

# The Teaching Efficacy and Professional Competence of Alternative Learning System Teachers of Bislig City Division

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## ABSTRACT

This study determined the teaching efficacy and professional competence of Alternative Learning System (ALS) teachers in the Division of Bislig City as basis for an enhanced action plan. Specifically, it examined the professional preparation of ALS teachers, their teaching performance across the domains of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), their roles and responsibilities in instruction, community involvement, and research, the differences between the perceptions of ALS teachers and formal education teachers regarding teaching performance, and the relationship between professional preparation and teaching efficacy. The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design involving 19 ALS teachers through complete enumeration of usable respondents and 147 formal education teachers selected through simple random sampling. A

researcher-made questionnaire, validated by experts and subjected to pilot testing, served as the primary data-gathering instrument. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, chi-square test, coefficient of contingency, and t-test. Findings revealed that ALS teachers had satisfactory professional preparation and rated themselves from Very Satisfactory to Outstanding across PPST-related domains, while formal education teachers generally rated ALS teachers at the Satisfactory level. The study further found a significant difference between the perceptions of ALS teachers and formal education teachers and a significant relationship between the professional preparation profile and the teaching efficacy of ALS teachers. Based on the findings, the study proposed a capacity-building and professional development action plan to strengthen ALS teachers' competencies, instructional performance, community engagement, and research competence in the Bislig City Division.

**Keywords:** *Alternative Learning System, teaching efficacy, professional competence, Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers, instructional performance, capacity-building program*

## INTRODUCTION

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) is a major educational intervention of the Department of Education that provides out-of-school youth and adults with a second opportunity to complete basic education through flexible, non-formal learning pathways. In the Philippine context, ALS is especially important because it responds to the learning needs of marginalized learners who may have left formal schooling because of age, economic hardship, family responsibilities, or other personal and social circumstances. Calabit (2022) emphasized that ALS gives learners hope and creates pathways for improving their lives, while the Department of Education vision underscores the need to produce Filipinos with values and competencies that enable them to contribute meaningfully to nation-building (Department of Education, 2013).

At the center of ALS implementation are teachers who perform roles beyond those commonly expected in formal classrooms. ALS teachers work in non-conventional learning settings, address diverse learner profiles, use flexible and individualized learning strategies, and often operate with limited instructional resources. Their teaching efficacy, or belief in their ability to influence learner outcomes, becomes essential in sustaining learner participation and improving learning achievement. Ackerman (2018) explained that self-efficacy affects how individuals execute actions in specific situations; in ALS, this belief influences how teachers respond to learners' varied needs, challenging contexts, and limited support systems.

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) provides a useful framework for examining teacher effectiveness because it articulates domains of professional practice such as content knowledge, pedagogy, learning environment, diversity of learners, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages, and professional growth (Department of Education, 2018). These standards are particularly relevant to ALS because teachers must demonstrate professional competence while facilitating flexible learning, engaging community stakeholders, and supporting learners who may have different educational histories and life experiences.

Despite the established importance of teacher competence, the manuscript indicates continuing concerns in the Division of Bislig City regarding learning achievement, inconsistent utilization of assessment tools, limited technical assistance, and insufficient enthusiasm for school-based research. These concerns point to the need to examine how ALS teachers perceive their own professional competence and how formal education teachers perceive the performance of ALS teachers. By identifying gaps between self-assessment and peer assessment, the study provides baseline evidence for designing an enhanced action plan that can strengthen ALS teacher effectiveness, professional preparation, and role performance.

This study therefore determined the teaching efficacy and professional competence of Alternative Learning System teachers in the Bislig City Division. Specifically, it assessed their professional preparation, teaching performance across PPST-related domains, roles and responsibilities in instruction, community involvement, and research, differences in perception between ALS teachers and formal education teachers, and the relationship between professional preparation and teaching efficacy. The findings served as the basis for an enhanced capacity-building action plan.

