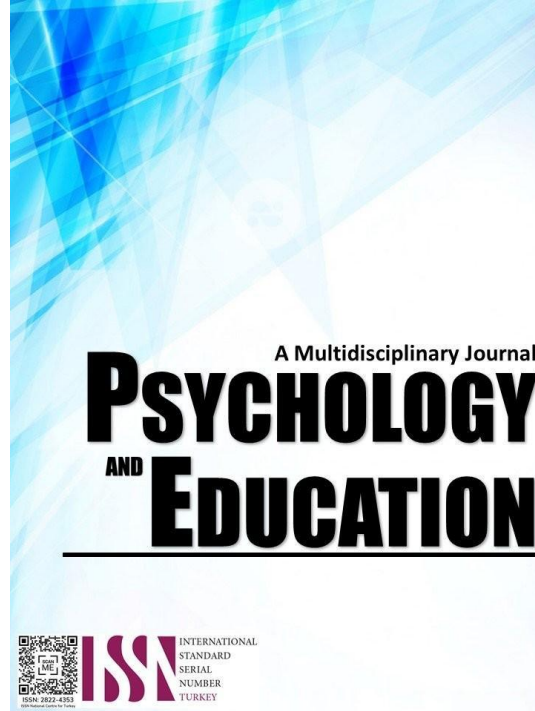


# REMOTE TEACHING REALITIES OF NEWLY HIRED TEACHERS: A PHENOMENOLOGY



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## Remote Teaching Realities of Newly Hired Teachers: A Phenomenology

Yllenor C. Gabales,\* Chrislie Mae Mariquit, Kyla D. Carba, Elaiza Mae L. Badonio, Jasmin E. Cardeño, Angel Mae P. Abrenica, Jellypie A. Velos, Allison O. Tabanao, Roselyn P. Pelegrino, Merelyn Gallosa, Jayseife A. Languita, Crisha Marie C. Dagooc, Elisa C. Tapales, Dev. Ed. D., Cyril A. Cabello, Ph. D.

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

### Abstract

This study explored the real-life experiences of newly hired teachers assigned to remote areas. While some research has been done on teaching in challenging locations, there is still limited focus on the specific struggles and adjustments that new teachers face when working in hinterland schools. This study used a Descriptive Phenomenology approach anchored on the Thematic Analysis of Braun and Clarke. This study focused on the five newly hired teachers working in geographically isolated parts of Southern Cebu Province who agreed to participate the study. Through careful analysis of their shared stories and lived experiences, six key themes generated and abbreviated as REMOTE which stands for Relevant Technologies in the Mountain School, Expediency for Professional Development, Multi-grade Reality, Overcoming Classroom Diversity, Tenacity in the Workplace and Exhaustion of Resources. These themes reflect the challenges of the newly hired teachers, including coping mechanisms with limited teaching and learning resources, dealing with difficult transportation, adapting to multi-grade classrooms, and navigating a lack of institutional support. The findings highlight an urgent need for targeted continuous professional development key indicators, better access to educational resources, and stronger support systems ensuring that newly hired teachers in remote areas are well-prepared and empowered to succeed in their career delivering quality education.

**Keywords:** *Remote Teaching, Newly Hired Teachers, Lived Experiences, Descriptive Phenomenology*

### Introduction

Schools in rural or remote areas challenge the skills and adaptability of teachers, especially the newly hired ones who do not have enough teaching experience and are still in their adjustment years. According to the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines, a newly hired teacher is specifically a teacher with zero to three years of experience in the public school system and is further classified as a beginning teacher. These teachers struggled to identify the most effective instructional tactics and manage classroom dynamics (Carulasan, 2024). While existing studies examine the experiences of newly hired teachers in remote areas, a gap remains in research regarding the specific interventions that can support their adaptation and professional growth. Thus, this study seeks to explore the lived experiences of newly hired teachers in remote areas, providing insights that can enhance their professional environment. Ultimately, the insights will inform the development of targeted support strategies to help these teachers deliver quality education.

The location of schools can affect the professional development and teaching experiences, especially for newly hired teachers. In the study by Van et al. (2021), teachers in Vietnam revealed that their learning environment has a strong positive correlation with their professional learning. This suggests that an environment rich in resources and support fosters professional growth, while a challenging environment may hinder it. In line with this, Algonos et al. (2024) highlighted that teachers in remote areas face multiple obstacles, such as poor resources, armed organizations, social isolation, language barriers, and logistical difficulties. These challenges not only affect their ability to teach effectively but also influence their professional development and overall well-being. Similarly, Pancho (2022) emphasized that transportation difficulties and limited accessibility further add to the burden, making adaptation and growth even more challenging for these educators. Meanwhile, the Philippines has seen an expansion of remote schools, particularly in the province of Cebu. While these schools aim to expand access to education, they also pose significant challenges for teachers, especially novice educators, who often struggle with limited resources and expertise.

Teaching in rural or remote areas poses significant challenges, particularly for newly hired educators who are still gaining experience and adapting to their roles. According to Brown Taylor (2020), beginner teachers in isolated regions often struggle with integrating themselves into the community, which in turn affects their instructional effectiveness. Similarly, Frahm and Cianca (2021) emphasized that the lack of mentorship and professional development opportunities can significantly hinder the professional growth of new teachers in remote settings. This scenario often leads to higher attrition rates, as noted by Ingersoll and Tran (2023), who reported that teachers in rural schools are more likely to leave their posts within the first few years of service. Therefore, understanding and addressing these challenges is essential in fostering an environment where newly hired teachers can thrive despite the adversities inherent in remote teaching.

Newly hired teachers in remote areas face significant professional and social challenges, highlighting the need for targeted support to ensure quality education. Adding this study to the literature can enhance teacher support systems, particularly for new teachers assigned to remote areas. Research suggests that studying their experiences informs professional development and support mechanisms, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes (Algonos et al., 2024). Given these findings, implementing an action plan can be

instrumental in supporting newly hired teachers in such areas. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by investigating both the unique challenges and potential interventions that can support newly hired teachers in remote and mountainous regions.

## Research Questions

This study explored the lived experiences of the newly hired teachers assigned in the hinterland schools of Cebu South Province. Specifically, this study answered the question:

1. What are the lived experiences of the participants indicating their challenges and encountered realities in their teaching journey in the assigned hinterland schools as newly hired teachers?

## Literature Review

Remote schools present a unique challenge for teachers, pushing their social interactions and professional capabilities to the edge. These difficulties are even more challenging for newly hired teachers with insufficient experience and who are still in their adjustment years. According to Werang et al. (2022), work conditions have a significant impact on the job performance of a teacher, making the challenges of remote teaching even more pronounced. To fully understand these challenges, we have selected published research studies that focus on teachers' lived experiences, particularly those of newly hired teachers in remote areas. These studies were selected because they address teachers' difficulties, such as limited resources, isolation, and adjusting to teaching in remote schools. They are relevant to our research as they highlight real-life cases, comparative analyses between urban and rural schools, and possible interventions to improve teacher experiences. Furthermore, these studies are essential because they validate the research problem, offer theoretical and empirical evidence, and present solutions that could enhance teacher performance in remote areas. By encompassing these studies, our research acquires a strong foundation, a deeper understanding of the problem, and increased credibility. Additionally, the findings from these studies will help inform the development of recommendations to support newly hired teachers and create an organized and effective learning environment in remote schools.

According to Shikalepo (2020), teachers in rural schools face numerous challenges that significantly impact the quality of education. Dlamini et al. (2023) further emphasize some challenges, including a lack of resources, excessive workloads, limited transportation options, and inadequate access to food and water supplies. These factors contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and low morale. Many newly hired teachers are underprepared to handle resource shortages, which hinders their ability to teach effectively. Moreover, teachers in rural areas often bear significantly more burdens than those in urban areas, resulting in feelings of inequity and diminished motivation (Williams, 2023). To address these issues, it is recommended that school administrators take proactive steps to support teachers, ensuring that they are better equipped to create a more organized and effective learning environment.

According to Equipado and Gilbas (2021), newly hired elementary teachers face various challenges that influence their teaching and overall well-being. These challenges were shaped by necessities, transportation, and safety concerns, as well as social connections. Despite the proper budgeting, they have difficulties obtaining new supplies due to the market being far from their location (Ziyamba, 2024). Transportation is another primary concern, with teachers relying on habal-habal (motorcycle for hire) as their primary mode of transportation, while others purchase motorcycles or rent tricycles (Lariosa et al., 2022). Although solutions were present, they still come with risks; teachers face security threats from hazardous pathways, unexpected encounters with venomous animals, and bad weather conditions. Additionally, social isolation is evident in these remote areas, which exacerbates their stress; however, many teachers have built strong relationships with the local community and gained valuable support (Gutierrez & Pascual, 2022). To solve these challenges, an action program is implemented aiming to improve their well-being through various events and assistance, such as body-friendly dances and consultations.

According to Lariosa et al. (2022), teachers teaching from far-flung schools face a challenging mission. They face classroom challenges, including communication barriers, behavioral issues, and practical hardships such as hazardous travel, limited access to healthcare, and financial pressures. It highlights that being a teacher is not just a profession, but a reflection of one's passion and commitment to fulfilling the needs of learners. Teaching in remote areas demands a firm commitment and a genuine love for teaching (Sampelolo & Dominikus, 2022). Despite these challenges, many teachers stay because they prioritize job stability. Even though their work is emotionally draining or requires personal sacrifices, it provides them with a sense of fulfillment and builds strong relationships, making their mission more rewarding. Additionally, the community members were welcoming and friendly, making teaching in these schools a meaningful and enriching experience.

According to No et al. (2022), newly hired public school teachers have various expectations before starting their teaching jobs. Some expected good outcomes, while others anticipated bad ones. However, their expectations were defied by realities once they started teaching at their assigned school. Many experience difficulties due to the school's geographic location and the state of their working environment (Pancho, 2022). Their collaboration with administration, peers, and stakeholders also differs from what they imagined. Moreover, paperwork, how they manage their class, and their teaching responsibilities are much more demanding than what they initially expected (Cabello et al., 2024). Salary concerns also add to their challenging experiences (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). Given these challenges, it is essential to provide strong support to teachers in remote public schools, especially those who are newly hired and have less expertise, and are still in their adjustment years (Galut, 2025). The Department of Education should consider these factors to

develop a solution that helps teachers deliver quality education to learners and be effective educators. Enhancing teachers' support systems can improve their welfare and job satisfaction, leading to improved performance in their classrooms and communities (Manegdeg & Paglinawan, 2024).

According to Isip et al. (2023), newly hired teachers who were assigned to remote areas had a challenging experience. Teachers struggle with long travel distances and face challenges such as a teacher shortage, a lack of technology, and classrooms without electricity. Learners also struggle to follow instructions or fully understand academic activities. The absence of technology, particularly communication signals, makes it difficult for professional teachers to monitor student progress and improvement. Learners often require parental guidance when engaging in hands-on activities from the modules, as they frequently struggle with the self-learning method. However, many parents in these communities cannot read and write, making it challenging for them to support their children's learning (Kerns & Walls, 2022). Teaching should be designed to fit how well students can learn, grow, and improve their learning. Despite numerous struggles, the learners still found joy in their educational experiences. They believe a small class size is a significant benefit in remote and mountainous schools. Thus, teachers can give more time and attention to each student, making learning more effective and personal (Tayyab et al., 2023).

According to Pancho (2022), newly hired teachers in far-flung areas faced numerous challenges. The main challenges they faced were challenges related to transportation, insufficient school supplies, and the quality of the learning environment and resources. They also show effective coping mechanisms, especially in school facilities, transportation, and learning environments/resources. These coping mechanisms include riding a vehicle with only light materials to bring, reaching out to parents and other stakeholders to provide chairs, tables, and classrooms, or even asking for support from local government units (LGUs), and considering and understanding the diverse learning needs of the students. Through these, their performance will be satisfactory. Newly hired teachers assigned to remote areas are expected to face challenges that motivate them to develop and utilize effective coping mechanisms, both personal and professional, which help them manage the situation and thrive despite the challenges.

