

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2026, Vol. 7, No. 2, 756 – 769

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.07.02.21>

Research Article

The Experiences of Elementary Learners in the National Learning Camp (NLC) Program of DepEd, Division of Zambales, Philippines

Elbert D. Fronda^{1*}, Marie Fe D. De Guzman², Leila L. Ravana²

¹Cabatuan Integrated School, Botolan, Zambales, Philippines¹

²President Ramon Magsaysay State University, Iba, Zambales, Philippines^{2&3}

Article history:

Submission 25 January 2026

Revised 12 February 2026

Accepted 23 February 2026

*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

ehlfronda97@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study utilized a phenomenological research methodology to explore the lived experiences of elementary Grade 3 pupils in Zone 2, Division of Zambales, who participated in the National Learning Camp (NLC) program. Participants were selected via purposive sampling, ensuring they met specific criteria including: (1) was a bona fide grade 3 pupil participating in the NLC program; (2) had completed at least one full cycle of the NLC program; (3) whose parents/guardians had provided written informed consent for their participation in the study; and (4) was able to communicate their thoughts and experiences clearly and effectively. Qualitative data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and subsequently analyzed using Bingham's five-phase thematic analysis. The findings show that the National Learning Camp successfully created a positive and engaging learning environment for pupils; and enriching experiences in reading and game-based activities. The participants described the challenges in terms of environmental, resources and pedagogical; and emotional struggles. Despite the identified challenges, pupils particularly valued the NLC's impact on basic literacy and their overall perception of learning, crediting to their supportive teachers for much of this success. To further enhance the program, pupils recommend strengthening foundational skills through engaging, hands-on activities, providing personalized attention, and optimizing program duration and resources.

Keywords: *National Learning Camp Program, Elementary Pupils, Challenges, Impact, Attitudes towards Learning, Academic Performance, Program Effectiveness*

How to cite:

Fronda, E. D., De Guzman, M. F. D., & Ravana, L. L. (2026). The Experiences of Elementary Learners in the National Learning Camp (NLC) Program of DepEd, Division of Zambales, Philippines. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 7(2), 756 – 769. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.07.02.21

Introduction

Education, a cornerstone of social progress, confronts persistent global challenges. Despite its recognition as a fundamental human right and a core United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, millions worldwide remain out of school, and a significant portion of those enrolled lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, particularly in developing nations (UNESCO, 2024). This 'learning crisis' carries substantial economic and social ramifications, necessitating substantial investments in education to foster a more equitable and prosperous future (The Price of Inaction, 2024). In response to this global imperative, nations are implementing diverse strategies to mitigate learning loss and enhance educational outcomes as well as to address the country's learning losses and gaps; learning poverty; and to bolster student proficiency in core subjects like Mathematics, Science, and English, the Philippines through its Department of Education (DepEd) launched the National Learning Camp (NLC) via DepEd Order No. 14 S. 2023.

The NLC's efforts resonate with international initiatives aimed at combatting learning loss. Comparable programs include summer learning initiatives in the United States, targeted catch-up programs in the United Kingdom, and comprehensive science education reforms in Japan and Germany. While US summer programs have demonstrated positive outcomes, they also highlight persistent implementation challenges, a critical consideration for the NLC. The NLC, through its emphasis on collaborative teaching and hands-on activities, has shown initial promise (David, et al., 2024).

Beyond mere 'catch-up' strategies, global educational discourse emphasizes holistic, play-based learning, particularly in early childhood education (Arnott & Teichert, 2022). Nations like Japan and Germany, despite their strengths in STEM education, grapple with challenges such as gender stereotypes (Froehlich, et al., 2022). Germany's pursuit of insights from Japan's teacher education (Doil & Pietzner, 2023) and Japan's 'rika' curriculum, which balances scientific literacy with competitive standards (Isozaki, 2022), offer valuable comparative perspectives for the NLC.

Initial studies on the NLC, such as those by Espinosa & Guevara (2024) and Quezada (2024), indicate positive impacts on student engagement, motivation, and teacher development, all crucial for addressing learning losses and promoting educational success. However, the implementation of the NLC has encountered challenges, particularly in skill development and stakeholder engagement (Espinosa & Guevara, 2024), as well as resource limitations, inadequate preparation, and a lack of student interest (Quezada, 2024). These challenges are consistent with implementation issues noted in various international educational programs.

While preliminary research demonstrates promising short-term outcomes, there is a dearth of empirical evidence regarding the NLC's long-term impact and the factors that contribute to its successful and equitable implementation across the Philippines. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of elementary school pupils participating in the NLC in Zone 2, DepEd Division of Zambales. By capturing their narratives, this research sought to provide insights into how the program influences their academic growth, learning engagement, and overall development. The findings of the present study also aimed to contribute to a more purposeful, interactive and intensive implementation of the learning camp in terms of enriched sessions and mentoring. The experiences of the pupil participants will provide educators, school heads, parents and other stakeholders a realistic and accurate data to be considered in the next level of NLC program implementation and the DepEd's cause of further improving educational outcomes among learners.