## Literature Review

### *Alternative Learning System and the Role of ALS Teachers*

The Alternative Learning System has been recognized as a significant mechanism for educational inclusion in the Philippines. Studies on ALS implementation show that the program can provide meaningful learning opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults, particularly those in low-resourced communities. Mehra et al. (2021) described ALS as a valuable investment for young people at risk in urban contexts, while Arzadon et al. (2023) emphasized that the "ALS way" offers lessons in educational care, flexibility, and responsiveness, especially during periods of disruption such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

ALS teachers perform multiple roles as facilitators, mentors, community connectors, and instructional designers. Abad and Galleto (2020) found that ALS mobile teachers demonstrated commitment and best practices in delivering program content, while Bahiana (2020) noted that ALS teachers use modular materials, technology-based approaches, experiential learning activities, and differentiated instruction to reach learners. These practices affirm that ALS teaching requires professional flexibility and responsiveness beyond conventional classroom routines.

Teacher readiness and professional performance are also important in sustaining ALS outcomes. Loria (2024) emphasized that ALS teachers must be prepared to teach learners according to their level because ALS classes often include learners with different backgrounds and abilities. Similarly, Saron (2023) found that the instructional competence of ALS implementers is strongly connected with teaching performance, suggesting that the quality of ALS delivery depends greatly on the competence and preparedness of teachers.

### ***Teaching Efficacy, Professional Preparation, and Professional Development***

Teaching efficacy refers to teachers' belief in their capacity to organize and implement actions that lead to successful learning outcomes. Ackerman (2018) defined self-efficacy as a set of beliefs that influences how individuals act in prospective situations. In ALS, efficacy becomes especially important because teachers must respond to learner diversity, limited resources, and non-formal learning arrangements. Flores (2022) argued that ALS teachers need to believe in their ability to design strategies that address learners' varied needs, preferences, and abilities.

Professional development is repeatedly identified in the literature as a key factor that strengthens teacher competence. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasized that effective professional development enhances instructional competence and confidence, while Enarsao (2023) highlighted the need for stronger teacher training in technology and pedagogy. In ALS settings, professional development may include training on adult learning principles, differentiated instruction, modular delivery, assessment strategies, community engagement, and learner support.

Resource availability and psychological well-being also shape teaching efficacy. Bustillo and Aguilos (2022) noted that gaps in digital and modular learning resources can affect instruction, while Maslach and Leiter (2016) showed that stress and burnout can negatively influence educational work. Magtalas and Eduvala (2024) further linked workload with burnout and performance. These studies suggest that ALS teacher effectiveness must be supported not only through training but also through adequate materials, manageable workload, and systems that protect teachers' well-being.

### ***Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers and ALS Competence***

The PPST provides a standards-based lens for understanding teacher competence. It emphasizes content knowledge and pedagogy, supportive learning environments, responsiveness to learner diversity, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages, professional engagement, and personal growth (Department of Education, 2018). These domains align with the expectations for ALS teachers, who are required to facilitate learning in flexible spaces while still ensuring quality, learner-centered, and standards-based instruction.

The literature further supports the importance of these domains in ALS. Pablo (2021) emphasized that ALS teachers must know, do, and value professional standards to achieve competence and quality education. Gapila (2019) likewise discussed the relevance of Philippine standards in assessing teacher performance. These perspectives support the use of PPST-related domains as indicators for evaluating ALS teachers' professional competence and teaching performance.

Assessment, curriculum planning, and learning environment are central to ALS delivery. Valenzuela (2022) highlighted the importance of aligning instruction and assessment, while Candido and Silva (2021) emphasized teachers' self-efficacy in differentiated teaching strategies. In the ALS context, such alignment is necessary because learners progress at different rates and may require individualized support, flexible modules, and practical learning applications.