According to Tinampay (2023), hinterland teaching facilitates connections between teachers and students in remote learning areas. Teachers from the hinterland school of Barangay Kanghai, Dumanjug, Cebu, shared their lived experiences from S.Y. 2022–2023 to seek strategies for enhancing school management. Upon thorough analysis, the different facets of teachers' teaching experiences in a far-flung area were classified into eight main themes: MOUNTAIN, which is an abbreviation for Managing Self; Over the Rainbow; Undeniably Challenging; Noteworthy Experiences; Teaching with Love; Alternative is Life; In the Silence of Everything; and Nearest to Perfection. The eight main themes summarize the entire teacher's teaching expedition in the hinterland. Further, hinterland teachers' self-confidence, determination, and approaches to rigorous challenges were applied in Bandura's self-efficacy theory because of how they manage life's factors (Lawrent, 2024). Hinterland teachers' self-efficacy — or belief in their ability to effectively teach learners — has a significant impact on overcoming their obstacles, providing quality education, and motivating learners to strive for success. Conclusively, a newly developed instrument would best measure the teachers' work contentment, enthusiasm, and productivity in remote learning areas. By doing so, students will appreciate the nature of teaching and be inspired to improve their quality of life as their teachers provide quality education (Mursaleen et al., 2022).

According to Algonos et al. (2024), teaching in remote areas of Davao Del Norte is a significant challenge for teachers. Their teaching experiences highlight the hardships of living and working in that isolated area, including limited resources, transportation, and cultural adjustments. Their experiences underscore the importance of providing students with a quality education and supporting them in overcoming challenges under such difficult conditions (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021). They often faced challenging situations such as limited resources, loneliness, and language barriers. Despite these challenges, they work diligently to provide their students with the best education (Taole, 2024). They also sought support from their community and colleagues to refine their teaching methods and develop creative resources to enhance their school facilities (Mangione & Cannella, 2021). To address these challenges, they create programs that provide guidance and support, expand resources, and offer training in local languages and cultures to help them bridge gaps and make education more inclusive and meaningful (Harris, 2024).

According to Baynosa et al. (2024), teachers assigned in remote areas experience unique challenges that can challenge their passion for teaching. From transportation and instructional materials to their basic needs, these teachers made significant sacrifices to ensure education was accessible in disadvantaged areas (Leon et al., 2023). Difficult circumstances make teachers flexible and creative professionals who look for alternatives to accommodate their teaching (Salmon, 2022). These skills are essential for providing education and effective classroom instruction in remote and disadvantaged areas. There were eight challenges faced by these teachers, namely: extra work beyond teaching, lack of supplies and resources, transportation difficulties, teaching methods and lesson preparation, involvement of parents and the community, personal well-being and safety, coping mechanisms, and thriving motivations. Teaching in remote areas requires lots of determination, motivation, and passion (Sampelolo & Dominikus, 2022). Despite the circumstances and trying times, these teachers are committed to providing high-quality education and support to their students (Low et al., 2022).

According to Boyd (2024), the ongoing teacher shortage in rural Alabama had a significant impact on student performance and the quality of education. Major obstacles are evident, including inadequate salaries, challenging working conditions, and insufficient professional growth opportunities for teachers (Martinez, 2023). Given these challenges, it is important to implement structured

induction programs to attract and retain educators in rural areas. Teachers highlight the importance of supportive leadership, strong community connections, and a positive work environment as factors for retention (Moreno, 2024). Suggestions for improvement include increasing the teachers' salaries, promoting work connections, applying mentorship programs, and enhancing workplace conditions (Celestin, 2024). Ultimately, addressing these challenges will enhance teacher stability and student success in Alabama's rural communities and remote areas by improving their professional development and ensuring their long-term success in education.

According to Fabillar and Mustacisa (2024), teachers are the most important in shaping our minds. Teachers in remote areas face challenges such as limited internet connection and insufficient materials. Teachers have found that employing traditional materials can sometimes be monotonous for students (Haleem et al., 2022). As a result, they seek assistance from those willing to volunteer or contribute financially, so they can provide affordable technology that supports diverse learning styles. Additionally, utilizing online learning tools for teachers and students can make lessons more engaging and help students become tech-savvy (Ewing & Cooper, 2021). Teachers in remote areas have the determination to overcome various challenges. Even in these difficulties, teachers will find ways to teach using materials that are easy to handle and to keep the students more engaged (Rondero & Casupanan, 2024). Their commitment to learning in these times of uncertainty indicates how important they are to the learning process, building a future in learning that is more adaptable and promotes innovative ideas.

According to Galut (2025), the experiences of educators assigned to teach in remote areas highlight the unique challenges they face. It captures their struggles, resilience, and unwavering passion for teaching. For many of these teachers, education is more than just a profession; it is a calling that requires deep dedication and sacrifice. They navigate long and arduous journeys, sometimes traveling for nearly a day or enduring boat rides for hours to reach their schools. Despite these hardships, their commitment to their students never wavers. Meanwhile, a lack of resources, heavy workloads, and the challenges of managing students contribute to the stress and burnout of many faculty members, especially in public schools, where they often have limited access to digital tools, hindering effective communication and remote teaching. Additionally, many individuals invest their own personal finances to support their classrooms, ensuring that their students have the necessary resources to learn (Becker, 2023). Their experiences illustrate the strength and determination required to educate in isolated locations, bridging gaps in accessibility and cultural understanding. These teachers emphasize that while the challenges are immense, meaningful support and stronger connections can make quality education in these areas possible. Despite these difficulties, teachers navigate their roles with understanding and adaptability, finding fulfillment in their passion, relationships with students, and dedication to their duties (Nwoko et al., 2025).

These studies examine the realities of newly hired teachers assigned in remote areas, focusing on their adjustment periods, development in their teaching abilities, and classroom management. According to Algonos et al. (2024), rural education affects teachers both within the school and in their external environment, adding to the complexities of their role. Ultimately, this study focuses on the central issue: newly hired teachers face distinct challenges in adjusting to remote teaching, requiring targeted support to ensure they thrive in this environment and can successfully provide quality education to Filipino students.

## Methodology

This study used the descriptive phenomenology anchoring the six phases of Thematic Analysis of Braun and Clarke. This design is appropriate to be utilized as this gives a clear picture on describing the lived experiences of the teachers teaching in the remote areas. Indicated in the analysis is the six-phase process which are the (1) Familiarization wherein the researchers are immersed with the data to gain deeper understanding of the nature of phenomenon, (2) Generating Initial Codes that determines the features of the qualitative data which establishes impact and connections to the research questions raised in the study, (3) Searching for Themes that collect and collate codes to become themes that describe the lived experiences of the participants, (4) Reviewing Themes to refine and identify the detailed information of the themes ensuring the rigor of the study and how accurately it represents the data provided by the participants, (5) Defining and Naming Themes that give a detailed analysis of each theme and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures, and lastly, (6) Producing the Report that finalizes the analysis and information to describe the lived experiences of the participants teaching in the remote areas. The research environment was set in the hinterland schools of the Cebu South Province such as in Moalboal, Ronda, Alcantara, Dumanjug, Barili, Alegria, Malabuyoc, Badian, Ginatilan, Samboan, and Santander. With more than fifty possible participants, after the 5th participant, the data was already saturated. The participants were interviewed and provided assurance of the confidentiality of their identity and their data was set to the highest degree of privacy. They were not harmed, and they can leave whenever they are not comfortable during the interview. The ethical standards were strictly followed during the data gathering. The narrative accounts from the participants were analyzed and interpreted using thematic Analysis, which resulted in six themes: Relevant Technologies in the Mountain School, Expediency for Professional Development, Multi-grade Reality, Overcoming Classroom Diversity, Tenacity in the Workplace, and Exhaustion of Resources in the Remote School. These emerging themes are discussed comprehensively with literature and related studies to corroborate the participants' experiences of the phenomenon established in this study.

## Results and Discussion

### REMOTE TEACHING REALITIES OF NEWLY HIRED TEACHERS

Note: The narrative accounts presented in this study were originally expressed in Cebuano and have been translated into English. Slight

edits were made for clarity while preserving the original meaning.

Themes	Subthemes	Narrative Accounts
Relevant Technologies in the Mountain School	Technology is Beneficial	<p>Para sa akoo, pareha na man ang remote ug ang rural area ron kay puro na naay TV. In our school, our school principal required us to buy a TV. In lower grade, beneficial kaayo siya kay through technology, it's timely and dli siya awkward sa mga bata. For me, the rural and remote area are same but naa ra gihapoy remote area na depende sa maestra if naning saiya nga maghimo siyag worksheet para paanswerranan sa mga students but there are also teachers that always uses YouTube in their class. For me, integration of educational technology, the rural and remote area are the same because using technology it will aroused the learners' interest. (P3)</p> <p><i>[For me, remote and rural areas are quite similar nowadays, as most already have access to TVs. In our school, the principal required us to buy a TV. In the lower grades, it's very beneficial because technology is timely and not awkward for the children. In my view, rural and remote areas are the same when it comes to educational technology, but in some remote areas, it still depends on the teacher—some take the initiative to create worksheets for their students, while others consistently use YouTube in their classes. For me, integrating educational technology is effective in both rural and remote areas because it helps arouse learners' interest. (P3)]</i></p>
	Technology for engagement	<p>As a newly hired teacher in a remote school handling Grade 2 pupils, honestly lisod gyud sa kinaunahan nga makuha ang atensyon sa mga bata, labi na kay wala pay TV ato, dali ra sila ma distract jud. Pero katung natauran nag TV among room grabi dako gyud ang kausaban sa mga bata kay aktibo naman sila sa akong klase, ganahan na sila mo participate tungod guro sa mga videos ug multimedia nga akong gipakita nila. Para naku, dako gyud kaayo ug tabang ang teknolohiya sa ilang pagkat-on. (P4)</p> <p><i>[As a newly hired teacher in a remote school handling Grade 2 pupils, honestly, it was really difficult at first to get the children's attention—especially because we didn't have a TV back then, and they got distracted very easily. But when a TV was finally installed in our classroom, there was a huge change in the students. They became more active in class and more eager to participate, probably because of the videos and multimedia I started showing them. For me, technology has been a big help in their learning. (P4)]</i></p>
	Technology Integration	<p>The challenges of integrating of educational technology is the older teacher in remote area that doesn't know how to use computer. If we request laptop it depends on the principal on how he/she allocate the budget of the school. So the challenges of integrating technology is that some of the older teacher being left behind in terms of using technology it's because wala sila maanad. (P3)</p> <p><i>[One of the challenges in integrating educational technology is that some older teachers in remote areas don't know how to use computers. When we request a laptop, it depends on how the principal allocates the school budget. The challenge is that these older teachers tend to be left behind when it comes to using technology because they're simply not used to it. (P3)]</i></p>
	Unfamiliarity with Basic Technology	<p>One of the biggest challenges I've faced in handling Grade 2 learners in a remote school is that some pupils are not yet familiar with using basic technology. Maong giguide gyud nako sila og hinay-hinay hangtud nga makat-on sila. Usahay pud dili kasaligan ang internet koneksyon maong mag lisod ko kay mabalaw pakog pagana nga maka signal tawon. Nakabantay pud kos mga edad-edaran nga maestra comfortable ra sila sa tradisyonal nga pagtudlo ug dili sila ganahan mo try sa teknolohiya. (P1)</p> <p><i>[One of the biggest challenges I've faced in handling Grade 2 learners in a remote school is that some pupils are not yet familiar with using basic technology. That's why I really had to guide them slowly until they learned. Sometimes, the internet connection is also unreliable, which makes things difficult because I struggle just to get a signal. I also noticed that older teachers seem more comfortable with traditional teaching methods and are not willing to try using technology. (P1)]</i></p>
	The Breakthrough of Technology in the Classroom	<p>The breakthrough of this is there is a possibility that the performance of the class will excel. Dali ra sila makakuha kay giexplain na pag-ayo sa technology. For example, in science subject were making an experiment through technology aron mas nasabtan sa mga bata di pareha sauna na nga mag-imagine ra mi sa experiment. Kung naay technology, makakita man nila sa video kung unsaon pag buhat ang experiment. That's the breakthrough of</p>

