and problem-based learning can be strengthened through appropriate scaffolding, enabling learners to develop deeper understanding while engaging in complex learning tasks. In the words of these researchers, effective scaffolding helps learners manage challenging tasks while gradually developing greater independence. Inquiry-based learning can therefore contribute not only to academic achievement but also to the development of critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. By allowing learners to investigate questions that are meaningful to them, the approach may also strengthen motivation and engagement.

Inquiry-based learning can take different forms depending on the degree of guidance provided by the teacher and the level of independence given to learners. These forms include structured inquiry, in which the teacher provides the questions and procedures; guided inquiry, in which learners investigate questions within a framework provided by the teacher; and open inquiry, in which learners formulate their own questions and determine appropriate ways of investigating them. Such flexibility allows inquiry-based learning to be adapted to different grade levels, subject areas, learning objectives, and learner needs.

In social studies education, inquiry-based learning offers particular opportunities for developing historical thinking and civic understanding. Through inquiry, learners can examine historical events, interpret primary sources, evaluate different perspectives, and construct evidence-based arguments. Canuto (2022) emphasized the potential of inquiry-oriented social studies instruction to cultivate communities of inquiry and support learners' development as deliberative citizens. Similarly, Osias (2023) examined online inquiry-based instruction in social studies and highlighted its potential for promoting learner participation and engagement. Lampros et al. (2022), in an action research study involving pre-service teachers, likewise reported that inquiry-based learning could support the teaching of controversial historical issues while developing learners' confidence in analyzing sources and constructing historical narratives.

Moreover, inquiry-based learning is consistent with the demands of 21st-century education because it encourages collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking, and digital literacy. When learners investigate real-world issues, collaborate with others, and

present their findings, they have opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and confidence. The approach can also provide multiple entry points for learners with different abilities, experiences, and interests. By connecting classroom inquiry with learners' cultural backgrounds and real-life experiences, teachers can promote more meaningful participation and engagement.

In the context of Araling Panlipunan 8, which includes the study of Philippine history during the Spanish colonial period, maintaining learners' interest may present a considerable challenge. When historical content is presented predominantly through traditional lecture-based approaches, learners may become passive recipients of information. Historical topics that are not connected to learners' experiences or contemporary issues may also be perceived as distant, repetitive, or difficult to understand. Consequently, learners may demonstrate limited engagement, shallow understanding, and poor retention of historical concepts.

The use of inquiry-based learning in Araling Panlipunan may provide an alternative to predominantly teacher-centered approaches. Through inquiry, learners can formulate questions about historical events, examine primary and secondary sources, evaluate historical interpretations, and connect past events with contemporary social issues. Such activities position learners as active participants in constructing knowledge rather than merely receiving information. In this way, inquiry-based instruction can potentially strengthen content knowledge while also developing historical thinking, civic awareness, critical reflection, and evidence-based reasoning.

The relevance of inquiry-based learning to Araling Panlipunan is further supported by the studies of Canuto (2022), Osias (2023), and Lampros et al. (2022), which demonstrate the potential of inquiry-oriented approaches in promoting participation, reflection, historical analysis, and democratic engagement. These findings suggest that inquiry-based instruction may be particularly appropriate for a subject that requires learners to examine evidence, understand different perspectives, and relate historical developments to present-day social realities.

Hence, the present study examines the implementation of inquiry-based teaching in Araling Panlipunan 8 in public secondary schools in Legislative District 5 of Isabela. Specifically, it seeks to determine the extent to which inquiry-based methods are used, examine the realization of the learning competencies under the MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan 8, identify the challenges encountered by teachers, and determine the mechanisms they use to address these challenges. The findings are expected to provide useful information for improving instructional practices, supporting teacher professional development, and strengthening the teaching of Araling Panlipunan in the district and in similar educational contexts. The study is anchored in Jerome Bruner's Discovery Learning Theory, John Dewey's Experiential Learning Theory, and Lev Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development. These theoretical perspectives provide complementary explanations of how inquiry-based learning can facilitate active participation, meaningful learning, and the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Bruner's (1961) Discovery Learning Theory emphasizes that learners develop understanding more effectively when they actively discover relationships, concepts, and principles through exploration and problem-solving rather than merely receiving information from the teacher. In the context of Araling Panlipunan, this perspective is relevant because historical and civic concepts can be explored through questions, evidence, analysis, and interpretation. Instead of simply memorizing historical facts, learners can be encouraged to examine evidence and discover relationships among historical events and social issues.