### ***Community Involvement, Research, and Support Systems in ALS***

ALS teachers are not only classroom facilitators but also community-based educators who often coordinate with parents, local organizations, and stakeholders. Parto and Yango (2023) showed that teaching competence and adversity quotient influence students' learning engagement in ALS, while Flores (2022) noted that limited local government support can shape ALS teachers' perceptions of their capacity to request and obtain assistance. These findings highlight the importance of community linkages in sustaining ALS learner participation and support.

Research competence is another professional responsibility of teachers. The manuscript indicates that despite seminars and capacity-building activities on action research, some teachers still show limited interest in research activities. Fernandez (2013) identified areas of weakness among ALS teachers related to subject matter mastery, questioning, instructional aids, teaching strategies, and real-life learning tasks, while Lozada (2022)

linked implementers' job performance with ALS achievement. These findings suggest that research-based practice can help teachers address instructional problems and improve learning delivery.

The literature therefore points to the need for holistic support systems that combine professional development, peer collaboration, action research training, and community engagement. Such support can help ALS teachers move from satisfactory performance toward higher levels of professional competence and educational effectiveness.

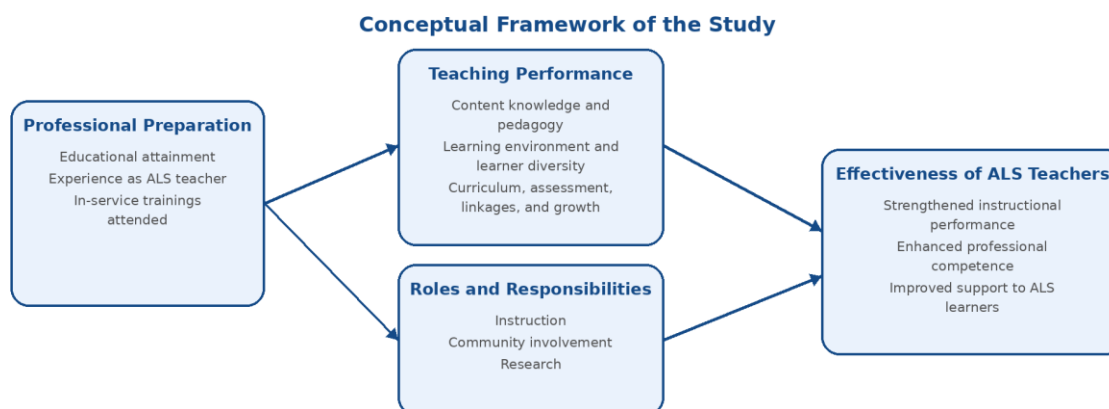


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework of the Study*

## METHODS

### Research Design

The study used a quantitative descriptive research design. This design was appropriate because the study described the prevailing professional preparation, teaching efficacy, professional competence, role performance, and perceptions of ALS teachers and formal education teachers. The design also allowed comparisons between respondent groups and examined the relationship between professional preparation and teaching efficacy.

### Research Locale

The study was conducted in the Bislig City Division, one of the divisions of DepEd Caraga Region. The division includes several districts and public schools, making it a relevant context for examining the teaching efficacy and professional competence of ALS teachers serving learners through alternative education delivery.

### Participants and Sampling Technique

The analysis involved 19 Alternative Learning System teachers and 147 formal education teachers in the Bislig City Division. The ALS teachers represented the usable complete-enumeration respondents, while formal education teachers were selected through simple random sampling using the lottery technique. The respondent groups provided two perspectives: the self-assessment of ALS teachers and the external perception of formal education teachers regarding ALS teachers' teaching performance and role performance.

### Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary instrument. The instrument included items on the professional preparation of ALS teachers, teaching performance across PPST-related domains, and roles and responsibilities in instruction, community involvement, and research. The questionnaire used a rating scale interpreted as Outstanding, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, and Poor. It was reviewed by the

adviser and thesis committee and was pilot-tested with 20 teachers to establish validity and reliability before final administration.