Expediency for Professional Development	Technology Access	<p>integrating of educational technology, it increases the performance of the students. It can also lessen the stress of the teacher. (P5)</p> <p><i>[The breakthrough of integrating educational technology is the possibility that class performance will excel. Students can understand lessons more easily because technology explains things more clearly. For example, in science, we now conduct experiments through technology so that the students can understand better—unlike before, when we only imagined how the experiments were done. With technology, they can actually watch videos showing how the experiments are done. That's the breakthrough: educational technology improves student performance and can also lessen the stress of the teacher (P5)]</i></p> <p>Maka-access na ang mga teachers ug lesson guides or books because of the internet. (P2)</p> <p><i>[Teachers can now access lesson guides and books because of the internet. (P2)]</i></p>
	Hindrances to Joining Training and Seminars	<p>In terms in professional development, sa remote area ang challenges kay ang first transportation, it is hard kay times 10 imong plete jd naa pajd usahay naay driver moingon nga “Adto ka bukid dae? 200 lang dae pakyaw, kwaon rapod tika nig hapon pakyaw lang japon”. Ikaduha is kanang mga lisod ang dalan, kuyaw, risky. And ikatulo kay ang uban teachers di kaapil og seminars or trainings kay way internet kay di stable ang signal. Tanan man gipaconnect sa MOOE pero naay days nga mawala ang internet. (P4)</p> <p><i>[In terms of professional development, one of the challenges in remote areas is transportation. The fare can be up to ten times higher than usual, and sometimes drivers would say, 'You're heading to the mountains, miss? That's ₱200 for a special trip. I'll pick you up again this afternoon, also as a special trip.' Second, the roads are difficult, dangerous, and risky to travel. Teachers also struggle to attend seminars or training because of poor or unstable internet connection. Everything depends on the MOOE, but some days, there's just no signal at all. (P4)]</i></p>
	Work-Life Conflict	<p>Ang mga teachers sad didto dli na mopursue og masteral or usa pa ba kay para nila laing buhatonon sa sabado og domingo and naa pay laing buhatonon nga maapektohan ang professional development. (P5)</p> <p><i>[The teachers there also no longer pursue a master's degree or anything similar because, for them, weekends are already filled with other responsibilities, and these additional tasks can affect their professional development. (P5)]</i></p>
	Combined Classes	<p>So sa professional development, hard sya base on my observation kay kasagaran didto kay combined, like my friend nga na assign sa Matalao Elementary School, gamay ra kaayo syag mga studyante pero sa iyang room kay gitunga, sa pikas side kay grade 1 and then sa pikas side kay grade 2. Ingon ko, why not isagul nimo? Ana sya di man pwede kay lahi man sya og competencies unlike kung pareha og competencies. (P1)</p> <p><i>[Based on my observation, professional development is harder in remote schools. For example, my friend was assigned to Matalao Elementary School, where she had very few students, but her class was split—one side for Grade 1 and the other for Grade 2. I asked, “Why not combine them?” She said, “I can't. They have different competencies. If they had the same competencies, then combining them would be possible.” (P1)]</i></p>
Multi-grade Reality	Breakthroughs in Diversity	<p>Based on my experience, as I recall my breakthroughs, before, muagi jod tag kasakit, kakapoy unsaon pag handle sa mga bata however as a teacher in a remote school it's how you handle the class to change their perspective in learning and how you will change your teaching style kay at the end man gud ang mga bata makat-on rana sila if imoha sang teaching style is better and because it doesn't matter if sa remote school or dependi rajod sa teacher ug unsa ilahang strategy. (P5)</p> <p><i>[Based on my experience, I can recall that before achieving any breakthroughs, I had to go through hardships and exhaustion, especially in learning how to handle the students. However, as a teacher in a remote school, it was about learning how to manage the class in a way that helped change their perspective on learning, and how to adjust your teaching style. At the end of the day, students will learn if the teacher knows how to make their teaching style better, and it doesn't matter whether you teach in a remote area or not; what truly matters is the teacher's strategy. (P5)]</i></p>

Foster Positive Connection	<p>Nakabuild ang mga teachers og maayong relationship sa mga students, maong nindot ang environment sa klase. Mas naay interest ang mga students sa leksyon kay ang mga activity kay nay connect sa ilang kinabuhi ug sa ilang community. Mas daghan usab ang niparticipate kay naggamit ang mga teachers og mga dula nga interactive paagi sa pagtudlo, mao nga nalingaw ang tanan sa pagkat-on. (P2)</p> <p><i>[Teachers were able to build good relationships with their students, creating a better classroom environment. Students became more interested in the lessons because the activities were related to their daily lives and communities. Participation also increased when the teacher incorporated interactive games into the lessons, making learning enjoyable for everyone. (P2)]</i></p>
Addressing Students' Needs	<p>Based on my experience it depends upon the attitude of the student kay bisan remote area or di ug ang bata dili jod interested sa klasi bisan pag unsa katechnology driven sa imo klasi kay ug di siya ganahan maminaw dijod na siya maminaw maong ang teacher maoy dapat naay initiative nga unsaon pag spark sa curiosity sa bata kay mostly same rajod ang feedback. Ug dili kiat ang bata, dili sad kahibaw mubasa pero naa sad jod mga bata nga nagpuyo sa bukid kay kugihan sad nya ganahan jod makat-on maong dependi jod na usnaon sa maestra pag handle sa bata kay usa sad sa problema sa bukid kay ang absenteeism. Kay before, I experience nga akoang student is kapila jod sig-absent and then as a teacher, matingala jod ka why sig-absent so akoang paagi kay is adtuon nako ang bata sa ilahang balay to know the background and the reason why sig absent kay ma affect man sad nimo as a teacher nganung naa kay students nga in-ana. Ma-question kas principal and then the saying goes nga all students must be well taken care of that's why my technique in having this kind of student is focus more by sugoon siya sa room or naa kay ipabuhat na exclusive rajod niya kay in that way, most student is need jod siyag attention para makasabot more sa klasi. Another is, dili najod new sa remote school na naa jod mga bata nga intelligence and average ra even sa mga highway school so as a teacher, mag incorporate kog method nga mopagana sa ilahang interest like popsicles since naa jod bata nga ganahan ug naay visual. (P1)</p>
Overcoming Classroom Diversity	<p><i>[Based on my experience, it really depends on the student's attitude. Even if you're teaching in a remote area or not, if the student isn't interested in learning, no matter how technology-driven your class is, they won't listen. That's why the teacher must take the initiative to spark the child's curiosity—since the feedback is usually the same. If the child isn't naughty, they usually can't read either. But there are also kids living in the mountains who are diligent and eager to learn. So it really depends on how the teacher handles each child. One of the problems in mountain areas is absenteeism. I experienced having a student who was frequently absent. As a teacher, you'd wonder why that was happening. So I visited the student's home to understand the background and reasons behind the absences. It affects you as a teacher when you have students like that—you'll be questioned by your principal. And there's that saying, "all students must be well taken care of." My technique for students like this is to give them more attention—assign exclusive tasks to them inside the classroom. In that way, students who need extra attention are better able to understand the lesson. Another thing is that it's not only in remote schools where you find students with average or lower academic performance—even in highway schools, it's the same. So as a teacher, I incorporate methods that stir their interest, like using popsicle sticks, because some kids really enjoy visual activities. (P1)]</i></p>
Heightened Interest in Remote Learning	<p>Ang uban nga mga students kay interested moapil sa mga activities sa school then ang uban pud kay walay pake sa kung unsay kalihukan sa school samot na ug ang mga gamiton kay mga computer or cellphone. Usa sa makalisod sa mga studyante kay ang sitwasyon sa pamilya ilabi na sa mga buluhaton sa balay, mag lisod sila ug balance, mo skuyla or magtuon. So, tungod ana, ubang students mag lisod ug participate, ilabi na during remote learning. (P3)</p> <p><i>[Some students are interested in joining school activities, but others just don't care, especially when computers or cellphones are involved. One difficulty students face is their family situation—particularly when they're burdened with house chores. They struggle to balance school and study time. Because of this, some students find it hard to participate, especially during remote learning.]</i></p>
Managing Behavior	<p>One of the challenges I have encountered in remote school is the behavior of the students because mostly if the environment of the students is toxic or</p>

daghang bugoy mura man gud silag matakdan if they are surrounded with that kind of environment. So my strategy is I will have a heart to heart talk of that student kay mas better if ingon-ane ang strategy sa teacher kay maka understand siya and if idaghan man gud, makadungog iyang classmate. That student is mamore hard to manage iyahang attitude. For example, before, na assign man kog room nga dili jod siya well maintained and the grade level is grade 3 and the worst is naa man nako tanang dili average na student as well as mga kiat nga students and worst of the worst, I have this student nga during classes, naa siya sa gawas nanguhag bayabas and as a bagp-o pa baya na maestra mag doubt jod kas imohang teaching style ug unsaon nimo paghandle ing-ana nga mga bata and then kay gahi man jod siyag ulo naabot jod ko sa point nga ni hilak ko kay ikaw nga teacher nga ni maintain sa imohang dignity unsa palay mafeedback sa principal or other co-teachers usa pa sad ug unsa bayay ma hitabo sa bata ang teacher baya manubag. (P5)

*[One of the challenges I've encountered in a remote school is student behavior. If their environment is toxic or full of troublemakers, they tend to be influenced by it. So my strategy is to have a heart-to-heart talk with the student. This kind of approach is more effective because it helps the student understand better. If you call them out in front of the class, their classmates might hear, and it could worsen the student's attitude. For example, I was once assigned to a poorly maintained classroom with Grade 3 students, and most of them were either below average or very mischievous. The worst part was having a student who, during class, would sneak outside just to pick guavas. As a new teacher, it really made me doubt my teaching skills and how I would handle such students. Because this particular student was very stubborn, I reached a point where I cried. As a teacher trying to maintain her dignity, I was worried about what the principal or my co-teachers might think. I was also worried about what could happen to the student after all, it's the teacher who's held accountable. (P5)]*

Absenteeism  
versus motivation

Daghang mga students ang perme wala sa klase, especially kadtong nagpuyo sa mga sudlunon nga lugar. Wala kaayo silay interest sa pagtuon kay dili sila anad sa paggamit og technology para sa ilang pag-eskwela. And, daghan usab og students ang need motabang sa ilang pamilya sa pag pangita og kwarta para sa pang adlaw-adlaw, nga maoy nakapalisod nila sa paghatag og saktong pagtagad sa ilang mga buluhaton sa eskwela. (P2)

*[Many students are often absent from school, especially those who live in remote areas. Their motivation to learn is low, mostly because they are not used to using technology for their studies. Also, many of them need to help their families earn money for daily needs, making it difficult for them to focus on schoolwork. P2)]*