Dewey's (1938) Experiential Learning Theory further emphasizes the importance of experience in the learning process. According to Dewey, meaningful learning occurs when learners actively engage with experiences and reflect on their significance. In Araling Panlipunan, inquiry-based activities can provide opportunities for learners to connect historical knowledge with contemporary social issues and real-life situations. Such connections may make lessons more meaningful and encourage learners to develop critical and reflective thinking.

Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development highlights the importance of guidance and instructional scaffolding in helping learners perform tasks that they cannot yet accomplish independently. As explained by Vygotsky (1978), learning can be supported when learners receive appropriate assistance from more knowledgeable individuals. In inquiry-based learning, the teacher therefore serves as a facilitator who provides guidance, questioning, feedback, and scaffolding while gradually encouraging learners to assume greater responsibility for their learning. This approach is particularly relevant to historical inquiry, where learners may require guidance in evaluating sources, interpreting evidence, and developing reasoned conclusions.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding inquiry-based teaching in Araling Panlipunan 8. Bruner's theory emphasizes discovery and active knowledge construction; Dewey's theory highlights learning through meaningful experiences; and Vygotsky's concept emphasizes guided learning and scaffolding. Collectively, they support the use of inquiry-based instruction as a means of promoting active learning, critical thinking, historical reasoning, and learner participation.

The conceptual framework of the study focuses on the relationship among the respondents' characteristics, the implementation of inquiry-based methods, the realization of the learning competencies in the MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan 8, the challenges encountered by teachers, and the coping mechanisms they employ. The study considers these elements as important factors in understanding the implementation of inquiry-based instruction in public secondary schools in Legislative District 5 of Isabela.

The respondents' profile includes age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, present position, latest performance rating, length of service, and level of in-service training attended. The study also examines the extent to which inquiry-based methods are used in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8, including instructional strategies, learner engagement, and classroom interaction. In addition, it considers the extent to which the learning competencies prescribed in the MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan 8 are realized.

The study further examines the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing inquiry-based methods. These challenges include teacher-related factors, student-related factors, time management, and resource-related concerns. It also considers the mechanisms employed by teachers to address these challenges, such as collaboration with colleagues, the use of digital resources, and the provision of differentiated support.

Through the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, the study seeks to provide an evidence-based understanding of the implementation of inquiry-based methods in Araling Panlipunan 8. The findings may serve as a basis for improving instructional practices, strengthening teacher support and professional development, and enhancing the delivery of Araling Panlipunan instruction in the participating schools.

Statement of the problem

The study sought to determine the effect of inquiry based methods in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8 in public secondary schools in Legislative District 5, Isabela, during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, present position, latest performance rating, length of service, and level of in service training attended?
2. To what extent are inquiry based methods used in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8, and what are their perceived effects on teaching and learning?
3. What is the extent of realization of the learning competencies in the MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan 8?
4. To what extent do secondary school teachers encounter challenges in using inquiry based methods in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8 in terms of teacher related factors, student related factors, time management, and resource related factors?
5. What mechanisms do teachers use to address the challenges encountered in using inquiry based methods in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-normative research design to assess the effectiveness of the inquiry-based method in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8. This research design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe existing instructional practices, identify patterns and relationships, and determine common practices within the educational setting without manipulating the variables. According to Habaridota (2019), the descriptive-normative method is useful for examining the current condition of a group, program, or situation while identifying patterns and relationships that may provide a basis for improving practice. In agreement, Kaiser (2017) stated that descriptive research is particularly useful in educational settings where the purpose is to examine actual conditions and practices. In this study, the design was used to describe the implementation of inquiry-based learning in Araling Panlipunan 8 classrooms, including the instructional strategies employed and the challenges encountered by teachers.