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore and understand the perspectives of elementary pupils participating in the national Learning Camp Program in Zone 2, Division of Zambales. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do elementary pupils describe their experiences during the National Learning Camp program?
2. How do elementary pupils describe their challenges during the National Learning Camp Program?

3. What specific aspect of the program do they find most helpful?
4. How do pupils perceive the NLC Program's impact on their attitudes towards learning and academic performance?
5. What specific recommendations do elementary school pupils have for improving the National Learning Camp (NLC) program to make it more effective and engaging for future participants?

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by three primary theoretical frameworks: Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). SDT, developed by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, emphasized the importance of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—in fostering intrinsic motivation and well-being (Olafsen & Deci, 2020). On the other hand, ELT, by David Kolb, emphasized active participation and reflection in the learning process, contrasting with traditional passive methods (Chae, 2024). ELT's popularity stemmed from its inclusive, active learning approach and recognition of individual differences in learning styles (Kayes & Kayes, 2021), making it a valuable framework for educational innovation across different fields. While Vygotsky's ZPD referred to the gap between what a learner could do independently and what they could achieve with guidance and support. It emphasized the importance of scaffolding, which involved providing temporary support to learners as they developed new skills and knowledge.

In the context of this study, SDT focused on the 'why' of learning—motivation and engagement; ELT focused on the 'how' of learning—the process of making meaning from experiences, and ZPD helped in understanding 'where' students were in their learning journey and how the National Learning Camp (NLC) program met their individual needs. When pupils were intrinsically motivated, they were more likely to actively engage in the experiential learning cycle. Then, if the NLC program provided rich and engaging experiences, it could enhance students' intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, providing clear goals, constructive

feedback, and opportunities for success could build competence and confidence. Hence, fostering a supportive and collaborative learning environment could enhance feelings of belonging and connection. Understanding the student's ZPD could provide tailored support to help them grasp the concept and move forward. SDT provided a lens for understanding the motivational factors that influenced pupils' engagement and learning within the NLC program, focusing on the extent to which it fostered autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Concurrently, ELT served as a framework for examining how pupils learned through their concrete experiences within the NLC environment, emphasizing the cyclical process of reflecting, conceptualizing, and applying new knowledge, and the ZPD provided a framework for how to build competence through appropriate scaffolding.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically the phenomenological research approach, using thematic analysis to explore and understand the lived experiences of Grade 3 pupils participating in the National Learning Camp (NLC) Program in Zone 2, Division of Zambales, Philippines. Phenomenology is a research method that investigates human experiences focusing on understanding the subjective meanings and significance of these experiences (Delmas & Giles, 2022). Hence, the researchers believed that this research design aligned with the study's aim. To effectively design a phenomenological study, researcher had to carefully consider the research goals and the most appropriate investigative strategies while keeping the search for the essence of the lived experience and the need for flexibility in mind.

The study was conducted at elementary schools of the three (3) Districts (Botolan District, Iba District and Palauig District) of Zone 2, DepEd Division of Zambales. In this study the schools include Baquilan Resettlement School II, Brgy. Baquilan, Botolan; Doña Luisa Obieta Integrated School, Brgy. Amungan, Iba; and Liozon Elementary School at Brgy. Liozon, Palauig. The participants were selected using Purposive sampling technique. This technique according to Campbell, et al. (2020) will allow the

research to focus the resources on a smaller, carefully selected group of participants who could provide the most valuable data. Accordingly, participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) were currently enrolled in Grade 3 in a school within Zone 2, Division of Zambales; (2) had successfully completed at least one full cycle of the National Learning Camp program; (3) had obtained written informed consent from their parents/guardians as participants; and (4) were able to effectively communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to the NLC program.

An in-depth semi-structured interviews guide was developed based on the research questions and the key themes identified from the literature review and the theoretical framework (SDT and ELT). These interviews conducted in the local dialect (Sambali/Tagalog) and translated in English. This allowed pupils to express their experiences in their own words, providing rich and detailed narratives.

Data collection followed the five phases outlined by McMillan & Schumacher (2014). This initial phase involved the crucial steps of planning and preparation that guided the entire research process. The researchers obtained permission and assistance of the School Heads, of the selected Elementary Schools of Zone 2, Division of Zambales, the Advisers and Parents in the conduct of the interview to participants. The data gathering was conducted in the month of May 2025. Phase two marked the start of data collection activities. Interviews were scheduled at a convenient time and location for the pupils. Phase three while simultaneously engaging in initial data analysis. The researchers continued to review and refine field notes. Data were recorded, finalizing all data records and ensuring their proper storage (phase four). The final phase involved completing the research project and disseminating the findings. Throughout the research process, the researcher adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the confidentiality and well-being of the participants. The researcher obtained all necessary approvals from relevant bodies. In addition, parental consent was obtained from each participating child. All information collected from the participants was kept strictly confi-

dential. The researcher ensured that participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity in all research materials and publications. The researcher made every effort to establish a comfortable and supportive interview environment, ensuring the child felt safe, respected, and at ease to share their thoughts and feelings freely.