Higher  
Expectations For  
New Teachers

Wala man ko kabalo nga by tasks ang designation usahay Math usahay Science. Akoy sige ug sugoon. People pleaser ka ushay di ka gusto naay masuko ug di pod sila ma suko nimo. Mo ana sila nga "Hello dae, ikaw himo sa Brigada dae." Dili ko magklase, magpa answer ko sa math activity kay naghimo ug report. Kay gatuo ko nga dapat sundon siya kay master teacher siya. Niya sigeg panugo na man. Tahod pod ko kay naa sa akong utok mas labaw sila nako. Niopen ko ani sa lain nga teacher ni ana ang lain nga teacher nga "ikaw diay naghimo ato, dae?" Nganong ikaw man?" Malooy pod ko kay tigulang na man dili kaayo kabao sa laptop. Ni ana ana uban nga teacher nga "ayaw ug himoe kay imo siyang gikuhaan rights nga makat-on. Pero kung siya ang pahimoon di man pod mao moreflect man pod sa school. Makaana pod ang uban "mga bogo siguro ni mga maestraha, dili man mao ang report. Now, kay mag help na me sa each other. Like for example "Hi ma'am! Mana ka sa form 2? Please sende ko sa messenger ma'am." We help each other kay mag matter ang workplace support. Kung maassignnan pod ka sa daghan, ang mga tigulang nga teacher ikaw ang mas saligan sa tanan. Kay kasagaran sa bag-o kay maoy kopyahan sa answer kay mao daw lab-as. Moana sila, "Dalia imoha dae kay mo kopya mi.". Taas kaayo sila ug expectations sa bag-o. Technology driven pod ang mga bag-o (P1)

Tenacity in the  
Workplace

*[I didn't know at first that task assignments changed frequently—sometimes I had to handle Math, sometimes Science. I often got assigned random tasks, and I ended up doing a lot of things. I admit I'm a people-pleaser, so I didn't want to offend anyone. They would say things like, "Hello dae, can you work on the Brigada Eskwela documents?" I wouldn't get to teach that day—I would*

### Mental Health Challenges in Teaching

*just let students answer activities while I focused on paperwork. I believed I had to follow her because she was the Master Teacher. She often gave me a lot of tasks, and I respected her because I thought she was in a higher position than me. Eventually, I shared my situation with another teacher, and they asked, "You're the one doing all of that, dae? Why you?" I also felt sorry for the older teacher, as she wasn't very skilled at using a laptop. Another teacher told me, "Don't do everything for her—you're taking away her opportunity to learn." But if you make her do it, it still won't be done properly—and that will reflect poorly on the school. Other people might think, "These teachers must be incompetent if the report looks like that." Now, we help each other out. For example, someone might ask, "Hi Ma'am, are you done with Form 2? Can you please send it to me on Messenger?" We help one another now because workplace support really matters. When you're assigned to a school where most teachers are older, you're often the one everyone relies on. New teachers are usually the go-to for answers because they say our work is more "fresh" or updated. They'll even say things like, "Hurry up with yours, dae, so we can copy it." Expectations are often higher for the new ones, especially since we're more familiar with technology. (P1)]*

If happy ka sa imong trabahoan bisag naa ka sa na assign sa remote areas, dedicated jud kaayo ka motudlo. Samot na if supportive imong co-teachers unya positive ra pud kaayo sila maka provide sila ug motivation nimo. Naa may ubang schools nga motake advantage sila nimo if bag-o ka nga maoy makadiscourage sa imoha ug makawa ug gana sa trabaho. In some cases, di man jud malikayan nga naa kay problema sa balay no? Nya nag sulti<sup>2</sup> baya kay if naa kay problema sa balay dapat ig padung nimo sulod sa room dapat imong ibilin imong problema sa gawas. Pero di jud baya malikayan nga mada nimo ang problema sud sa classroom samot na if bug-at na nga problema. Sa isa ka school pud di jud malikayan nga naay competition ug libak sa mga co-teachers nga makacreate ug toxic environment. So if ingon-ana sila, makahatag siyag negative energy, makawala siyag motivate ug dako kaayog impact sa imong pagtrabaho tungod mawad-an kag gana usahay. (P2)

*[If you're happy in your workplace—even if you're assigned to a remote area—you'll be very dedicated to teaching. Especially when your co-teachers are supportive and positive, they can really motivate you. But in some schools, people take advantage of new teachers, which can be discouraging and make you lose interest in your work. Sometimes you can't avoid bringing personal problems to work. They say you should leave your problems at the door, but that's easier said than done—especially when your problems are heavy. In one school, there was competition and gossip among co-teachers, creating a toxic environment. This negativity can really impact your performance and motivation. (P2)]*

### Professional Jealousy

Naa pod unseen competition. Kanang amega kaayo mo wala ka kabalo nga naa diay siyay kalagot nimo. Hidden agenda nga nalain diay siya nimo. Niya moask ka nila ug question. Mo ana ka nga "Ma'am mana ka sa form" Mo answer siya ug "wala pa". Pero nakapass na. Pwede ra man unta ug mo ingon nga pag-answer lang ug imoha maam. Dapat lang gyud positive lang pod ta ayaw lang padala sa mga challenges. Kanang divided groups, kanang naay amega. For example, kanang 5 amega, kani pod sila amega sa workplace. Manglibak sa uban nga groups mao nay challenges. Mas nice ug di maggroup-group kanang close gyud mo tanan ba. Naa pod uban nga parents bisag mama na sila no. mo act ug mas labaw pa nimo. Ingon-ani sa school namo. Manglihabot sa lihok nimo, sa imong attire. Pero kopyahon ang imong attire. Wala lang nako gimind sila. Ang mga mama ron kay wala nay respect sa group chat with teachers. Walay greetings namo ana na "nga ma'am naunsa diay tong akong anak giniha gihilabtan sa anak niya." Mo adjust nalang ka mo ana ka nga "good morning ate I'll settle it ate." Pero deep inside naglagot ka. Dili nalang nimo siya tubayan. Naay mo sulod lang sa room nga nagklase ka, naninda. Naa pod mo sulod lang kay mo ingon nga gi away ang iyang anak. Ingon-ani ang uban nga mama. Ni open ko ani sa uban nga teachers ana sila "kung ipakita nimo nga approachable kaayo ka iabuse ka" kung magstricta pod ka, libakon pod ka. Dili man gyud ka please sa ubang tawo. (P5)

*[There's also what I call unseen competition. Sometimes a colleague acts like a close friend, but you don't realize they're actually holding a grudge or have something against you. It's only when situations come up that you see it. For example, I might ask a simple question like, "Ma'am, have you completed the*

*form?" and she'll reply, "Not yet," even though she's already submitted it. It would've been kinder and more professional to just say, "Go ahead and do your part, Ma'am." These little things are discouraging, but I try to stay positive and not let it get to me. It's important not to allow these challenges to affect our mindset. Another difficulty is the presence of cliques in the workplace. Some groups are really close—like five people who always stick together—and they often gossip about others outside their circle. That creates division among teachers. It would be much better if we didn't form exclusive groups and instead worked toward becoming a more united team where everyone feels included and supported. We also deal with difficult parents. Some of them act like they're in a higher position than the teachers. In our school, for instance, some moms will criticize how you move, what you wear—yet they'll copy your style the next day. I choose not to dwell on it, but it's hard to ignore the lack of respect. Respect is also missing in our group chats with parents. There are no greetings or polite conversations anymore. They go straight to complaints like, "Ma'am, what happened to my child? Someone touched them." And as a teacher, you have to adjust, so I just respond with, "Good morning, Ate. I'll take care of it," even if I'm upset inside. Most of the time, I just keep quiet rather than argue. Another issue is interruptions during class. While teaching, someone might suddenly walk in to sell something or to complain that their child got into a fight. It's very disruptive. When I brought this up with other teachers, they told me, "If you're too approachable, people will take advantage of you. But if you're too strict, they'll gossip about you." That really stuck with me—because no matter what you do, you cannot please others. (P5)]*

#### Educational Competition

Naa juy individual competition. Naay ubang schools nga suod, labi na sa ilang friendship ba. Yes, mag matter ang principal kay once ang principal kay friendly sa mga teachers, muana dayon sya "magmeeting ta ron, gadala baya kog sud-an, salo salo tag kaon!", magkaclose namo tanan, nya naay mag birthday, "nagdala baya kog isda oh, tabangan nato nig lunch". Naa poy principal na di sya ganahan nga magsuod ang mga maestra, di pod sya ganahan na mag sige ug close-close. So, depende ra jud. (P3)

*[There really is individual competition. Some schools are close with each other, especially when it comes to friendships. Yes, the principal really matters because if the principal is friendly with the teachers, they might say something like, 'Let's have a meeting now, I even brought some food—let's eat together!' Then we all become close. And when someone has a birthday, they'll say, 'I brought some fish, let's help each other with lunch.' But there are also principals who don't want the teachers to get too close. They don't like too much familiarity. So, it really depends. (P3)]*

#### Affected Well-being

One of the reasons that can affect my mental health and well-being are the person I'm working with. Naay kauban nakos trabaho nga suyaan, akua rang lihok ilang tan-awon ug lisod kaayo silang e-please. If usa ka nga bag-ong gi-hire nga magtutudlo, mo-take advantage sila sa imoha nga makadugang og emotional stress ug maghimo imong trabaho nga lisud ug bug-at. If papilion ko nga motudlo sa usa ka eskwelahan nga naa sa highway o sa remote areas, mas pilion nako ang remote areas. Sa remote areas man gud kasagaran ang mga tawo magtinabangay ug e-treat na ang usa-usa as a family, nga mo welcome nimo ug positive environment nga makainspire nako sa pagtudlo nga malipayun. Usa pud ana, ang mga eskwelahan nga naa sa daplin sa highway kasagaran adunay mga storya about nimo nga di tinuod or bati ug dali nga masuya sa ilang co-teachers, nga maka down ug maka unmotivate nimo mo trabaho. Sa pagtudlo sa remote areas, naa say butang nga makadaot sa imong mental health. Lisod kaayo ang pag-atubang sa mga istorya o tsismis against nimo, for example kung mosakay ka og habal-habal padulong sa eskwelahan ug ang driver naay pamilya, unya naay mga silingan nga makakita nga niangkay ka, himuon na nilang issue nga kabit daw ka atong driver. Because of this challenges, if ma assign ka sa remote areas dapat strong imong personality ug andam nga modawat sa mga issues against nimo to avoid trauma. Ang uban pud nga ginikanan usahay walay respeto sa mga teachers o magpakita nga mas taas sila unya usahay pud libakon ka nila. Sa sulod sa eskwelahan, naay unseen competition nga mahitabo ug hidden agenda sa uban nga teachers nga mahimong reason sa toxic environment. Bisan pa ug imong gihunahuna nga close mo anang teacher, like moingon sila nga wa pa nahuman sa form ba ron pero diay mana jud to sila. (P1)

Exhaustion of Resources in the Hinterland School	Limited in everything	<p><i>[One reason that affects my mental health and well-being is the people I work with. Some coworkers are envious, and they closely monitor everything I do. It's hard to please them. As a newly hired teacher, they take advantage of you, which adds emotional stress and makes your work feel heavier. If I were given a choice between teaching in a highway or remote school, I'd choose the remote area. People in remote schools usually help each other and treat each other like family. It's a more positive environment that inspires me to teach happily. In contrast, schools near highways often have gossip and jealousy that can bring you down and demotivate you. However, remote schools also have their challenges—like rumors. For example, if you ride a motorcycle to school and the driver has a family, neighbors might gossip and say you're having an affair. Because of these issues, if you're assigned to a remote area, you need a strong personality and the ability to handle such rumors to avoid trauma. Some parents also don't respect teachers and even talk behind their backs. Inside the school, unseen competition and hidden agendas also happen. Even if you think you're close to a fellow teacher, they may lie about being done with their forms, when in fact, they already submitted them. (P1)]</i></p> <p>Ang books kay gamay ra for the school or worse, wala jod siya. If maabot man gani sa remote schools, limited lang jod siya maong maghuwam-huwam ra ang mga teachers sa usa ka school. Pero usahay sad, ang mga teachers mahadlok manghuwam sa book kay basin unya maguba. Also, one example is ang fire extinguisher, ang mas pabor jod nga gitagaan ana kay ang mga central or highway schools kay sila man ang mas dool jod. Ang remote schools, mauwahi jod sa mga resources. (P3)</p> <p><i>[There are only a few books in the school—sometimes none at all. If resources do arrive at remote schools, they're very limited. Teachers often have to share books, and some are afraid to borrow them for fear of damaging them. For example, even the fire extinguishers are prioritized for central or highway schools because they're more accessible. Remote schools are always the last to receive resources. (P3)]</i></p>
	Less Prioritized	<p>Mas prioritize ang central or highway schools sa mga books. If naa maabot supplies gikan sa DepEd, taud-taud pa siya maabot sa mga remote areas. We hadn't been given books in my remote school. If matagaan man gani, limited lang jod. (P2)</p> <p><i>[Central or highway schools are prioritized when it comes to books. If supplies arrive from the DepEd, it takes a long time before they reach remote areas. In our remote school, we haven't been given books. If we do receive any, they're very limited. (P2)]</i></p>
	Inequality of resources	<p>Some of the remote school aren't given big priorities in resources. Not equal and opportunities sa resources unlike sa mga central or highway schools. Ingnon ra mi nga "sunod lang mo ma'am ha?" since mas mauna jod sa mga big schools kay sila man ang mas dool. (P3)</p> <p><i>[Some remote schools are not given high priority when it comes to resources. There's inequality in access compared to central or highway schools. We're often just told, "You'll get yours later, ma'am," because bigger schools are prioritized since they are closer in main roads. (P3)]</i></p>

### Theme 1: Relevant Technologies in the Mountain School

The first theme, which highlights the relevant technologies at the Mountain School, shows the importance of utilizing technological tools in schools, particularly in remote settings. This theme provides a clear picture of how both newly hired and experienced teachers can maximize the benefits of integrating technologies into the teaching-learning process, as this enhances interaction and increases the attention span of learners (Van et al., 2021). The words of the participants supported this claim as they said below.