The normative component of the design focused on identifying common or typical practices within the population under study. Christiani (2016) explained that normative research involves examining existing practices and responses within a particular population to establish prevailing conditions or norms. As further explained by Short (2023), descriptive-normative research combines the observation and documentation of actual practices with the identification of common trends within a particular group. Thus, the design enabled the researcher to describe the implementation of inquiry-based instruction and identify common instructional practices and challenges among Araling Panlipunan 8 teachers.

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in Legislative District 5 of Isabela. The district is located in the western portion of the province and includes the municipalities of Aurora, Burgos, Luna, Mallig, Quezon, Quirino, Roxas, and San Manuel. Legislative District 5 is among the additional legislative districts established through Republic Act No. 11080, which was signed into law on September 27, 2018. The law increased the number of legislative districts in Isabela from four to six and reapportioned the municipalities and cities of the province to strengthen political representation and governance.

Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the respondents. The study involved exactly 40 Araling Panlipunan 8 teachers from public secondary schools in the eight districts comprising Legislative District 5, Isabela. Five teacher-respondents were selected from each district: Aurora, Burgos, Mallig, Luna, Quezon, Quirino, Roxas, and San Manuel. Thus, each

district contributed five respondents, representing 12.50% of the total sample, for an overall total of 40 respondents or 100% of the study sample.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering instrument. It was supplemented by interviews conducted during the retrieval of the questionnaires to clarify vague or unclear responses. The questionnaire was developed from professional books, periodicals, theses, dissertations, and other relevant materials. It covered the profile of the respondents, the extent of use and perceived effect of inquiry-based methods in teaching, the extent of realization of the learning competencies under the MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan 8, the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing inquiry-based methods, and the effectiveness of coping mechanisms used to address these challenges.

Before its administration, the questionnaire was pilot-tested among selected Araling Panlipunan 8 teachers in the neighboring municipality of Aurora, Isabela. The teachers were asked to answer the instrument honestly and provide suggestions for its improvement. The draft questionnaire was also reviewed by the researcher's adviser and the Dean of the Graduate School. Their comments, together with the feedback obtained during the pre-testing, were incorporated into the final version before reproduction and distribution.

To further validate and clarify the responses, the researcher conducted unstructured interviews during the retrieval of the questionnaires. These interviews were conducted in classrooms, offices, or homes during free periods, breaks, or weekends and were intended to clarify vague or inconsistent answers. Documentary analysis was also undertaken to verify information obtained from the questionnaires. The documents reviewed included lesson exemplars, curriculum guides, class records, and other relevant teacher records.

Before the questionnaires were administered, the researcher secured approval from the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent and obtained permission from the principals or school heads of the selected public secondary schools. The questionnaire underwent validation and was revised based on the recommendations of the research adviser. After finalization, the instrument was reproduced and systematically distributed to the respondents. The researcher supervised the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires to facilitate a high response rate and address concerns raised by the participants. The collected data were subsequently tallied, organized, and prepared for analysis and interpretation.

The data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents, while the weighted mean was used to analyze the responses to Research Questions 2 to 5. The weighted mean was applied in determining the extent of the use of inquiry-based methods, their perceived effects, the realization of the learning competencies under the MATATAG Curriculum for Araling Panlipunan 8, the challenges encountered by teachers, and the effectiveness of coping mechanisms.