Data were analyzed through Inductive Thematic Analysis (ITA), following the systematic six-step thematic analysis process developed by Naeem, et al. (2023). Inductive coding is a data-driven approach where themes and codes emerge from the data itself. ITA, allows for an in-depth exploration of the pupils' unique perspectives, feelings, and interpretations. Essentially, inductive thematic analysis prioritizes a 'bottom-up' approach, where themes are generated from the data itself rather than being driven by pre-determined categories (Dawadi, 2020). This approach ensures that the findings are authentically grounded in the participants' voices and experiences. The thematic analysis process outlined by Naeem, et al. (2023) consists of six key steps designed to create a conceptual model from qualitative research findings. The systematic thematic analysis process starts with data familiarization. Followed by the conduct of initial coding. Codes were assigned to meaningful segments of text. The researchers grouped similar codes together to form preliminary themes, which is Phase three. In fourth phase, the researchers look for patterns, connections, and relationships between them. Phase five, the researcher reviewed and refined the identified themes. Last phase, the researchers clearly defined and named each theme.

Results and Discussion

The Lived Experiences of Learners in the National Learning Camp Program in Elementary Schools of Zone 2, Division of Zambales

Q1. How do elementary pupils describe their experiences during the National Learning Camp program?

The pupils perceived the National Learning Camp (NLC) as a positive and engaging environment for learning. The learning camp pro-

vided them with both enriching learning experiences, particularly through interactive games; reading and comprehension activities; and opportunities for fostering social connections - new friendships and positive interactions among participants.

The pupils shared that they have engaged in various forms of reading practice, both individually and collaboratively. This indicates an emphasis on moving beyond mere decoding to actual understanding. This also demonstrate the potential to improve students' reading and narrative understanding capabilities.

"Reading" (Miko, Jojo, Keng, Karl, Andong, Itong, Jenjen)

"Reading while playing" (Angge)

"Reading a story in front of class" (Vinvin, Manny, Jayjay)

"Reading a story and asking what we have learned from the story" (Sonny, Junjun)

"Teaching us how to understand the story" (Ishang)

Regular reading practice and independent reading promotes implicit learning, enhances vocabulary, improves comprehension skills (Mackenzie, 2025). This was in alignment of the results from Maguate, et al. (2024), citing that students' participation in the learning camp significantly improved their reading performance. Moreover,

The results specifically suggest that games were a significant and effective pedagogical tool in the NLC. Based on the pupils' narratives:

"Memory game" (Miko)

"Finding the missing letter" (Angge)

"Word hunt" (Vinvin)

"The puppet show" (Jojo)

"Role playing" (Keng)

"Spelling Relay" (Karl, Jayjay)

"We played games wherein we learn" (Andong Maymay, Jenjen, Manny, Sonny)

"We played guess the word" (Junjun)

"There were words that we needed to complete as a group" (Itong)

"We drew" (Ishang)

Playing while learning has been shown to benefit students across various age groups and contexts. Ramirez & Mendoza (2025) found

and offered valuable developmental, such as improving children's social skills, creativity, emotional resilience, and collaborative behaviors.

It is also notable to see the social benefits of learning camp. This is consistent with the findings of David, et al. (2024), which indicates that the learning camp is highly effective at developing learners' interpersonal abilities; crucial for holistic education and real-world success. As pupil responses confirming new friendships:

"Yes" (Miko, Angge, Vinvin, Jojo, Keng, Karl, Sonny, Manny, Andong, Junjun, Ishang, Jenjen, Maymay)

"Yes, there were three of them" (Jayjay)

This study confirms that remedial programs can provide social benefits for students. Suggesting the supportive environment positively with one another. This is evident with their responses: *"Yes, and we're helping each other" (Itong).*

Pupils found the learening camp to be a positive space and engaging learning environment. It offered enriching experiences through interactive games, focused reading and comprehension activities, and opportunities for social connection. They engaged in various reading practices collaboratively, which is crucial for developing reading skills and fostering learning. The pupils confirmed that new friendships were estblished.

Pupils Description of their Challenges during The National Learning Camp Program

Q2. How do elementary pupils describe their challenges during the National Learning Camp Program?

The pupils revealed that they have encountered challenges while enrolled in the NLC. They described the problems stemming from environmental challenges, resources challenges and pedagogical challenges.

The pupils detailed some environmental challenges (external and interpersonal) that posed as difficulties during their experience in the NLC. The participants recounted:

"It was hot inside the classroom" (Angge, Vinvin, Jojo)

"Sometimes, my classmates are noisy" (Miko, Jenjen)

"My classmates were stubborn" (Andong)

The physical classroom environment, for instance adequate lighting and ventilation being crucial factors (Bresenio, 2025). On the other hand, according to Hasty, et al. (2023), the hyperactive behavior in elementary students negatively impacts their learning outcomes and classroom environment.