Participant 3 said, “Para sa akua, pareha na man ang remote ug ang rural area ron kay puro na naay TV. In our school, our school principal required us to buy a TV. In lower grade, beneficial kaayo siya kay through technology, it's timely and dli siya awkward sa mga bata. For me, the rural and remote area are same but naa ra gihapoy remote area na depende sa maestra if naning saiya nga maghimo siyag worksheet para paanswerranan sa mga students but there are also teachers that always uses YouTube in their class. For me, integration of educational technology, the rural and remote area are the same because using technology it will arouse the learners' interest.”

*[Participant 3 said, “For me, remote and rural areas are quite similar nowadays, as most already have access to TVs. In our school, the principal required us to buy a TV. In the lower grades, it's very beneficial because technology is timely and not awkward for the children. In my view, rural and remote areas are the same when it comes to educational technology, but in some remote areas, it still depends on the teacher—some take the initiative to create worksheets for their students, while others consistently use YouTube in their*

*classes. For me, integrating educational technology is effective in both rural and remote areas because it helps arouse learners' interest."]*

Many remote and mountainous schools are now equipped with televisions in each classroom. This access to basic educational technology has made it easier for teachers to integrate digital tools into their teaching, particularly in helping students who are struggling academically (Algones et al., 2024). It has greatly benefited students, as they have become more familiar and comfortable with technology, which in turn makes them more engaged and interested in their lessons (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Recognizing the availability of technology, many teachers ensure that students fully understand the lessons, believing that this strategy strengthens understanding and improves learning outcomes.

Participant 4 mentioned, "As a newly hired teacher in a remote school handling Grade 2 pupils, honestly lisod gyud sa kinaunahan nga makuha ang atensyon sa mga bata, labi na kay wala pay TV ato, dali ra sila ma distract jud. Pero katung natauran nag TV among room grabi dako gyud ang kausaban sa mga bata kay aktibo naman sila sa akong klase, ganahan na sila mo participate tungod guro sa mga videos ug multimedia nga akong gipakita nila. Para naku, dako gyud kaayo ug tabang ang teknolohiya sa ilang pagkat-on."

*[Participant 4 mentioned, "As a newly hired teacher in a remote school handling Grade 2 pupils, honestly, it was really difficult at first to get the children's attention—especially because we didn't have a TV back then, and they got distracted very easily. But when a TV was finally installed in our classroom, there was a huge change in the students. They became more active in class and more eager to participate, probably because of the videos and multimedia I started showing them. For me, technology has been a big help in their learning."]*

Technology is a valuable tool in making young students more active and interested in learning, especially in remote schools where resources are often limited (Tinampay, 2023). Without the use of engaging visual aids, new teachers struggle to maintain the attention of young learners, which adds to their challenges. However, once television became available, the integration of multimedia presentations brought the lessons to life, making them more visually stimulating and easier for the students to understand. This experience demonstrates how access to even basic technology can significantly enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement in remote classrooms.

Participant 3 shared, "The challenges of integrating of educational technology is the older teacher in remote area that doesn't know how to use computer. If we request laptop it depends on the principal on how he/she allocates the budget of the school. So, the challenge of integrating technology is that some of the older teacher being left behind in terms of using technology it's because wala sila maanad."

*[Participant 3 shared, "One of the challenges in integrating educational technology is that some older teachers in remote areas don't know how to use computers. When we request a laptop, it depends on how the principal allocates the school budget. The challenge is that these older teachers tend to be left behind when it comes to using technology because they're simply not used to it."]*

Many older teachers struggle with using computers due to a lack of prior training and experience, resulting in a gap in their teaching approaches. Additionally, access to devices like laptops often depends on the principal's budget allocation, making it challenging to ensure that all teachers are equipped (Cabello et al., 2024). As a result, some older teachers feel left behind and tend to prefer traditional teaching methods, finding comfort in familiar practices rather than adapting to new technologies. This situation highlights the importance of ongoing professional development and more equitable resource allocation to support effective technology integration across all age groups.

Participant 1 stated, "One of the biggest challenges I've faced in handling Grade 2 learners in a remote school is that some pupils are not yet familiar with using basic technology. Maong giguide gyud nako sila og hinay-hinay hangtud nga makat-on sila. Usahay pud dili kasaligan ang internet koneksyon maong mag lisod ko kay mabalaw pakog pagana nga maka signal tawon. Nakabantay pud kos mga edad-edaran nga maestra comfortable ra sila sa tradisyonal nga pagtudlo ug dili sila ganahan mo try sa teknolohiya."

*[Participant 1 stated, "One of the biggest challenges I've faced in handling Grade 2 learners in a remote school is that some pupils are not yet familiar with using basic technology. That's why I really had to guide them slowly until they learned. Sometimes, the internet connection is also unreliable, which makes things difficult because I struggle just to get a signal. I also noticed that older teachers seem more comfortable with traditional teaching methods and are not willing to try using technology."]*

Teaching young learners and working alongside older teachers who struggle with technology are common challenges faced by newly hired teachers. Guiding young students who are not yet familiar with digital tools demands extra patience and effort. Adding to this difficulty is the issue of poor internet connectivity, which limits access to valuable online resources and teaching materials (Booyd, 2024). These challenges underscore the crucial need for enhanced digital literacy, stronger infrastructure, and increased support for teachers as they transition to modern educational approaches.

Participant 5 explained, "The breakthrough of this is there is a possibility that the performance of the class will excel. Dali ra sila makakuha kay giexplain na pag-ayo sa technology. For example, in science subject were making an experiment through technology aron mas nasabtan sa mga bata di pareha sauna na nga mag-imagine ra mi sa experiment. Kung naay technology, makakita man nila sa video kung unsaon pag buhat ang experiment. That's the breakthrough of integrating of educational technology, it increases the performance of the students. It can also lessen the stress of the teacher."

*[Participant 5 explained, “The breakthrough of integrating educational technology is the possibility that class performance will excel. Students can understand lessons more easily because technology explains things more clearly. For example, in science, we now conduct experiments through technology so that the students can understand better—unlike before, when we only imagined how the experiments were done. With technology, they can actually watch videos showing how the experiments are done. That’s the breakthrough: educational technology improves student performance and can also lessen the stress of the teacher.”]*

Integrating educational technology has a significant impact on student learning and overall classroom performance (Becker, 2023). By providing dynamic and intriguing approaches to present lessons, technology makes it easier for students to understand even the most complex concepts. In addition, this approach supports teachers by offering more effective tools to explain content, which helps reduce their pressure and workload (Baynosa et al., 2024). Overall, it highlights the valuable role of educational technology in enhancing both the learning experience for students and the teaching practices of educators.

Participant 2 said, “Maka-access na ang mga teachers ug lesson guides or books because of the internet.”

*[Participant 2 said, “Teachers can now access lesson guides and books because of the internet.”]*

Access to lesson guides and books online through the internet is a great help for new teachers, especially when they are overwhelmed with work and going through an adjustment phase. This easy availability enables educators to quickly find and utilize a diverse range of educational resources without relying solely on physical resources (Celestin, 2024). As a result, lesson planning becomes more efficient and flexible, allowing teachers to better meet the diverse needs of their students. This demonstrates the importance of online resources in helping teachers prepare their lessons and enhancing student learning.

Educational technology has greatly enhanced learning and student engagement in remote schools; however, challenges such as limited teacher training and unreliable internet connectivity continue to hinder its full potential. While access to devices and online resources has made lessons more dynamic and effective, ongoing support, adequate training, and improved infrastructure remain essential. By addressing these barriers, technology can play a transformative role in elevating both teaching practices and student achievement in remote and underserved areas.

## Theme 2: Expediency for Professional Development

The second theme, expediency for professional development, emphasizes the necessity for accessible and flexible growth opportunities for teachers, particularly in remote areas. This theme emphasizes the importance of addressing both logistical and personal barriers, such as transportation difficulties, unstable internet connectivity, and time constraints, which prevent teachers from participating in seminars, training, or pursuing further studies. It underlines the importance of responsive professional development systems that align with the realities faced by not only newly hired but also older teachers in a challenging environment. The statements from the participants clearly reflect these concerns, as shown in the responses below.

Participant 2 mentioned, “In terms in professional development, sa remote area ang challenges kay ang first transportation, it is hard kay times 10 imong plete jd naa pajd usahay naay driver moingon nga “Adto ka bukid dae? 200 lang dae pakyaw, kwaon rapod tika nig hapon pakyaw lang japon”. Ikaduha is kanang mga lisod ang dalan, kuyaw, risky. And ikatulo kay ang uban teachers di kaapil og seminars or trainings kay way internet kay di stable ang signal. Tanan man gipaconnect sa MOOE pero naay days nga mawala ang internet.”

*[Participant 2 mentioned, “In terms of professional development, one of the challenges in remote areas is transportation. The fare can be up to ten times higher than usual, and sometimes drivers would say, ‘You’re heading to the mountains, miss? That’s ₱200 for a special trip. I’ll pick you up again this afternoon, also as a special trip.’ Second, the roads are difficult, dangerous, and risky to travel. Teachers also struggle to attend seminars or training because of poor or unstable internet connection. Everything depends on the MOOE, but some days, there’s just no signal at all.”]*

Teachers in remote areas face significant challenges in accessing professional development opportunities. The high transportation costs and risky travel conditions make attending seminars or training difficult, while unstable or unavailable internet further limits their ability to participate in online learning. These factors highlight both physical and technological barriers that hinder continuous professional growth for educators in remote locations. Overall, it highlights how infrastructure and connectivity issues significantly hinder teachers’ access to essential development resources.

Participant 5 stated, “Ang mga teachers sad didto dli na mopursue og masteral or usa pa ba kay para nila laing buhatonon sa sabado og dominggo and naa pay laing buhatonon nga maapektohan ang professional development.”