The methodology therefore consisted of a descriptive-normative research design, purposive sampling of 40 Araling Panlipunan 8 teachers, the use of a structured questionnaire supported by interviews and documentary analysis, and descriptive statistical analysis through frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. These procedures provided the basis for describing the implementation of inquiry-based instruction, determining the challenges encountered by teachers, and assessing the perceived effectiveness of the instructional approach in Araling Panlipunan 8.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 40 Araling Panlipunan 8 teachers whose profiles indicate a generally experienced and professionally qualified group. The largest age group was 36–40 years old, comprising 22.50% of the respondents, followed by those aged 26–30 years at

20.00%. Female teachers constituted 67.50% of the respondents, while 32.50% were male. Most were married (60.00%). In terms of educational attainment, 37.50% were graduates of Master of Arts in Education, while another 30.00% had completed MAED units. Only 7.50% had completed or were pursuing doctoral-level studies. In terms of position, 55.00% were Teacher III, making this the largest group. Moreover, 62.50% received a Very Satisfactory performance rating, while 17.50% received an Outstanding rating. Nearly half of the respondents (47.50%) had 6–10 years of teaching experience. These characteristics suggest that the respondents generally had sufficient classroom experience and professional preparation to provide informed assessments of inquiry-based teaching.

With regard to professional development, school-level in-service training was the most frequently reported level of training, with 19 mentions, compared with 12 at the division level and 9 at the district level. This pattern suggests that professional learning opportunities are commonly organized within schools and may therefore be closely connected to teachers' immediate instructional needs. However, the later findings on teacher-related challenges indicate that existing training may not yet be sufficient to develop strong competence and confidence specifically in inquiry-based teaching.

The teachers reported that inquiry-based methods were used very often, with an overall weighted mean of 4.51. Technology-enhanced inquiry received the highest rating at 5.00, followed by structured inquiry at 4.70 and open inquiry at 4.53. Guided inquiry and problem-based learning both obtained 4.48, while case-based learning received 4.38. These results indicate that teachers were not limited to a single form of inquiry-based instruction. More importantly, the highest rating for technology-enhanced inquiry suggests that digital resources have become an important means of supporting investigation, analysis, and presentation of learning tasks. At the same time, the strong rating for structured inquiry may indicate that teachers are more comfortable using inquiry when clear guidance and direction are provided.

The perceived effect of inquiry-based teaching was likewise positive. The overall weighted mean was 4.42, interpreted as Very Effective. Structured inquiry obtained the highest rating at 4.68, while case-based learning and technology-enhanced inquiry each obtained 4.40. Guided inquiry received 4.35, whereas open inquiry and problem-based learning each obtained 4.33. The findings suggest that teachers perceive inquiry-based instruction as an effective approach for Araling Panlipunan 8. However, the higher rating for structured inquiry compared with open inquiry is noteworthy. It may mean that teachers recognize the value of learner independence but still find teacher guidance important, particularly when students are required to analyze historical issues, formulate questions, and draw conclusions.

The learning competencies under the MATATAG Curriculum were generally assessed as fully realized, with an overall weighted mean of 4.40 across the four quarters. The fourth quarter obtained the highest rating at 4.45, followed closely by the first quarter at 4.44, the third quarter at 4.39, and the second quarter at 4.31. The first quarter recorded strong ratings for describing the physical characteristics of the world and appreciating human interaction with the environment, both at 4.70. In the second quarter, the lowest rating was 4.03 for analyzing the consequences of European exploration and colonialism in the Americas. Although still interpreted as realized, this relatively lower score may indicate that some historically complex competencies require greater instructional support.

The third quarter obtained an overall weighted mean of 4.39, with the competencies on World War I and the role of various movements in promoting democratic society receiving the highest ratings of 4.70. The fourth quarter recorded an overall weighted mean of 4.45, with the competency on describing the United Nations and the Philippines as a member receiving the highest rating of 4.55. Taken together, the results indicate that teachers perceived inquiry-based

teaching as capable of supporting the realization of curriculum competencies across different content areas and levels of historical and social analysis.

