# Exploring students' experiences in the dynamic learning program model

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## Abstract

This qualitative study, grounded in descriptive phenomenology, investigated the lived experiences of students studying in a private school under the Central Visayan Institute Foundation - Dynamic Learning Program (CVIF-DLP) framework. Through eight focus group discussions involving 62 participants analyzed with the use of thematic analysis, the research explored the advantages, disadvantages, and transformative potential of the CVIF-DLP approach outlined to the three learning domains. Findings revealed that students focus first on the tangible aspects of learning such as learning activity sheet and writing. They also believed that CVIF-DLP has limited special impact on their physical aspects but affects greatly their cognitive and affective aspects. Despite the varied perspectives and encountered challenges, students agreed that the program helps them improve intellectually and personally. It revealed the complex dynamics shaping student learning journeys, emphasizing the need for ongoing program refinement to address student needs effectively. The study offered valuable insights into educational innovation and pedagogical practices, guiding future efforts to enhance the educational experiences of the implementers of CVIF-DLP.

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## 1. Introduction

The search for innovative and effective teaching strategies has taken center stage in the field of education in the current global climate. Many pedagogies have attracted differing levels of attention to identify the most effective means of promoting student participation in all facets of their behavior, emotions, and cognition (Mc Mullen, 2022). In addition, one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Yet, one unfortunate reality in education is that poverty is one of the primary reasons that hinders students from accessing quality education (NEDA, n.d.).

In the Philippines, educational problem is more than just simplifying the learning process; it's mainly about raising the standard of education (Filoteo, 2021). The perennial issue of teacher shortage, particularly in public schools (Chi, 2023), is largely exacerbated by the numerous unfilled positions within the Department of Education (EDCOM2, 2023). According to Mercado (2023), the Department of Education has reported 51,127 unfilled positions, resulting in a current teacher-student ratio of 1:40. This ratio is far below the ideal 1:30 as studied. In response to these challenges, educational institutions in the Philippines have undertaken continuous reform initiatives aimed at elevating the standard of education. One of the notable initiatives concerning uplifting the quality of education was launched by a couple who has pioneered an innovative approach to education known as the Central Visayan Institute Foundation - Dynamic Learning Program (CVIF-DLP) (Asenorio et al., 2022).

The CVIF-DLP is considered a potential remedy to the persistent educational challenges, such as teacher and textbook shortages in public schools (Chi, 2023) and the need for more engaging learning experiences (Opdenakker & Minnaert, 2011). Remarkably, it achieves these goals without heavy reliance on advanced technology and with flexibility to accommodate a diverse range of learners, offering ease of implementation, adaptability for individualized student experiences, applicability across various educational settings, and notably, it incurred minimal expenses (Bernido & Bernido, 2020). In addition, given its high level of credibility, it comes as no surprise that PLDT, Smart Communications, and the PLDT-Smart Foundation, among others, have emerged as main supporters and advocates of this pedagogical approach to learning (Rioferio, 2023). It has reached 400 schools and 19

municipalities around the Philippines as of 2022, and more than 15,000 teachers have been trained since its inception in 2012 (DepEd Hails PLDT, Smart for Inclusive Education, Aiding Face-to-face Transition, 2023). With such huge impact, the proponents, Ma. Victoria Bernido and Christopher Bernido, were honored with the Ramon Magsaysay Award in recognition of their pioneering efforts in revolutionizing the way students are taught.

The CVIF-DLP has four key pillars that have been substantiated by recent neuroscientific discoveries (Bernido & Bernido, 2020), which include parallel classes, activity-based learning by doing, in-school comprehensive portfolio, and strategic rest. There are a few research proving its effectiveness (Asenorio et al., 2022; Bernido & Bernido, 2020) rooted on quantitative measures, specifically students' performance in standardized tests. Yet, this approach predominantly evaluates only one of the three learning domains for the holistic development of students - the cognitive domain. While quantitative research methods have dominated the research about CVIF-DLP, there is a need for additional qualitative research to give a more in-depth knowledge of the complex processes involved in learning (Sotto, 2018). By adopting a qualitative phenomenological method to investigate the experiences and perceptions of students involved in a dynamic learning program, this study seeks to fill this gap.