*[Participant 5 stated, “The teachers there also no longer pursue a master’s degree or anything similar because, for them, weekends are already filled with other responsibilities, and these additional tasks can affect their professional development.”]*

Time constraints significantly hinder teachers’ pursuit of further studies, such as a master’s degree (Ewing & Cooper, 2021). Due to the heavy workload and personal responsibilities occupying their weekends, many educators are unable to commit to additional academic or professional growth (Galut, 2025). This highlights how demanding schedules and lack of work-life balance can limit opportunities for advancement. It highlights the need for more flexible professional development options that consider teachers’ time

constraints

Whether newly hired or experienced, teachers in remote areas face significant barriers to professional development, including high transportation costs, unsafe travel conditions, and unstable internet connectivity despite support from the school. Additionally, heavy workloads and weekend responsibilities prevent many from pursuing further studies, such as a master's degree. These challenges highlight the need for adaptable and inclusive professional development programs that consider both logistical limitations and time constraints faced by educators in remote settings. Addressing these concerns is essential to ensure equal opportunities for teacher growth and improved educational outcomes.

### Theme 3: Multi-grade Reality

The third theme, multi-grade reality, highlights the unique challenges and experiences of newly hired teachers handling multiple grade levels within a single classroom, particularly in remote schools. This theme highlights the need for educators to balance diverse competencies and learning needs while striving to deliver high-quality instruction. The participants' reflections clearly illustrate the importance of effective classroom management and adaptable teaching strategies in overcoming these challenges, as they stated in their responses below.

Participant 1 explained, "So sa professional development, hard sya base on my observation kay kasagaran didto kay combined, like my friend nga na assign sa Matalao Elementary School, gamay ra kaayo syag mga studyante pero sa iyang room kay gitunga, sa pikas side kay grade 1 and then sa pikas side kay grade 2. Ingon ko, why not isagul nimo? Ana sya di man pwede kay lahi man sya og competencies unlike kung pareha og competencies."

*[Participant 1 explained, "Based on my observation, professional development is harder in remote schools. For example, my friend was assigned to Matalao Elementary School, where she had very few students, but her class was split—one side for Grade 1 and the other for Grade 2. I asked, "Why not combine them?" She said, "I can't. They have different competencies. If they had the same competencies, then combining them would be possible."]*

Multi-grade classes are typically found in remote schools, where teachers have little access to professional development (Tinampay, 2023). The teachers in these schools teach multiple grade levels in the same room and struggle to monitor the individual preferences of their students. This arrangement requires a lot of attention to make teachers feel supported. Providing support and resources can help teachers manage multi-grade classes effectively and create a positive learning environment.

Participant 5 said, "Based on my experience, as I recall my breakthroughs, before, muagi jod tag kasakit, kakapoy unsaon pag handle sa mga bata however as a teacher in a remote school it's how you handle the class to change their perspective in learning and how you will change your teaching style kay at the end man gud ang mga bata makat-on rana sila if imoha sang teaching style is better and because it doesn't matter if sa remote school or dependi rajod sa teacher ug unsa ilahang strategy."

*[Participant 5 said, "Based on my experience, I can recall that before achieving any breakthroughs, I had to go through hardships and exhaustion, especially in learning how to handle the students. However, as a teacher in a remote school, it was about learning how to manage the class in a way that helped change their perspective on learning, and how to adjust your teaching style. At the end of the day, students will learn if the teacher knows how to make their teaching style better, and it doesn't matter whether you teach in a remote area or not; what truly matters is the teacher's strategy."]*

Effective classroom management and flexible teaching strategies are crucial in promoting meaningful learning, especially in multi-grade settings. Despite initial struggles and exhaustion, the newly hired teacher experienced a breakthrough by adjusting their approach to engage students better (Taole, 2024). This experience illustrates how a teacher's ability to respond to diverse classroom needs can positively influence students' attitudes and engagement (Salmon, 2022). Ultimately, it reinforces the idea that the quality of teaching, not the location, has the greatest impact on student learning outcomes.

The realities of teaching in multi-grade settings—common in remote schools—present unique challenges that require both strong classroom management and adaptable instructional strategies. Handling multiple grade levels with distinct competencies in a single room demands careful planning, creativity, and a deep understanding of student needs. Despite the difficulties, breakthroughs are possible when newly hired teachers adjust their methods to make learning more engaging and effective. This highlights the importance of providing educators with proper support and targeted professional development to help them succeed in multi-grade environments, ultimately ensuring quality education regardless of location.

### Theme 4: Overcoming Classroom Diversity

The fourth theme, overcoming classroom diversity, highlights the unique challenges and strategies involved in managing diverse student backgrounds, abilities, and needs within remote school settings. This theme highlights the need to recognize and respond to difference to create an inclusive and effective learning environment. It also showcases how newly hired teachers adapt their instructional approaches to meet these varied needs, fostering equity and participation among all learners. The insights shared by the participants strongly support this perspective, as illustrated in their statements below.

Participant 2 mentioned "Nakabuild ang mga teachers og maayong relationship sa mga students, maong nindot ang environment sa

klase. Mas naay interest ang mga students sa leksyon kay ang mga activity kay nay connect sa ilang kinabuhi ug sa ilang community. Mas daghan usab ang niparticipate kay naggamit ang mga teachers og mga dula nga interactive paagi sa pagtudlo, mao nga nalingaw ang tanan sa pagkat-on”

*[Participant 2 mentioned, “Teachers were able to build good relationships with their students, creating a better classroom environment. Students became more interested in the lessons because the activities were related to their daily lives and communities. Participation also increased when the teacher incorporated interactive games into the lessons, making learning enjoyable for everyone.”]*

Building strong teacher-student relationships fosters a positive and engaging learning environment. A teacher's sincere relationship with their students may have a immense effect on the learning environment. By connecting lessons to students' real-life experiences and incorporating interactive activities, the teacher was able to increase interest and participation. This highlights how culturally relevant and student-centered teaching approaches can significantly enhance learner engagement (Werang et al., 2022). Overall, it demonstrates that meaningful connections and interactive strategies are crucial to motivating students and enhancing classroom dynamics.

Participant 1 shis theme emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing differences hared, “Based on my experience it depends upon the attitude of the student kay bisan remote area or di ug ang bata dili jod interested sa klasi bisan pag unsa katechnology driven sa imo klasi kay ug di siya ganahan maminaw dihod na siya maminaw maong ang teacher maoy dapat naay initiative nga unsaon pag spark sa curiosity sa bata kay mostly same rajod ang feedback. Ug dili kiat ang bata, dili sad kahibaw mubasa pero naa sad jod mga bata nga nagpuyo sa bukid kay kugihan sad nya ganahan jod makat-on maong dependi jod na usnaon sa maestra pag handle sa bata kay usa sad sa problema sa bukid kay ang abseentism. Kay before, I experience nga akoang student is kapila jod sig-absent and then as a teacher, matingala jod ka why sig-absent so akoang paagi kay is adtuon nako ang bata sa ilahang balay to know the background and the reason why sig absent kay ma affect man sad nimo as a teacher nganung naa kay students nga in-ana. Ma-question kas principal and then the saying goes nga all students must be well taken care of that's why my technique in this kind of student having is focus more by sugoon siya sa room or naa kay ipabuhat na exclusive rajod niya kay in that way, most student is need jod siyag attention para makasabot more sa klasi. Another is, dili najod new sa remote school na naa jod mga bata nga intelligence and average ra even sa mga highway school so as a teacher, mag incorporate kog method nga mopagana sa ilahang interest like popsicles since naa jod bata nga ganahan ug naay visual.”

*[Participant 1 shared, “Based on my experience, it really depends on the student's attitude. Even if you're teaching in a remote area or not, if the student isn't interested in learning, no matter how technology-driven your class is, they won't listen. That's why the teacher must take the initiative to spark the child's curiosity—since the feedback is usually the same. If the child isn't naughty, they usually can't read either. But there are also kids living in the mountains who are diligent and eager to learn. So it really depends on how the teacher handles each child. One of the problems in mountain areas is absenteeism. I experienced having a student who was frequently absent. As a teacher, you'd wonder why that was happening. So I visited the student's home to understand the background and reasons behind the absences. It affects you as a teacher when you have students like that—you'll be questioned by your principal. And there's that saying, “all students must be well taken care of.” My technique for students like this is to give them more attention—assign exclusive tasks to them inside the classroom. In that way, students who need extra attention are better able to understand the lesson. Another thing is that it's not only in remote schools where you find students with average or lower academic performance—even in highway schools, it's the same. So as a teacher, I incorporate methods that stir their interest, like using popsicle sticks, because some kids really enjoy visual activities.”]*

Student behavior and learning challenges are present in all schools, whether remote or urban, but require thoughtful and compassionate responses from teachers (Williams, 2023). Despite the use of technology or creative activities, engaging students depends greatly on sparking their interest and understanding their individual situations (Tayyab et al., 2023). The teacher's effort to personally visit an absent student's home and provide tailored support demonstrates the value of empathy and proactive engagement. This underscores the importance of knowing students personally and using varied strategies, like visual aids and hands-on activities, to meet diverse learning needs.

Participant 3 explained, “Ang uban nga mga students kay interested moapil sa mga activities sa school then ang uban pud kay walay pake sa kung unsay kalihukan sa school samot na ug ang mga gamiton kay mga computer or cellphone. Usa sa makalisod sa mga studyante kay ang sitwasyon sa pamilya ilabi na sa mga buluhaton sa balay, mag lisod sila ug balance, mo skuyla or magtuon. So, tungod ana, ubang students mag lisod ug participate, ilabi na during remote learning.”

*[Participant 3 explained, “Some students are interested in joining school activities, but others just don't care, especially when computers or cellphones are involved. One difficulty students face is their family situation—particularly when they're burdened with house chores. They struggle to balance school and study time. Because of this, some students find it hard to participate, especially during remote learning.”]*

Various external factors, such as family responsibilities and access to technology influence student engagement during remote learning. While some students show interest and actively participate, others struggle to stay focused, especially when digital tools are involved

(Ziyamba, 2024). These challenges highlight the inequality in learning conditions and the necessity for flexible teaching strategies. It underscores the importance of understanding students' home environments and providing support that accommodates their diverse circumstances.

Participant 5 said, "One of the challenges I have encountered in remote school is the behavior of the students because mostly if the environment of the students is toxic or daghang bugoy mura man gud silag matakdan if they are surrounded with that kind of environment. So my strategy is I will have a heart to heart talk of that student kay mas better if ingon-ane ang strategy sa teacher kay maka understand siya and if idaghan man gud, makadungog iyang classmate. That student is mamore hard to manage iyahang attitude. For example, before, na assign man kog room nga dili jod siya well maintained and the grade level is grade 3 and the worst is naa man nako tanang dili average na student as well as mga kiat nga students and worst of the worst, I have this student nga during classes, naa siya sa gawas nanguhag bayabas and as a bagp-o pa baya na maestra mag doubt jod kas imohang teaching style ug unsaon nimo paghandle ing-ana nga mga bata and then kay gahi man jod siyag ulo naabot jod ko sa point nga ni hilak ko kay ikaw nga teacher nga ni maintain sa imohang dignity unsa palay mafeedback sa principal or other co-teachers usa pa sad ug unsa bayay ma hitabo sa bata ang teacher baya manubag."

*[Participant 5 said, "One of the challenges I've encountered in a remote school is student behavior. If their environment is toxic or full of troublemakers, they tend to be influenced by it. So my strategy is to have a heart-to-heart talk with the student. This kind of approach is more effective because it helps the student understand better. If you call them out in front of the class, their classmates might hear, and it could worsen the student's attitude. For example, I was once assigned to a poorly maintained classroom with Grade 3 students, and most of them were either below average or very mischievous. The worst part was having a student who, during class, would sneak outside just to pick guavas. As a new teacher, it really made me doubt my teaching skills and how I would handle such students. Because this particular student was very stubborn, I reached a point where I cried. As a teacher trying to maintain her dignity, I was worried about what the principal or my co-teachers might think. I was also worried about what could happen to the student after all, it's the teacher who's held accountable."]*

Newly hired teachers often face emotional and professional challenges in managing student behavior, particularly in challenging classroom environments (Tinampay, 2023). External influences, such as toxic surroundings or peer behavior, can significantly impact how students behave, making classroom management more challenging. The teacher's use of private, empathetic conversations highlights the importance of building trust and understanding rather than resorting to public discipline. This situation also reveals the emotional toll on teachers, who often bear the burden of accountability while striving to balance both authority and compassion.