Despite the favorable assessment of inquiry-based teaching, the respondents identified substantial difficulties in implementing it. The overall weighted mean for the challenges was 4.38, interpreted as Very Serious. Among the four categories, teacher-related factors ranked first at 4.44, followed by time management at 4.41, resource-related factors at 4.35, and student-related factors at 4.30. This is an important finding because it shows that the main barriers are not confined to students or classroom resources. The teachers themselves identified professional knowledge, confidence, preparation, and instructional support as major concerns.

Teacher-related challenges were particularly pronounced. The most serious concern was limited knowledge of inquiry-based teaching strategies (4.70), followed by lack of confidence in using inquiry-based instruction (4.58). Inadequate training, difficulty preparing inquiry-based lesson plans, uncertainty in assessing inquiry-based student work, and lack of mentoring each obtained 4.48. These findings point to a significant implementation issue: teachers may recognize the value of inquiry-based instruction and use it frequently, yet they may still lack the specialized knowledge and support necessary to implement it confidently and consistently.

Student-related challenges were also rated very serious, with an overall weighted mean of 4.30. The most prominent concern was students' limited readiness for open-ended tasks (4.70), followed by students' heavy reliance on teacher guidance (4.35). Lack of engagement, resistance to independent tasks, limited background knowledge, and inconsistent participation in group activities each obtained 4.30. These results suggest that inquiry-based learning requires not only a change in teaching practice but also a gradual development of students' capacity to work independently, ask questions, collaborate, and take responsibility for learning.

Time management emerged as another major concern, with an overall weighted mean of 4.41. The highest-rated problems were discussions extending beyond the allotted period and difficulty managing students working at different paces, both with a weighted mean of 4.78. Insufficient time to complete inquiry lessons also received a high rating of 4.75. These results are particularly significant because inquiry-based learning normally requires time for questioning, investigation, discussion, reflection, and presentation. Thus, the findings suggest a tension between the depth of learning encouraged by inquiry and the limited time available within regular classroom schedules.

Resource-related challenges were likewise very serious, with an overall weighted mean of 4.35. The most serious concern was the lack of appropriate instructional materials for inquiry (4.65), followed by a shortage of technology tools for investigations (4.45). Poor internet connectivity and the unavailability of simulation tools and interactive media each received 4.38. These findings indicate that the successful use of inquiry-based learning depends not only on teachers' competence but also on the availability of instructional, technological, and physical resources.

Despite these difficulties, the teachers reported that the coping mechanisms they used were very effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.41. The highest-rated strategy was creating a flexible schedule that allows adjustments in pacing without sacrificing learning depth, with a weighted mean of 4.78. Seeking mentoring or coaching from experienced colleagues or instructional leaders followed at 4.68. Other effective strategies included using short, focused inquiry activities, utilizing free online resources, collaborating with colleagues, attending professional development activities, modifying existing materials, and breaking complex inquiry tasks into smaller activities.

Generally, the findings present an important contrast. Teachers reported that inquiry-based methods are used very often (4.51) and are perceived as very effective (4.42), while the learning competencies are assessed as fully realized (4.40). At the same time, the overall

challenges in implementing the approach are very serious (4.38). This suggests that the positive implementation of inquiry-based teaching does not mean that implementation is easy. Rather, teachers appear to be making considerable efforts to use the approach despite difficulties involving their own preparation and confidence, students' readiness for independent inquiry, limited classroom time, and inadequate resources.

The findings further indicate that professional support may be central to sustaining inquiry-based instruction. The fact that teacher-related challenges ranked highest, while mentoring and coaching emerged as one of the most effective coping mechanisms, points to a practical direction for intervention. Strengthening teachers' knowledge of inquiry-based strategies, improving their confidence in designing and assessing inquiry tasks, providing mentoring, and making appropriate instructional resources available could help reduce the barriers identified in the study. At the classroom level, the results also suggest the need to gradually develop students' readiness for open-ended and self-directed learning rather than expecting them to immediately perform independently.