Another research gap is the concentration of the research studies related to CVIF-DLP in Visayas and Mindanao areas in the Philippines, where most of the early implementers can be found. Consequently, there were few and limited published studies about the CVIF-DLP implementation in Luzon. Each region in the Philippines can have unique educational, cultural, and social factors that influence the effectiveness and experience of educational programs. Therefore, research findings from Visayas and Mindanao may not directly translate to the specific conditions and challenges faced by institutions in Luzon. This contextual variation is essential to acknowledge because it emphasizes the need for research that is specific to the setting of implementation to ensure that the findings are directly relevant and applicable to the local educational environment.

Despite the acknowledgments and potential benefits of the CVIF-DLP, there have been few to no studies available about the lived experiences of students who have transitioned from a traditional school setup to the CVIF-DLP. This transition, which represents a significant shift

in educational methodology, presents its unique challenges and opportunities. In lieu of the deficiency in the literature and limited exploration of how the CVIF-DLP affects students across the three domains of learning, this study aimed to determine the lived experiences of Senior High School Students at a private school studying under the CVIF-DLP.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. The Central Visayan Institute Foundation - Dynamic Learning Program

This study is anchored on the CVIF-DLP model (Bernardo & Bernardo, 2020), where the non-negotiable features of DLP, specifically the four pillars, were employed as the lens to have an insightful analysis of each of the pillars based on the student's actual experiences. Its four key pillars include parallel classes, activity-based learning by doing, in-school comprehensive portfolio, and strategic rest.

The first pillar is the parallel classes. There are two main roles to be filled that help facilitate student learning: the expert teacher and facilitators. Since the hallmark of CVIF-DLP is independent learning through its learning activity sheet (LAS), this pillar minimizes the intervention of the teacher in the students learning by 80%. In this setup, the expert teacher, who typically serves as the regular classroom instructor, assumes responsibility for a specific subject. Their roles encompass designing and preparing daily learning activities, as well as evaluating and assessing student performance within that subject. In parallel classrooms, when the expert teacher is not present, a facilitator, who may not necessarily be a subject expert, will supervise the class. If students have any questions or issues related to the LAS or the subject, they will await the return of the expert teacher to address their inquiries.

The second pillar is the activity-based learning by doing. With this approach, the students have more time to do learning activities on their own. The expert teacher is not readily available most of the time when students are working on the LAS, and as a result, they are less inclined to provide immediate assistance. Consequently, this approach can be applied in various learning environments, including but not limited to distance learning and alternative learning systems.

In the third pillar, the concept of preparing a portfolio is adapted and made more comprehensive. The students compile all their daily LAS, small projects, quizzes, and examinations. Thus, the output of the students was placed in one portfolio, which allowed the "expert teachers" to monitor the improvement of the students. This comprehensive portfolio acts as a representative documentation of a student's schoolwork, serving as both a reviewer and tangible evidence of their performance in school. With these, students improve their self-worth, become more motivated, and have better satisfaction (Sotto, 2018).

The last pillar is the incorporation of the no-homework policy into its educational approach, extending to both weekdays and weekends. In addition, strategic rest includes a light midweek load, which means that all students have their Physical Education, Music, Arts, and Health on Wednesday, and the program strongly discourages tutorial sessions after school hours.