### Data Gathering Procedure

After validation of the questionnaire, the researcher prepared sufficient copies for the target respondents and secured permission from the Division Office and concerned school heads. The instrument was distributed to the respondents and retrieved personally. The responses were tallied, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis with the guidance of the research adviser and statistician.

### Data Analysis

Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the professional preparation profile of ALS teachers. Weighted means were used to determine teaching performance and role performance. The chi-square test, coefficient of contingency, and t-test were used to determine significant differences and relationships relevant to the research problems. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

### Ethical Consideration

The researcher sought permission from the appropriate division and school authorities before gathering data. Participation was limited to the identified respondents, and results were presented in aggregated form to protect the identity of individual teachers. The study followed institutional research procedures and used the data only for the purposes of determining ALS teacher efficacy, professional competence, and the development of an enhanced action plan.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Professional Preparation of ALS Teachers

The professional preparation profile of ALS teachers was rated Satisfactory, with an average weighted mean of 2.98. The teachers had varied levels of educational attainment, experience as ALS teachers, and in-service trainings attended. In-service training received the highest weighted mean of 3.42, while educational attainment and experience as ALS teacher were rated Satisfactory. This result indicates that ALS teachers possessed the professional preparation needed to perform their tasks, although additional development remains necessary to improve their competence and instructional effectiveness.

Table 1. *Professional Preparation Profile of ALS Teachers*

Area	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Rating
Educational attainment	2.78	Satisfactory
Experience as ALS teacher	2.83	Satisfactory
In-service trainings attended	3.42	Satisfactory
Average	2.98	Satisfactory

The findings support the position of Saron (2023) that instructional competence affects teaching performance. They also indicate the need for continuing professional development, as Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and Enarsao (2023) emphasized that sustained training and pedagogy-related support improve teachers' instructional competence and confidence.

### Teaching Performance Across PPST-Related Domains

ALS teachers assessed their teaching performance as Very Satisfactory to Outstanding across the PPST-related domains. Their highest self-ratings were in learning environment (4.55, Outstanding) and curriculum and planning (4.53, Outstanding), followed by content knowledge, assessment and reporting, personal growth and professional development, pedagogy, diversity of learners, and community linkages and professional engagement.

These results show that ALS teachers viewed themselves as competent in designing learning opportunities, creating supportive environments, and sustaining professional growth.

In contrast, formal education teachers generally rated ALS teachers at the Satisfactory level, except in diversity of learners, which was rated Very Satisfactory. This difference suggests a gap between ALS teachers' self-perception and the perception of their colleagues. The gap may indicate that ALS teachers feel confident in their performance, but their practices may not be sufficiently visible, documented, or consistently recognized by other teachers. It also suggests the importance of peer observation, collaborative planning, and feedback mechanisms to align self-assessment with external evaluation.

Table 2. *Summary of Teaching Performance Ratings of ALS Teachers*

PPST-Related Domain	ALS Teachers' Self-Rating	Formal Teachers' Rating
Content knowledge	4.48 - Very Satisfactory	3.41 - Satisfactory
Pedagogy	4.47 - Very Satisfactory	3.44 - Satisfactory
Learning environment	4.55 - Outstanding	3.42 - Satisfactory
Diversity of learners	4.38 - Very Satisfactory	3.62 - Very Satisfactory
Curriculum and planning	4.53 - Outstanding	3.39 - Satisfactory
Assessment and reporting	4.48 - Very Satisfactory	3.41 - Satisfactory
Community linkages and professional engagement	4.37 - Very Satisfactory	3.36 - Satisfactory
Personal growth and professional development	4.48 - Very Satisfactory	3.37 - Satisfactory

These findings are consistent with the PPST expectation that teachers demonstrate professional competence across content, pedagogy, assessment, community engagement, and professional development domains (Department of Education, 2018). The self-ratings also reflect the importance of efficacy in flexible learning contexts, where teachers must believe in their ability to respond to varied learner needs (Ackerman, 2018; Flores, 2022). However, the lower peer ratings highlight the need for professional learning communities and evidence-based documentation of instructional practices.