In sum, the study shows that inquiry-based teaching is viewed positively by the 40 Araling Panlipunan 8 teachers and is perceived to contribute to the realization of the MATATAG Curriculum competencies. However, its continued and more effective implementation requires sustained teacher development, realistic time allocation, adequate instructional and technological resources, and strategies that gradually build students' inquiry skills. The findings therefore support the view that the success of inquiry-based teaching depends not simply on adopting the method, but on creating the conditions that allow teachers and learners to use it effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the teacher-respondents were predominantly 36–40 years old, female, married, MAED graduates, and Teacher III. Most received a Very Satisfactory performance rating, had 6–10 years of teaching experience, and attended in-service training primarily at the school level. These characteristics indicate that the respondents were generally mid-career teachers with graduate-level qualifications and substantial classroom experience.

The use of inquiry-based methods in teaching Araling Panlipunan 8 was manifested very often. Teachers regularly used Technology-Enhanced Inquiry, Structured Inquiry, and Open Inquiry, among other approaches, to engage learners in activities that encourage participation, investigation, and critical thinking. Among the strategies, Structured Inquiry, Case-Based Learning, and Technology-Enhanced Inquiry were perceived as very effective in enhancing student learning. These approaches provide learners with opportunities to examine issues, analyze information, and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

The learning competencies in Araling Panlipunan 8 were assessed as fully realized across all four quarters. This indicates that the use of inquiry-based methods supported the attainment of competencies involving the understanding of historical events, analysis of societal and global issues, and evaluation of their implications. The findings suggest that inquiry-based instruction can be effectively aligned with the learning expectations of the MATATAG Curriculum.

Despite these positive findings, the teachers encountered very serious challenges in implementing inquiry-based methods. The challenges involved teacher-related factors, student-related factors, time management, and resource-related factors. Teacher-related concerns were the most serious, particularly limited knowledge of inquiry-based strategies, lack of confidence, inadequate training, difficulty in preparing inquiry-based lessons, and uncertainty

in assessing students' inquiry work. Time constraints, students' limited readiness for open-ended tasks, and inadequate instructional and technological resources also affected implementation. These findings show that the effective use of inquiry-based teaching requires more than the adoption of the strategy; it also requires appropriate preparation, support, time, and resources.

The teachers, however, considered their coping mechanisms very effective. Mentoring and coaching from experienced colleagues or instructional leaders, collaboration among teachers, participation in professional development activities, flexible scheduling, and adjustment of lesson plans were among the strategies that helped address the identified difficulties. In view of these findings, schools should provide sustained and structured professional development focused on inquiry-based teaching, particularly on lesson planning, questioning techniques, facilitation, and assessment of inquiry-based learning. School heads and instructional leaders should also establish mentoring and coaching systems to strengthen teachers' competence and confidence.

Teachers are encouraged to collaboratively design and refine inquiry-based lesson plans and to use Structured Inquiry as an appropriate starting point, particularly for learners who are still developing the skills needed for independent and open-ended inquiry. As students become more prepared, teachers may gradually introduce more open-ended tasks. Activities that develop questioning, critical thinking, collaboration, and independent learning should likewise be incorporated to improve students' readiness for inquiry-based learning.

School administrators should also consider reasonable flexibility in class schedules and instructional pacing because time management was identified as a serious concern. Schools should strengthen the availability of instructional materials, digital tools, reference materials, and reliable internet connectivity to support inquiry activities. Finally, future researchers may undertake similar studies using larger samples, other grade levels, or different educational settings to further examine the implementation, effectiveness, challenges, and support mechanisms associated with inquiry-based instruction.

On the whole, the study concludes that inquiry-based teaching is frequently used, perceived as effective, and capable of supporting the realization of Araling Panlipunan 8 learning competencies. However, its sustained and effective implementation depends on adequate teacher preparation, student readiness, sufficient instructional time, appropriate resources, and continuing professional and administrative support.

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