The resource challenges were also identified and observed by the pupil participants such as inadequacy or absence of necessary materials. They have directly referred to insufficient or faulty resources, affecting the availability and quality of learning tools. They have quoted:

"Sometimes there aren't enough materials, so not everyone can make one" (Ishang, Maymay)

"The TV was not working properly" (Keng)

"Clearer pictures" (Karl)

Escote & Detera (2025) identified that inadequacy of necessary materials and equipment was a key challenge in implementing the learning camp. Buendia (2025) revealed that the challenges with the lack of resources and materials were due to the insufficient funding support.

The effectiveness of the NLC was further complicated by the inherent pedagogical challenges. These are struggles in language and comprehension; including basic language skills, dealing with long texts, and managing self-doubt. They quoted:

"Struggled in composing sentences" (Miko, Itong)

"Some words are hard to read" (Angge, Karl)

"Spelling test" (Jojo)

According to Soria (2024), teachers main challenges in the implementation of the reading program includes preparing modules and materials, managing attendance issues, and addressing varied reading skill levels. Manguilimotan, et al. (2024) said it is important to note that interest, motivation, prior

knowledge, and vocabulary knowledge affect reading comprehension skills of learners.

Acquiring reading skills is one of the main goals of the NLC, as such, pupils were mostly given reading activities. The pupils tend to feel difficulty in maintaining focus during extended reading; and a struggle with sustained attention or memory for detailed content. As reflected with their responses:

"Reading long sentences or stories" (Keng, Karl, Sonny, Andong, Ishang, Manny, Itong)

"If the story is long, I tend to forget the other details" (Ishang)

"Make the stories shorter" (Sonny)

Students report challenges such as limited memory, lack of concentration, and boredom when engaging with lengthy texts (Fitria, 2022). This could be credited for the teaching practices in reading which significantly influence the reading performance of primary grade learners in the Philippines (Valido, 2025).

The pupils faced and demonstrated issues with understanding directions, test anxiety, and difficulty with task initiation or problem-solving. As evidence, they shared:

"Sometimes, it's hard for me to understand the instructions" (Karl, Manny)

"I get nervous if I don't know the answer" (Ishang)

"If I don't know what to do to a given task" (Keng)

Giving clear instruction is crucial for student performance and understanding in language classrooms (Angulo, 2023); acts as guidance for task completion, hence, more student engagement and learning outcomes (Visca & Pelayo, 2024). However, persistent unresolved confusion may result in frustration and disengagement (Daniels, et al., 2022). The present study, highlighted array of factors that can impede effective learning, hence necessitates an intervention like the learning camp program of the department of education.

Another challenge cited by the pupils, points to cognitive or emotional struggles related to understanding and confidence. They

have shown self-doubt and difficulty with task execution. As they reflected:

"There were so many questions" (Sonny)

"Yes, at first, I don't know how to organize the words in a story" (Miko)

"Yes. I sometimes got it wrong" (Angge)

Stress and anxiety in task situations remain consistent across age groups (Ikävalko, et al., 2022). Hence, teacher guidance and support during this stage is crucial.

The pupils also mentioned issue on teacher's instructional approach. Two students revealed: *"When the teacher talks fast" (Jojo, Keng)*. Bottalico, et al (2023) revealed that fast speech of mentors can lead to reduced comprehension and increased listening difficulty, especially for younger children.

The pupils encountered several challenges that affected their learning experience. The participants described the challenges in terms of environmental, resources and pedagogical; and emotional struggles. They reported physical discomforts like hot classrooms and disruptive behavior from classmates, which negatively impacted their ability to focus and learn effectively. They noted instances of not enough materials for everyone, or equipment like televisions were not working properly. Many pupils struggled with composing sentences, reading challenging words, and spelling. Furthermore, pupils expressed challenges with the pace of and understanding instructions and experiencing test anxiety.

Identified Specific Aspect of the NLC Program that was Most Helpful by the Grade 3 Pupils

Q3. What specific aspect of the program do they find most helpful?

The pupil participants acknowledged that the learning camp program helped them in developing basic literacy skills; provided them with positive learning experiences; and venue for social engagement. According to Soria (2024), DepEd's learning camp aimed to fight the pandemic-induced learning losses among learners in the basic education.

The present study offered compelling evidence of the learning camp program's

perceived strengths in fostering literacy and learning dynamics. Virtus, et al., (2025) confirm that NLC generally provides a positive experience for students, with engaging activities and clear objectives; and for Visca & Pelayo (2024) fosters positive student interactions among teachers and students.