### 2.2. Challenges in the Philippine education and the need for CVIF-DLP

Despite the Department of Education (DepEd) efforts to enhance the quality of education in the Philippines through the implementation of the K to 12 Program (Abranga et al., 2022), recent global surveys have revealed that the country continues to face challenges. With the most recent PISA 2022 results, the Philippines show poor performance (Ines, 2023), suggesting a five- to six-year gap in the nation's learning skills, according to DepEd. In addition, Schleider (2023) provides an interpretation and insights from the result, emphasizing that a lack of social variety in schools suggests that socially and economically challenged students are more prone to share classrooms with other underprivileged families, which might adversely impact how well they perform. It is crucial to emphasize that despite the discouraging outcome, the DepEd has taken a proactive stance by acknowledging these results and realizing the urgent need to address issues and gaps in the pursuit of quality basic education in the Philippines. However, it is important to recognize that the root causes of these problems are complex and not easily resolved. These underlying issues encompass a lack of high-quality educators, insufficient educational resources, and scarcity of textbooks, among other challenges (Bernido & Bernido, 2020).

Sotto (2018) has recommended the adoption of the CVIF-DLP in schools with necessary modifications. It not only offers solutions to longstanding problems like teacher shortages and textbook inadequacies but also presents a contemporary teaching approach that does not heavily rely on advanced technology. This approach holds promise in addressing some of the educational challenges faced by the Philippines. Moreover, it has its origins in the Philippines, specifically in high schools in 2002 (Bernido & Bernido, 2020). According to its proponents, it represents a harmonious blend of classical and contemporary pedagogical theories, thoughtfully adapted to cultivate the highest levels of learning, creativity, and productivity across a broad spectrum of students.

According to Rioferio (2023), CVIF-DLP's impact across 162 public high schools in Bohol, Philippines from 2011 to 2014 revealed a consistent rise in National Achievement Test scores, progressing from 57.58 percent to 58.62 percent and finally reaching 64.35 percent. Conversely, the failure rate steadily dropped from 5.70 percent to 2.13 percent. Similarly, Davao Christian High School, an early CVIF-DLP adopter since 2005, excelled in the 2016-2017 National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE). Over half of their students ranked in the top one percent nationally, with an impressive 77 percent in the top two percent. In addition, the University of the East's Basic Education Department in Manila saw substantial improvements after just one year of CVIF-DLP implementation during 2012-2013. Most students achieved "excellent" ratings, particularly in English, Science, and Mathematics. On the contrary, findings of Basilio (2009, as cited by Asenorio et al., 2022) indicated no notable variance in post-test scores between students who had no prior exposure to CVIF-DLP and those who had experienced it. However, the research also highlights a significant disparity in post-test scores between students with no exposure and those exposed to CVIF-DLP for one year. This suggests that the program was already effective in its initial year of implementation. Nonetheless, prolonged exposure to the program does not necessarily guarantee improved performance. The program has improved a lot since 2012 as the program continues to innovate based on the results of the recent neuroscientific research findings (Bernido & Bernido, 2020). The improvement of the program focuses on promoting more independent learning, which focuses on activity over traditional lectures (Sotto, 2018).

## 2.3. Independent learning

According to Livingston (2012, as cited by Belawati et al., 2023), in an independent learning technique or process, students take responsibility for and control over their education; they lead, manage, and evaluate their own learning. In order to satisfy his learning requirements, the independent learner can create objectives, and make decisions, and choices. They can also assume responsibility for creating and carrying out their own learning, keep track of how well they are being met, and self-evaluate the results. Independent learning or independent study is a process, method, and philosophy of education in which a student acquires knowledge through his or her efforts, and develops the ability for inquiry and critical evaluation (Madrazo & Dio, 2020).

In a literature review conducted by Meyer et al. (2020) across different studies, independent learning has been shown to improve the academic performance of students. It increases motivation and confidence, provides greater student awareness of their limitations and their ability to manage them, enables teachers to provide differentiated tasks for students and fosters social inclusion by countering alienation. On the contrary, the same authors discovered that the greatest obstacle to adopting independent learning is the emphasis on delivering the curriculum and whole-class instruction, which contradicts the teacher's role in promoting individual learning.

## 2.4. Research framework

In this study, each pillar of the CVIF-DLP was used to assess how it affects the three learning domains; cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The analysis sheds light on the CVIF-DLP holistic qualities, its ability to support learners' cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor development, and its potential to produce educational experiences that are well-rounded.