### **Roles and Responsibilities in Instruction, Community Involvement, and Research**

ALS teachers rated their performance of roles and responsibilities as Very Satisfactory to Outstanding. Community involvement obtained the highest self-rating of 4.50, followed by instruction at 4.48 and research at 4.30. This means that ALS teachers perceived themselves as actively involved in instructional implementation, school-community engagement, and research-related tasks. The findings affirm that ALS teachers perform broader professional functions, especially because ALS delivery requires community partnership and learner-centered support.

Formal education teachers rated ALS teachers' performance in instruction, community involvement, and research as Satisfactory. This pattern again shows a difference between self-evaluation and peer evaluation. Although ALS teachers viewed themselves as highly effective, formal education teachers perceived their role performance as adequate but still needing improvement. The comparatively lower peer rating in research suggests the need for stronger action research training and support, especially because research can help teachers solve classroom problems and improve learning outcomes.

Table 3. *Summary of Ratings on ALS Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities*

Role Area	ALS Teachers' Self-Rating	Formal Teachers' Rating
Instruction	4.48 - Very Satisfactory	3.41 - Satisfactory
Community involvement	4.50 - Outstanding	3.41 - Satisfactory
Research	4.30 - Very Satisfactory	3.39 - Satisfactory

The findings are supported by literature showing that ALS teachers use flexible strategies and community-based practices to reach learners (Bahiana, 2020; Arzadon et al., 2023). However, the results also support the need to strengthen professional development in research, assessment, and community linkages, as effective ALS implementation depends on teacher competence, resourcefulness, and engagement with stakeholders (Lozada, 2022; Parto & Yango, 2023).

### Significant Difference in Perceptions of Teaching Performance

The study found a significant difference between the perceptions of ALS teachers and formal education teachers regarding ALS teachers' teaching performance. The computed chi-square value of 39.86 was greater than the critical value of 9.45 at the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that the perceptions of ALS teachers and teachers do not differ was rejected.

Table 4. *Difference Between ALS Teachers' and Formal Teachers' Perceptions*

Statistical Test	Computed Value	Critical Value	Decision	Interpretation
Chi-square	39.86	9.45	Reject Ho1	Significant

This result indicates that ALS teachers and formal education teachers viewed ALS teacher performance differently. The difference may be explained by variations in roles, experiences, exposure to ALS work, and expectations of teaching effectiveness. For program improvement, this finding suggests that ALS teachers need structured opportunities for peer dialogue, classroom observation, mentoring, and performance evidence-sharing to ensure that their contributions are understood and evaluated using appropriate ALS-specific expectations.

### Relationship Between Professional Preparation, Teaching Performance, and Role Performance

The study also found a significant relationship between the professional preparation profile, teaching performance, and roles and responsibilities of ALS teachers. The chi-square value of 70.44 was greater than the critical value of 15.51 at the 0.05 level of significance. The coefficient of contingency was 0.11, and the t-test value of 7.83 was greater than the tabular value of 1.96. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between professional preparation, efficacy, and roles and responsibilities was rejected.

Table 5. *Relationship Between Professional Preparation, Teaching Performance, and Role Performance*

Statistical Indicator	Value	Comparison/Decision
Chi-square	70.44	Greater than critical value of 15.51
Coefficient of contingency	0.11	Relationship present
t-test	7.83	Greater than tabular value of 1.96
Decision	Reject Ho2	Significant relationship found

The result underscores the importance of professional preparation in strengthening ALS teacher effectiveness. Teachers who have stronger preparation, relevant experience, and training opportunities are more likely to perceive themselves as effective in their teaching performance and professional roles. This supports the literature that teacher development, instructional competence, and continuing training are central to improving educational outcomes in ALS and other learning environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Loria, 2024; Saron, 2023).