Participants frequently mentioned activities such as:

"Practicing writing and reading" (Jenjen, Maymay)

"We have learned to listen and read" (Angge)

"Learning new words" (Jayjay)

"Spelling practice" (Itong)

"Reading short stories" (Miko, Itong, Maymay, Manny)

"Reading aloud" (Miko)

"Practicing and reading together" (Sonny, Andong, Ishang, Itong)

"Flashcards on syllables" (Angge)

"Storytelling" (Angge, Vinvin, Karl, Jayjay, Ishang, Jenjen); and "Listening to stories" (Keng)

The consistent focus on these activities by various participants indicates their perceived helpfulness in skill acquisition. Moreover, they have described the application and development of reading skills beyond just recognition, moving towards understanding and smooth delivery.

Participants highlighted the activities they have enjoyed the most as:

"Role playing" (Vinvin, Karl, Jojo)

"Matching game" (Keng, Junjun)

"Playing games wherein we learn something" (Ishang, Jenjen)

"Playing games" (Maymay)

"The games where we are also learning" (Sonny, Andong)

"Group reading" (Vinvin, Keng, Manny, Andong, Junjun, Jayjay)

"Working in groups" (Jojo)

"Having group activities because we work together" (Karl)

This points to the use of games and role-playing as effective and enjoyable learning methods. Further, emphasizing the social aspect of learning, where participants benefit from interacting and working with peers, hence, enhance further their social skills and motivation.

The teacher's role was presented as crucial to the program's success. The teacher's positive attributes and actions helped in achieving the targets of the learning camp. Teachers' caring, nurturing, supportive behaviors have been found to positively impact students' learning experiences (Khanna, et al., 2021). Numerous participants praised their teacher, describing them as:

"Our teacher who is kind" (Jayjay, Junjun, Miko, Jojo, Keng, Karl, Sonny, Manny, Andong, Itong, Ishang, Jenjen, Maymay)

"She taught us how to properly pronounce the words" (Vinvin)

"She helped us in breaking down long words" (Angge)

It could be deduced that the program stands as a testament to the power of holistic educational approaches that prioritize not only skill acquisition but also student well-being, engagement, and the pivotal role of dedicated educators.

The pupil participants viewed and praised the learning camp of the Department of Education as a positive engaging experience; and effective in developing basic literacy skills and in promoting social connections. Pupils frequently mentioned reading and spelling practice which highlight the program's perceived helpfulness in acquiring basic skills and developing comprehension and fluency. Pupils particularly enjoyed game-based activities which significantly boosted engagement and learning. The teachers' supportive role was valued and seen crucial during the course of the program.

Pupils' Perception of the NLC Program's Impact on their Attitudes towards Learning and Academic Performance

Q4. How do pupils perceive the NLC Program's impact on their attitudes towards learning and academic performance?

According to the pupils, after joining the NLC program there has been an enhancement in their literacy and comprehension skills. This improvement has changed their perception about learning, and even willing to encourage

others to join the program as well. Learning camp participants in the study of Magdaraog, et al. (2025) demonstrated the high value placed on academic outcomes. Luana & Siat's (2025) study, stated that the learning camp effectively boosts learners' literacy skills and enthusiasm for learning. The pupils of the present study demonstrated clear improvement and skills developments. Overall, they expressed their strong desire to learn more and

"I want to learn now." (Junjun)

"Opo" (Miko, Itong, Jayjay, Ishang, Jenjen, Maymay)

"I like reading and writing more now." (Sonny, Karl)

"Understanding what I'm reading" (Manny)

"I can write short sentences, and I already know how to read." (Andong)

"Practice spelling many words." (Angge)

"To continue learning to read a lot of words." (Vinvin)

"About the stories and poems" (Jojo)

"About the new words" (Keng)

Testaments of pupils strongly suggest that the learning camp program helped pupils' to improve their literacy and comprehension skills. Moreover, learning camp cultivated a positive attitude towards learning, making them more eager and confident in their abilities to engage with reading and writing tasks. The progression from basic skill acquisition to enhanced comprehension is clearly visible in their responses. This directly reflects the program's perceived effectiveness and their desire in continued involvement:

"I find it difficult to read long words, but now I am able to." (Angge)

"I can now read and read fluently" (Jojo; and Vinvin)

"It is now easy to understand what I'm reading." (Keng)

"I'll encourage them to join too."

(Miko, Jojo, Karl, Manny, Junjun, Itong, Ishang, Maymay)

"I'll tell them to join as well so they can also learn more." (Angge)

"The camp is fun and helpful." (Vinvin, Andong)

"There is a lot to learn." (Keng, Jenjen, Jayjay)

"They will learn how to read long words and stories." (Sonny)

These responses directly captures the pupils' recognition of the program's positive impact on them. The pupils highlighted their enthusiasm for continued engagement with the program and enthusiastically recommend it to others. This positive perception translates into a desire for sustained learning and a willingness to participate and learn from the program.