Participant 2 mentioned, "Daghang mga students ang perme wala sa klase, especially kadtong nagpuyo sa mga sudlunon nga lugar. Wala kaayo silay interest sa pagtuon kay dili sila anad sa paggamit og technology para sa ilang pag-eskwela. And, daghan usab og students ang need motabang sa ilang pamilya sa pag pangita og kwarta para sa pang adlaw-adlaw, nga maoy nakapalisod nila sa paghatag og saktong pagtagad sa ilang mga buluhaton sa eskwela."

*[Participant 2 mentioned, "Many students are often absent from school, especially those who live in remote areas. Their motivation to learn is low, mostly because they are not used to using technology for their studies. Also, many of them need to help their families earn money for daily needs, making it difficult for them to focus on schoolwork."]*

Location and economic challenges can significantly affect a student's ability to attend and focus on school. Students in remote areas often lack access to technology, making learning less engaging and more challenging to keep up with (Shikalepo, 2020). Even if they want to study, the lack of resources and support lowers their interest. Financial struggles also force many students to prioritize work over education. These realities highlight the need for more accessible and flexible learning systems that consider the students' environment and daily struggles.

Newly hired teachers in remote settings not only manage academic lessons but also emotional and behavioral issues among students. Their environment and emotional needs heavily influence students' behavior and performance. This highlights the importance of adjusting teaching methods to fit students' real-life contexts. These experiences highlight the importance of empathy and flexibility in teaching practices. Their stories show the resilience and adaptability required to teach effectively in underserved communities.

### Theme 5: Tenacity in the Workplace

The fifth theme, tenacity in the workplace, highlights the resilience and perseverance required by teachers to navigate the complex challenges within their work environments. This theme highlights the challenges faced by newly hired teachers, particularly those in remote schools, who must continually adapt to heavy workloads, interpersonal conflicts, and emotional stress while maintaining their dedication to teaching. It underlines the value of mental resilience and supportive relationships in overcoming obstacles and sustaining motivation. The participants' experiences vividly illustrate these realities, as reflected in their shared insights below.

Participant 1 shared, "Wala man ko kabalo nga by tasks ang designation usahay Math usahay Science. Akoy sige ug sugoon. People pleaser ka ushay di ka gusto naay masuko ug di pod sila ma suko nimo. Mo ana sila nga "Hello dae, ikaw himo sa Brigrada dae." Dili ko magklase, magpa answer ko sa math activity kay naghimo ug report. Kay gatuo ko nga dapat sundon siya kay master teacher siya. Niya sigeg panugo na man. Tahod pod ko kay naa sa akong utok mas labaw sila nako. Niopen ko ani sa lain nga teacher ni ana ang lain

nga teacher nga "ikaw diay naghimo ato, dae?" Nganong ikaw man?" Malooy pod ko kay tigulang na man dili kaayo kabao sa laptop. Ni ana ana uban nga teacher nga "ayaw ug himoe kay imo siyang gikuhaan rights nga makat-on. Pero kung siya ang pahimoon di man pod mao morelect man pod sa school. Makaana pod ang uban "mga bogo siguro ni mga maestraha, dili man mao ang report. Now, kay mag help na me sa each other. Like for example "Hi ma'am! Mana ka sa form 2? Please sende ko sa messenger ma'am." We help each other kay mag matter ang workplace support. Kung maasiginnan pod ka sa daghan, ang mga tigulang nga teacher ikaw ang mas saligan sa tanan. Kay kasagaran sa bag-o kay maoy kopyahan sa answer kay mao daw lab-as. Moana sila, "Dalia imoha dae kay mo kopya mi.". Taas kaayo sila ug expectations sa bag-o. Technology driven pod ang mga bag-o."

*[Participant 1 shared, "I didn't know at first that task assignments changed frequently—sometimes I had to handle Math, sometimes Science. I often got assigned random tasks, and I ended up doing a lot of things. I admit I'm a people-pleaser, so I didn't want to offend anyone. They would say things like, "Hello dae, can you work on the Brigada Eskwela documents?" I wouldn't get to teach that day—I would just let students answer activities while I focused on paperwork. I believed I had to follow her because she was the Master Teacher. She often gave me a lot of tasks, and I respected her because I thought she was in a higher position than me. Eventually, I shared my situation with another teacher, and they asked, "You're the one doing all of that, dae? Why you?" I also felt sorry for the older teacher, as she wasn't very skilled at using a laptop. Another teacher told me, "Don't do everything for her—you're taking away her opportunity to learn." But if you make her do it, it still won't be done properly—and that will reflect poorly on the school. Other people might think, "These teachers must be incompetent if the report looks like that." Now, we help each other out. For example, someone might ask, "Hi Ma'am, are you done with Form 2? Can you please send it to me on Messenger?" We help one another now because workplace support really matters. When you're assigned to a school where most teachers are older, you're often the one everyone relies on. New teachers are usually the go-to for answers because they say our work is more "fresh" or updated. They'll even say things like, "Hurry up with yours, dae, so we can copy it." Expectations are often higher for the new ones, especially since we're more familiar with technology."]*

Newly hired teachers in remote schools often face overwhelming workloads due to frequent task shifting, unrealistic expectations, and unclear role boundaries (Pancho, 2022). This experience reveals how younger or tech-savvy teachers are often burdened with extra responsibilities, such as documentation and digital tasks, sometimes at the cost of their teaching time. It also highlights how hierarchical dynamics and generational skill gaps can create unfair work distribution (Rondero & Casupanan, 2024). Over time, however, mutual support and collaboration among colleagues become essential in fostering a more balanced and respectful work environment.

Participant 2 explained, "If happy ka sa imong trabahoan bisag naa ka sa na assign sa remote areas, dedicated jud kaayo ka motudlo. Samot na if supportive imong co-teachers unya positive ra pud kaayo sila maka provide sila ug motivation nimo. Naa may ubang schools nga motake advantage sila nimo if bag-o ka nga maoy makadiscourage sa imoha ug makawa ug gana sa trabaho. In some cases, di man jud malikayan nga naa kay problema sa balay no? Nya nag sulti<sup>2</sup> baya kay if naa kay problema sa balay dapat ig padung nimo sulod sa room dapat imong ibilin imong problema sa gawas. Pero di jud baya malikayan nga mada nimo ang problema sud sa classroom samot na if bug-at na nga problema. Sa isa ka school pud di jud malikayan nga naay competition ug libak sa mga co-teachers nga makacreate ug toxic environment. So if ingon ana sila, makahatag siyag negative energy, makawala siyag motivate ug dako kaayog impact sa imong pagtrabaho tungod mawad-an kag gana usahay."

*[Participant 2 explained, "If you're happy in your workplace—even if you're assigned to a remote area—you'll be very dedicated to teaching. Especially when your co-teachers are supportive and positive, they can really motivate you. But in some schools, people take advantage of new teachers, which can be discouraging and make you lose interest in your work. Sometimes you can't avoid bringing personal problems to work. They say you should leave your problems at the door, but that's easier said than done—especially when your problems are heavy. In one school, there was competition and gossip among co-teachers, creating a toxic environment. This negativity can really impact your performance and motivation."]*

A supportive and positive school environment, even in remote areas, can deeply enhance a teacher's motivation and commitment to their role. When co-workers treat each other like family, it fosters a sense of belonging that can help counterbalance the challenges of isolation (Nwoko et al., 2025). However, personal struggles and workplace toxicity, such as gossip and unfair treatment, can take a serious toll on a teacher's mental health and effectiveness. This highlights the importance of both emotional support and healthy professional relationships in sustaining teacher well-being and performance.

Participant 5 pointed out, "Naa pod unseen competition. Kanang amega kaayo mo wala ka kabalo nga naa diay siyay kalagot nimo. Hidden agenda nga nalain diay siya nimo. Niya moask ka nila ug question. Mo ana ka nga "Ma'am mana ka sa form" Mo answer siya ug "wala pa". Pero nakapass na. Pwede ra man unta ug mo ingon nga pag-answer lang ug imoha maam. Dapat lang gyud positive lang pod ta ayaw lang padala sa mga challenges. Kanang divided groups, kanang naay amega. For example, kanang 5 amega, kani pod sila amega sa workplace. Manglibak sa uban nga groups mao nay challenges. Mas nice ug di maggroup-group kanang close gyud mo tanan ba. Naa pod uban nga parents bisag mama na sila no. mo act ug mas labaw pa nimo. Ingon-ani sa school namo. Manglibabot sa lihok nimo, sa imong attire. Pero kopyahon ang imong attire. Wala lang nako gimind sila. Ang mga mama ron kay wala nay respect sa group chat with teachers. Walay greetings namo ana na "nga ma'am naunsa diay tong akong anak giniha gihilabtan sa anak niya." Mo adjust nalang ka mo ana ka nga "good morning ate I'll settle it ate." Pero deep inside naglagot ka. Dili nalang nimo siya tubayan. Naay mo sulod lang sa room nga nagklase ka, naninda. Naa pod mo sulod lang kay mo ingon nga gi away ang iyang anak. Ingon-ani ang uban

nga mama. Ni open ko ani sa uban nga teachers ana sila "kung ipakita nimo nga approachable kaayo ka iabuse ka" kung magstricta pod ka, libakon pod ka. Dili man gyud ka please sa ubang tawo."

*[Participant 5 pointed out, "There's also what I call unseen competition. Sometimes a colleague acts like a close friend, but you don't realize they're actually holding a grudge or have something against you. It's only when situations come up that you see it. For example, I might ask a simple question like, "Ma'am, have you completed the form?" and she'll reply, "Not yet," even though she's already submitted it. It would've been kinder and more professional to just say, "Go ahead and do your part, Ma'am." These little things are discouraging, but I try to stay positive and not let it get to me. It's important not to allow these challenges to affect our mindset. Another difficulty is the presence of cliques in the workplace. Some groups are really close—like five people who always stick together—and they often gossip about others outside their circle. That creates division among teachers. It would be much better if we didn't form exclusive groups and instead worked toward becoming a more united team where everyone feels included and supported. We also deal with difficult parents. Some of them act like they're in a higher position than the teachers. In our school, for instance, some moms will criticize how you move, what you wear—yet they'll copy your style the next day. I choose not to dwell on it, but it's hard to ignore the lack of respect. Respect is also missing in our group chats with parents. There are no greetings or polite conversations anymore. They go straight to complaints like, "Ma'am, what happened to my child? Someone touched them." And as a teacher, you have to adjust, so I just respond with, "Good morning, Ate. I'll take care of it," even if I'm upset inside. Most of the time, I just keep quiet rather than argue. Another issue is interruptions during class. While teaching, someone might suddenly walk in to sell something or to complain that their child got into a fight. It's very disruptive. When I brought this up with other teachers, they told me, "If you're too approachable, people will take advantage of you. But if you're too strict, they'll gossip about you." That really stuck with me—because no matter what you do, you cannot please others."]*

Workplace dynamics in schools can be emotionally taxing, especially when hidden competition, cliques, and unprofessional behavior undermine teamwork and morale (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021). Navigating strained relationships with colleagues and experiencing disrespectful interactions with some parents adds pressure, making it harder for teachers to focus on instruction and their own well-being. The struggle to balance approachability with authority reveals the delicate line teachers must walk to avoid criticism while maintaining classroom respect. These challenges highlight the urgent need for a more inclusive, respectful, and supportive school culture.