### Proposed Enhanced Action Plan

Based on the findings, the study proposed a capacity-building and professional development program for ALS teachers. The plan targeted the major areas assessed in the study, including content knowledge, pedagogy, learning environment, learner diversity, curriculum and planning, assessment and reporting, community linkages, professional growth, and research. The proposed plan aimed to strengthen ALS teachers' competencies and support their effectiveness in performing their roles and responsibilities.

Table 6. *Proposed Capacity-Building Action Plan for ALS Teachers*

Area of Concern	Objective	Time Frame	Success Indicator
Content knowledge	Equip ALS teachers with mastery of content knowledge across curriculum areas.	April-May	100% of ALS teachers manifest mastery of learning contents.
Pedagogy	Support teachers in applying developmentally appropriate and meaningful pedagogy.	April	100% manifest effectiveness in instruction.
Learning environment	Strengthen safe, fair, supportive, and learner-focused environments.	Whole year	100% sustain supportive learning environments.
Diversity of learners	Improve differentiated strategies for varied learner needs.	Whole year	100% apply inclusive teaching strategies.
Curriculum and planning	Enhance planning of relevant and sequenced learning programs.	April-May	100% prepare context-responsive learning plans.
Assessment and reporting	Strengthen use of assessment tools and learner feedback.	April-May	100% use appropriate assessment and reporting strategies.
Community linkages	Develop stronger school-community and stakeholder partnerships.	Whole year	100% sustain active community linkages.
Professional growth	Encourage continuous personal and professional development.	Whole year	100% participate in professional development activities.
Research	Capacitate ALS teachers in conducting action research.	May	100% conduct or develop action research.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that ALS teachers in the Bislig City Division possessed satisfactory professional preparation and perceived themselves as highly competent in teaching performance and role performance. Their strongest self-rated areas were learning environment, curriculum and planning, community involvement, instruction, and personal growth. These results show that ALS teachers view themselves as capable professionals who can respond to the demands of alternative learning delivery.

However, the study also revealed a consistent gap between the self-ratings of ALS teachers and the ratings given by formal education teachers. While ALS teachers rated their performance from Very Satisfactory to Outstanding, formal education teachers generally rated them as Satisfactory. This difference indicates the need for stronger collaboration, clearer performance documentation, and shared understanding of ALS teaching expectations. The significant difference in perceptions also suggests that self-assessment should be complemented by peer feedback and evidence-based performance review.

The significant relationship between professional preparation and teaching efficacy further confirms that training, experience, and educational preparation are important contributors to ALS teacher effectiveness. The study contributes to ALS improvement by providing empirical basis for a capacity-building action plan designed to strengthen teacher competence, instructional quality, community engagement, and research practice in the Bislig City Division.

## Recommendation

The Department of Education and the Bislig City Division should strengthen professional development programs for ALS teachers by providing regular training in content knowledge, pedagogy, differentiated instruction, assessment and reporting, and learner-centered strategies. These trainings should be aligned with the PPST and the specific conditions of ALS delivery.

ALS teachers should engage in peer coaching, classroom observation, collaborative lesson planning, and feedback sessions with formal education teachers and school leaders. These activities can help reduce the gap

between self-perception and external evaluation while promoting shared professional standards and collegial support.

Training on assessment and reporting should be prioritized because peer ratings suggest that this area requires improvement. ALS teachers should be supported in developing assessment tools that are flexible, inclusive, and responsive to learners' varied progress and educational backgrounds.

School heads, district supervisors, and ALS coordinators should strengthen support for community involvement and research. This may include providing time, mentoring, templates, research coaching, and opportunities for ALS teachers to conduct action research and community-based educational projects.

Future researchers may expand the study by including more ALS implementers, learners, school heads, and community stakeholders. Further research may also examine the effectiveness of novice ALS teachers, the impact of professional development programs, and the outcomes of capacity-building interventions on learner achievement and program completion.

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