While the learning camp has received an overall positive reception, some of the pupils acknowledged the feeling of nervousness:

"Somewhat nervous" (Karl, Manny, Andong, Itong, Jayjay, Maymay)

"I get a bit nervous when the teacher calls me in class." (Angge)

These views indicate that while the program's impact is overwhelmingly positive, there are still individual aspects where pupils are developing, such as full confidence in classroom interactions. This suggests that learning is an ongoing process, and even minor challenges can be viewed as opportunities for further personal growth and development.

The learning camp significantly enhanced pupils' literacy and comprehension skills (ability to write short sentences, read more fluently and with understanding), fundamentally changing their perception of learning. They now express a strong desire to learn more and are willing to encourage others to join the program, seeing the minor challenges encountered as opportunities for future growth. While the learning camp received an positive reception, some pupils acknowledged that personal confidence is still developing. Feelings of nervousness was framed as areas for growth, rather than flaws in the program.

Recommendations for Improving the National Learning Camp (NLC) Program

Q5. What specific recommendations do elementary school pupils have for improving the National Learning Camp (NLC) program to make it more effective and engaging for future participants?

The pupils hope to further enhance fundamental reading, writing, and comprehension abilities; moving towards more complex tasks and independent understanding. They have indicated their desire to not just to learn, but to master skills to a point of self-reliance:

"Be able to read complex words" (Vinvin)

"Be able to learn long words, stories and learn more" (Sonny, Junjun)

"Be able to write and read long stories." (Jen-jen)

"Be able to understand a story on my own" (Angge, Jojo, Keng, Itong)

"Be able to spell and comprehend what is being read." (Karl)

"To be able to write short sentences." (Ishang) and "write short poems" (Miko, Manny)

Virtus, et al. (2025), recommended to strengthen the foundational knowledge, activity design, and hands-on learning experiences.

The strong preference for games, quizzes, and treasure hunts clearly indicates that pupils find these methods highly engaging and effective for learning. According to Stjerne & Parker (2023), learning activities and games is not just about having fun but learning through fun.

"Spelling bee and quiz bee" (Angge, Vinvin, Sonny, Miko)

"A treasure hunt with clues about the lesson." (Jojo)

"The word puzzle race." (Karl)

"4 pics one word." (Manny, Itong)

"Word hunt" (Andong)

"Spelling race" (Junjun)

"Find the letters then form the word." (Ishang)

"Many activities." (Keng)

In the present study, pupils recommend having breaks and opportunities to play. This suggests a balance between intense learning and relaxation is important for their engagement and well-being. Quezada (2024); and In-sorio & Manalo (2024) revealed that the limitation of resources during the NLC was repeatedly reported by previous studies.

"Yes. To play" (Angge)

"Yes, so we can rest for a bit" (Vinvin)

"Yes." (Miko, Jojo, Karl, Sonny, Manny, Andong, Junjun, Itong, Jayjay, Ishang, Jenjen, Maymay)

"Yes. So, we can have a break and eat merienda." (Keng)

They also request for more books, supplies, and coloring materials indicate a need for better access to and variety of resources to support their learning:

"[Each] have their own book." (Vinvin)

"Add more learning materials." (Jojo)

"More supplies like pencils and paper." (Karl)

"I hope there are coloring materials." (Sonny)

The most notable suggestion thus far (among the published studies on NLC), is Miko's desire for fewer pupils so the teacher could focus more on them, this points to a need for more personalized attention, suggesting class size or teacher-student ratio as a factor. *"I hope there are fewer students so [the teacher could] focused on us more" (Miko)*. Luana & Siat (2025) reported that these settings can provide individualized instruction, foster care, and contribute to pupils' psychosocial and academic needs.

A few pupils wish for the program to be extended, implying they found it beneficial and wanted more of it. *"Longer" (Ishang, Maymay)*. Their desire for a longer term suggests that the learning camp was a positive and enriching experience for them, leading to a wish for continued participation.

While a significant number of pupils believed that the current program is already effective and do not require modifications. Overall, they are satisfied by the core structure. *"Shorter" (Miko, Angge, Vinvin, Jojo, Keng, Karl, Sonny, Manny, Andong, Junjun, Jayjay, Jenjen)*. *"None." (Angge, Manny, Andong, Junjun, Itong, Jayjay, Ishang, Jenjen, Maymay)*. This feedback indicates a significant level of satisfaction with the existing structure and activities of the NLC. Virtus, et al. (2025) indicated that NLC generally provides a positive experience with engaging activities.

Pupils' feedback emphasizes the importance of strengthening foundational knowledge, improving activity design, integrating hands-on learning; and enhancing learning pedagogy and outcomes. Pupils expressed a strong desire to further develop their fundamental reading, writing, and comprehension skills, aspiring for mastery and self-reliance. They strongly favored games and other learning activities, finding these methods highly engaging and effective for learning. They requested breaks and play; a balance between intense learning and relaxation. A notable suggestion was for fewer students per class to allow teachers to provide more personalized attention. While some pupils wished for the program to be longer, while, a significant number found the current program design effective and desired it to be shorter.