Participant 3 mentioned, "Naa juy individual competition. Naay ubang schools nga suod, labi na sa ilang friendship ba. Yes, mag matter ang principal kay once ang principal kay friendly sa mga teachers, muana dayon sya "magmeeting ta ron, gadala baya kog sud-an, salo salo tag kaon!" magkaclose namo tanan, nya naay mag birthday, "nagdala baya kog isda oh, tabangan nato nig lunch". Naa poy principal na di sya ganahan nga magsuod ang mga maestra, di pod sya ganahan na mag sige ug close-close. So, depende ra jud."

*[Participant 3 mentioned, "There really is individual competition. Some schools are close with each other, especially when it comes to friendships. Yes, the principal really matters because if the principal is friendly with the teachers, they might say something like, 'Let's have a meeting now, I even brought some food—let's eat together!' Then we all become close. And when someone has a birthday, they'll say, 'I brought some fish, let's help each other with lunch.' But there are also principals who don't want the teachers to get too close. They don't like too much familiarity. So, it really depends."]*

Principal's leadership style significantly influences workplace dynamics among teachers. Supportive and approachable principals foster a sense of camaraderie, collaboration, and community through informal interactions. In contrast, more distant or restrictive leadership can limit teacher bonding and teamwork. This underscores the crucial role of school leadership in shaping a positive and cooperative work environment.

Participant 1 shared, "One of the reasons that can affect my mental health and well-being are the person I'm working with. Naay kauban nakos trabaho nga suyaan, akua rang lihok ilang tan-awon ug lisod kaayo silang e-please. If usa ka nga bag-ong gi-hire nga magtutudlo, mo-take advantage sila sa imoha nga makadugang og emotional stress ug maghimo imong trabaho nga lisud ug bug-at. If papilion ko nga motudlo sa usa ka eskwelahan nga naa sa highway o sa remote areas, mas pilion nako ang remote areas. Sa remote areas man gud kasagaran ang mga tawo magtinabangay ug e-treat na ang usa-usa as a family, nga mo welcome nimo ug positive environment nga makainspire nako sa pagtudlo nga malipayun. Usa pud ana, ang mga eskwelahan nga naa sa daplin sa highway kasagaran adunay mga storya about nimo nga di tinuod or bati ug dali nga masuya sa ilang co-teachers, nga maka down ug maka unmotivate nimo mo trabaho. Sa pagtudlo sa remote areas, naa say butang nga makadaot sa imong mental health. Lisod kaayo ang pag-atubang sa mga istorya o tsismis against nimo, for example kung mosakay ka og habal-habal padulong sa eskwelahan ug ang driver naay pamilya, unya naay mga silingan nga makakita nga niangkas ka, himuon na nilang issue nga kabit daw ka atong driver. Because of this challenges, if ma assign ka sa remote areas dapat strong imong personality ug andam nga modawat sa mga issues against nimo to avoid trauma. Ang uban pud nga ginikanan usahay walay respeto sa mga teachers o magpakita nga mas taas sila unya usahay pud libakon ka nila. Sa sulod sa eskwelahan, naay unseen competition nga mahitabo ug hidden agenda sa uban nga teachers nga mahimong reason sa toxic environment. Bisan pa ug imong gihunahuna nga close mo anang teacher, like moingon sila nga wa pa nahuman sa form ba ron pero diay mana jud to sila."

*[Participant 1 shared, "One reason that affects my mental health and well-being is the people I work with. Some coworkers are envious, and they closely monitor everything I do. It's hard to please them. As a newly hired teacher, they take advantage of you, which adds*

*emotional stress and makes your work feel heavier. If I were given a choice between teaching in a highway or remote school, I'd choose the remote area. People in remote schools usually help each other and treat each other like family. It's a more positive environment that inspires me to teach happily. In contrast, schools near highways often have gossip and jealousy that can bring you down and demotivate you. However, remote schools also have their challenges—like rumors. For example, if you ride a motorcycle to school and the driver has a family, neighbors might gossip and say you're having an affair. Because of these issues, if you're assigned to a remote area, you need a strong personality and the ability to handle such rumors to avoid trauma. Some parents also don't respect teachers and even talk behind their backs. Inside the school, unseen competition and hidden agendas also happen. Even if you think you're close to a fellow teacher, they may lie about being done with their forms, when in fact, they already submitted them.”]*

A teacher's mental health is deeply influenced by the people they work with and the environment they are placed in. While remote schools may offer a more family-like and supportive atmosphere, they are not free from issues such as gossip, misjudgments, and hidden competition. Negative experiences with envious or manipulative colleagues, as well as disrespect from certain parents, can add emotional strain and reduce job satisfaction (Murasaleen et al., 2022). These challenges emphasize the significance of fostering a respectful, inclusive, and emotionally safe workplace where new teachers feel supported rather than scrutinized.

Newly hired teachers in remote schools face various challenges, including task overload, hidden workplace competition, and unclear role boundaries. They are often expected to handle both teaching and administrative duties, especially if they are younger or more technologically skilled. Gossip, disrespect from some parents, and strained relationships with colleagues can also negatively impact their mental health. However, a supportive and collaborative environment—where co-teachers treat each other with respect and school leaders promote unity—can significantly enhance job satisfaction and overall well-being. These findings highlight the importance of fostering inclusive, respectful, and emotionally safe school cultures to support new teachers to thrive professionally and personally.

### Theme 6: Exhaustion of Resources in the Mountain School

The sixth theme, exhaustion of resources in the mountain school, reflects the ongoing struggles of teachers working in remote schools regarding the scarcity of resources. This theme emphasizes the importance of equal distribution, regardless of the location to which newly hired teachers are assigned, whether remote or central, as this positively affects the overall performance of both teachers and students. The voices of the participants below support this lived experience of educational tools scarcity and inequality in remote settings.

Participant 3 explained, “Ang books kay gamay ra for the school or worse, wala jod siya. If maabot man gani sa remote schools, limited lang jod siya maong maghuwam-huwam ra ang mga teachers sa usa ka school. Pero usahay sad, ang mga teachers mahadlok manghuwam sa book kay basin unya maguba. Also, one example is ang fire extinguisher, ang mas pabor jod nga gitagaan ana kay ang mga central or highway schools kay sila man ang mas dool jod. Ang remote schools, mauwahi jod sa mga resources.”

*[Participant 3 explained, “There are only a few books in the school—sometimes none at all. If resources do arrive at remote schools, they're very limited. Teachers often have to share books, and some are afraid to borrow them for fear of damaging them. For example, even the fire extinguishers are prioritized for central or highway schools because they're more accessible. Remote schools are always the last to receive resources.”]*

Remote schools are facing a lack of basic educational resources. Central schools have easy access to teaching materials and school equipment, while remote schools are overlooked and oftentimes, left with little resources or none. With this scarcity, teachers working in remote settings carefully manage what they have, and they must find solutions to keep teaching and learning going (Moreno, 2024). This unequal resource distribution may often affect both teaching quality and students' safety.

Participant 2 expressed, “Mas prioritize ang central or highway schools sa mga books. If naa maabot supplies gikan sa DepEd, taud-taud pa siya maabot sa mga remote areas. We hadn't been given books in my remote school. If matagaan man gani, limited lang jod.”

*[Participant 2 expressed, “Central or highway schools are prioritized when it comes to books. If supplies arrive from the DepEd, it takes a long time before they reach remote areas. In our remote school, we haven't been given books. If we do receive any, they're very limited.”]*

Access to teaching materials varies significantly among schools, particularly in remote areas. Central schools receive educational resources earlier than others, which creates an unfair gap in quality education, especially from schools in the hinterland (Tinampay, 2023). Newly hired teachers working in remote settings often lack easy access to proper resources and materials, which can negatively impact both the overall performance of teachers and the experiences of students.

Participant 3 said, “Some of the remote school aren't given big priorities in resources. Not equal and opportunities sa resources unlike sa mga central or highway schools. Ingnon ra mi nga “sunod lang mo ma'am ha?” since mas mauna jod sa mga big schools kay sila man ang mas dool.”

*[Participant 3 said, “Some remote schools are not given high priority when it comes to resources. There's inequality in access compared to central or highway schools. We're often just told, “You'll get yours later, ma'am,” because bigger schools are prioritized since they are closer in main roads.”]*

In remote areas, schools often face significant disadvantages in accessing educational resources compared to those located near central roads or administrative centers. There is a clear inequality in distribution, where remote schools are frequently asked to wait or are overlooked entirely, while central schools receive prioritized support (Leon et al., 2023). This unequal access limits teachers' ability to deliver quality instruction and hinders student learning. Addressing this issue requires a more equitable allocation of resources that considers the unique challenges faced by schools in remote locations.

Teachers in remote areas often face a persistent shortage of essential materials, including books and safety equipment, which are frequently delayed or not delivered at all. This unequal distribution not only forces teachers to improvise with limited resources but also adds pressure to maintain the few resources they do receive. As a result, both teaching quality and student outcomes are compromised. Bridging this gap through fair and timely distribution of resources is crucial in promoting inclusive and equitable education for all learners, regardless of location.

## Conclusions

Newly hired teachers are often assigned to remote areas where their passion for the profession is truly put to the test. These experiences highlight the resilience and adaptability required of educators in such challenging environments. The insights gained from their journeys can serve as a valuable foundation for government agencies and policymakers in crafting strategies to ensure quality education for both teachers and students. Moreover, these lived realities can help prepare future newly hired teachers by fostering fortitude, encouraging innovative thinking, and promoting awareness of the potential challenges they may face—particularly within the workplace setting. The real-life experiences of these participants can be summarized in a single word that sums up their everyday encounters — this is "REMOTE". The remote is a place wherein these educators chose to teach students that deserve the right to have formal education, regardless of the challenges they might encounter. The participants were assigned at remote areas, wherein the urgent need of Relevant Technologies in the Mountain Schools is necessary such as the presence of Television and other devices to aid learning, which therefore prompts the need for Expediency for Professional Development, as teachers sought to enhance their digital competencies that is essential in the face of Multigrade Reality, where educators teach multiple grade levels simultaneously, which challenges the complexity of Overcoming Classroom Diversity, adjusting their strategies and approaches to fit onto various learning demands and needs, which signifies the teacher's unwavering Tenacity in the Workplace, as they continue to teach with commitment and purpose despite of the Exhaustion of Resources in the Hinterland Schools. Exploring the remote teaching realities of newly hired teachers offers valuable insight into how they navigate the professional and personal challenges in a virtual learning environment. These challenges reveal their resilience not only in handling remote teaching demands but also in shaping their professional identity. Through these lived realities, they discover purpose and significance, proving that even in isolation, impactful teaching remains possible.

Addressing the needs of teachers in remote schools requires urgent attention through comprehensive and sustainable support measures. This includes expanding outreach training programs focused on relevant educational technologies and increasing hardship allowances to support continuous professional development. Additionally, implementing accessible counseling services can help newly hired teachers manage the unique demands of multi-grade classrooms and build workplace resilience. Strengthened support from key stakeholders, particularly Local Government Units (LGUs) to address persistent resource exhaustion in hinterland schools. This study highly recommends a comprehensive exploration of newly hired teachers lived experiences in these mountainous and remote settings, as understanding their challenges from technology adaptation to emotional well-being is essential for shaping effective policies and support systems. Future researchers could employ a mixed-methods approach on the impact of allowances and training with qualitative insights from teachers and administrators about counseling needs and LGU collaboration in resource-deprived contexts.

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### Affiliations and Corresponding Information

**Yllenor C. Gabales**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Chrislie Mae Mariquit**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Kyla D. Carba**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Elaiza Mae L. Badonio**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Jasmin E. Cardeno**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Angel Mae P. Abrenica**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Jellypie A. Velos**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Allison O. Tabanao**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Roselyn P. Pelegrino**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Merelyn Gallosa**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Jayseife A. Languita**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Crisha Marie C. Dagooc**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Elisa C. Tapales, Dev. Ed. D**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines

**Cyril A. Cabello, Ph. D.**

Cebu Technological University – Philippines