Conclusions

Based on these findings, the following conclusions are presented:

1. The National Learning Camp (NLC) successfully created a positive and engaging learning environment for pupils. It delivered enriching experiences focused on reading activities and collaborative interactive games, significantly boosting literacy and comprehension. Beyond academics, the learning camp fostered crucial social connections and interpersonal development.
2. The learning camp faced several challenges described as environmental, resources and pedagogical; and emotional concerns. Additionally, teacher-related factors and personal struggles further impacted the learning experience.
3. The learning camp was perceived to be a success. The activities enhanced basic literacy skills through consistent practice and engaging game-based activities; and effectively fostered positive social connections and enjoyable learning experiences, which was also attributed to the supportive and impactful role of their teachers.
4. The learning camp effectively fostered a positive shift in their perception of learning. Demonstrating newfound

confidence in reading, writing, and spelling, participants are now enthusiastic advocates for the program, viewing minor challenges as opportunities for continued growth in self-assurance.

5. To optimize the learning camp, pupils recommend strengthening foundational skills through engaging activities like games and quizzes, while integrating more hands-on learning. They also suggested fewer students per class for personalized attention, more breaks and resources, caters to individual preferences, for desire for tailored improvements.

Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, specific recommendations are hereby suggested further enhance the NLC:

1. Teachers may continue integrating diverse interactive games and collaborative reading activities to maintain high levels of engagement and social interaction.
2. The school heads may implement a teacher-learners ratio (e.g., 1:20) to foster stronger teacher relationships, allows personalized instruction eventually address challenges in academic performance and discipline.
3. Teachers could implement classroom management strategies to minimize disruptions, vary their instructional pace, and offer differentiated support for language and comprehension challenges.
4. School Heads may conduct regular classroom inspections to ensure comfortable learning environments and look for increased funding to acquire adequate and functional learning materials.
5. School Heads could provide regular professional development workshops on student-centered approaches and effective use of engaging pedagogical tools are crucial to empower teachers.
6. Teachers and School Heads could create advanced modules on more complex texts, research projects, creative writing, or even introduce foundational critical thinking and analytical skills.
7. The school could engage parents and the wider community in supporting the

learning camp. Community partnerships could also offer additional learning opportunities (reading and social activities) or resources for pupils.

8. Educators could enhance activity design by holding brainstorming sessions to address issues immediately, making them more engaging and directly relevant to pupils' interests. Moreover, The school may implement a regular system monitoring, discussions real-time adjustments.
9. Future researchers may conduct a follow-up study with a larger and more diverse sample of learning camp participants across different zones and divisions in Zambales and in other regions. Furthermore, triangulate data by including perspectives from teachers and parents through surveys, interviews, or focus group discussions to provide a more comprehensive understanding and verify pupil responses.

References

- Angulo, J. C. L. (2023). The importance of Instruction-Giving to better students' performance of class activities in English lessons. *Ciencia Latina Revista Científica Multidisciplinar*, 7(3), 3449–3464. https://doi.org/10.37811/cl_rcm.v7i3.6419
- Arnott, L., & Teichert, L. (2022). Family learning and working in lockdown: Navigating crippling fear and euphoric joy to support children's literacy. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 23(1), 35–72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687984221122850>
- Bottalico, P., Murgia, S., Mekus, T., & Flaherty, M. (2023). Classroom acoustics for enhancing students' understanding when a teacher suffers from a dysphonic voice. *Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 54(4), 1195–1207. https://doi.org/10.1044/2023_lshss-22-00158
- Bresenio, F. (2025). Learners' Perceptions of the Physical Classroom Environment and its Role in Promoting Positive Learning Behavior. *International Journal of Open-*

- Access, *Interdisciplinary & New Educational Discoveries of ETCOR Educational Research Center (ij)*, 4(1), 74–85. <https://doi.org/10.63498/nxz2st256>
- Buendia, N. a. B. (2025). The implementation of national learning camp (NLC) in elementary schools of tabaco city. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 14(3), 1372–1376. <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2025.14.3.0926>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- David, N. G. R. M., Resuello, N. L. R., & Ancheta, N. M. G. (2024). Understanding the impact of national learning camps: Teacher volunteers experiences, teaching methods, challenges, and student learning outcomes. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21(1), 2182–2195. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.21.1.0245>
- Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic Analysis Approach: A step-by-step guide for ELT research practitioners. *Journal of NELTA*, 25(1–2), 62–71. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED612353.pdf>
- Delmas, P. M., & Giles, R. L. (2022). Qualitative research approaches and their application in education. In *Elsevier eBooks* (pp. 24–32). <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-818630-5.11003-6>
- Department of Education. (2023). DEPED Order No.14 S.2023 : Policy Guidelines on the implementation of the National Learning Camp. In *Department of Education*. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/DO_s2023_014.pdf
- Doil, M., & Pietzner, V. (2023). Structure of Science Teacher Education in PISA Leading Countries: A Systematic review. *Education Sciences*, 13(8), 826. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13080826>
- Escote, D., & Detera, V. (2025). Insights of teachers in the implementation of the national learning camp. *Pantao, International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.69651/pijhss0402151>
- Espinosa, F. A., & Guevara, N. L. (2024). Perceived effect of the National Learning Camp (NLC) to Grade 7 and 8 learners. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies*, 4(5), 721–730. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382463420_Perceived_Effect_of_the_National_Learning_Camp_NLC
- Fitria, T. N. (2022). An Analysis of The Students' Difficulty in Reading the TOEFL Prediction Test. *Komposisi Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Sastra Dan Seni*, 23(2), 110. <https://doi.org/10.24036/komposisi.v23i2.116291>
- Hasty, L. M., Quintero, M., Li, T., Song, S., & Wang, Z. (2023). The longitudinal associations among student externalizing behaviors, teacher-student relationships, and classroom engagement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 100, 101242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2023.101242>
- Ikävalko, M., Sointu, E., Lambert, M. C., & Viljaranta, J. (2022). Students' self-efficacy in self-regulation together with behavioural and emotional strengths: investigating their self-perceptions. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 38(4), 558–572. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2022.2127083>
- Insorio, J. E., & Manalo, D. C. (2024). Mathematics Teachers' and Students' Learning Evaluation for National Learning Camp: Basis for supplementary YouTube video lessons. *Journal of Research in Science Mathematics and Technology Education*, 67–94. <https://doi.org/10.31756/jrsmte.814>
- Isozaki, T. (2022). A Historical Perspective of Science Education in Japan: Which Way is it Headed in the Future? *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 37(2), 167–184.

- <https://doi.org/10.21315/apjee2022.37.2.8>
- Kayes, D. C., & Kayes, A. B. (2021). Experiential learning and education in management. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.294>
- Khanna, M., Jacob, I., & Chopra, A. (2021). Marketing of higher education institutes through the creation of positive learning experiences – analyzing the role of teachers' caring behaviors. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 34(1), 116–135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2021.1966158>
- Luana, M. C. E., & Siat, G. O. (2025). The Experiences of Learners on the Implementation of National Learning Camp (NLC) Impacting to their Reading Performance. *Cognition Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 5(5), 936–951. <https://doi.org/10.47760/cognition.2025.v05i05.063>
- Mackenzie, N. (2025). The power of independent reading. *Qualitative Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qj-09-2024-0200>
- Magdaraog, S. P., Villafuerte, M. R. F., Morales, M. R., Barlizo, F. G. B., Videña, H. C. P., Garcia, J. L. P., & Reyes, J. R. V. (2025). Factors affecting students' willingness to participate in the national Learning Camp. *United International Journal for Research & Technology*, 6(5), 307–317. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/390404310_Factors_Affecting_Students'_Willingness_to_Participate_in_the_National_Learning_Camp
- Maguate, G. S., Sotto, N. A. B., Moises, R. D., Ohoylan, J. G. D., & Alegre, A. B. (2024). Efficacy of National Learning Camp to literacy and numeracy of Grade 7 learners. *International Multidisciplinary Journal of Research for Innovation, Sustainability and Excellence*, 1(1), 68–72. <https://risejournals.org/index.php/imjrise/article/view/7/7>
- Manguilimotan, R. P., Zabala, J. T., Encog, C. A., Padillo, G. G., & Capuno, R. G. (2024). Factors affecting the reading comprehension skills of Grade 3 learners. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 7(3), 96–108. <https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v7i3.1930>
- Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A Step-by-Step process of thematic analysis to develop a conceptual model in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>
- Olafsen, A. H., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Self-Determination Theory and its relation to Organizations. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.112>
- Quezada, C. M. C. (2024). Teachers' experiences in DepEd's National Learning Camp: a phenomenological study. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology (IJISRT)*, 1807–1814. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/ijisrt24jul1071>
- Ramirez, L., & Mendoza, R. (2025). Play-based Learning Implementation of Early Childhood Educators in IPED School D: a case study. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i03.46842>
- Soria, S. F. E. (2024). Reading Program in the National Learning Camp: Teachers' Assessment of its Implementation and Teaching Strategies. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, XI(III), 418–435. <https://doi.org/10.51244/ijrsi.2024.1103030>
- Stjerne, J. B., & Parker, R. (2023). Does play belong in the primary school classroom? *Research Conference 2023: Becoming Lifelong Learners. Proceedings*, 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-715-1-3>
- Valido, J. P. R. (2025). Teaching Practices in Reading Skills of Primary Grade Learners and Class Reading Performance in Filipino: Foundation for an Enhanced Reading Instructional Program. *International*

- Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*, 08(02), 259–281.
<https://doi.org/10.54922/ijehss.2025.0919>
- Virtus, L. M., Villena, N. M., & Escobar, P. D. (2025). Unveiling the National Learning Camp: A Holistic Analysis of Student Engagement, Educational Activities, and Challenges. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 2992–3011.
<https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25jan1112>