The Benjamin Bloom's three domains of learning, which are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, were outlined to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the pillars of the pedagogical approach (Bloom et al., 1956, as cited by Ambalegin & Handayani, 2023). These domains of learning act as a valuable roadmap to gain a deeper understanding of learning experiences. It aids in data organization and facilitates comparisons among participants, shedding light on the diversity of learning experiences and the factors influencing them.

Moreover, it provides insights to enhance education by tailoring instructional approaches to meet the needs of learners (Main, 2021). In essence, applying Bloom's three domains of learning in phenomenological research allows for a more thorough exploration of how people learn and contribute to the improvement of educational practices (West, 2023). Utilizing the three domains of learning in this phenomenological study offers a comprehensive view of how individuals learn, considering three key aspects: thinking, emotions, and physical engagement. The cognitive aspect reveals how participants understand and engage with the subject matter, assessing the depth of their knowledge. Exploring the affective domain allows to uncover emotions and the importance individuals attach to their learning experiences. The psychomotor domain highlights the physical actions and interactions in the learning process. Through the application of this framework, the CVIF-DLP pillars can be assessed within the context of these fundamental learning domains.

**Figure 1**

*Research framework*
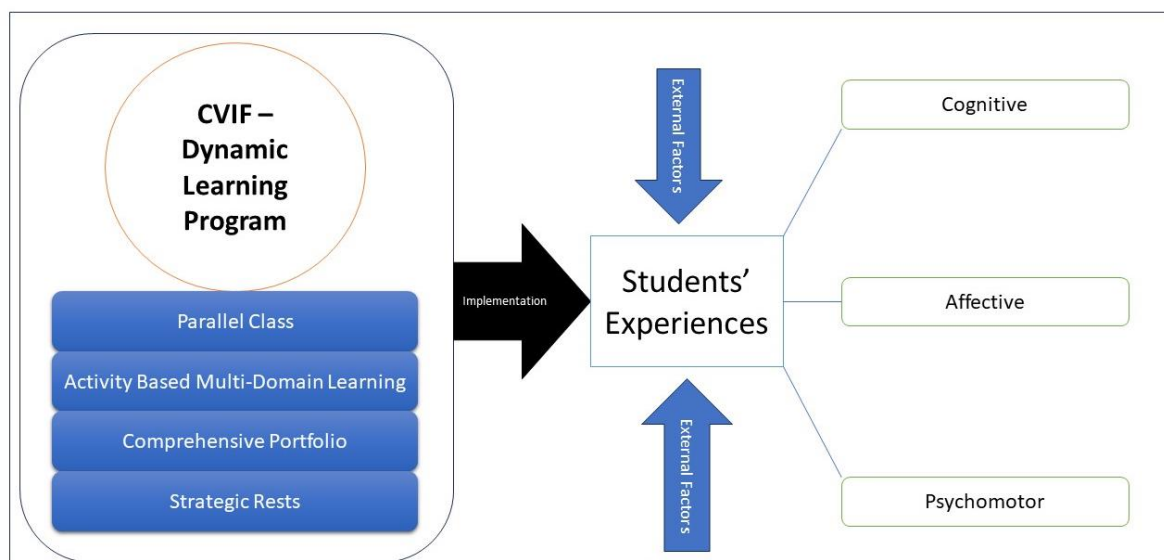


## 3. Methodology

In this research, a qualitative approach employing the phenomenological research method was utilized to explore the firsthand experiences of senior high school students studying at a private school enrolled in the CVIF-DLP. Although phenomenological in nature,

the data were collected through focus group discussions (FGD). It is an excellent way to gather individuals with similar experiences and backgrounds to discuss a particular subject of interest (Mishra, 2016). According to Bradbury-Jones et al. (2009), utilizing focus groups can offer a deeper insight into the phenomenon being investigated.

This study used a purposive sampling method to gather appropriate participants who gave diverse and in-depth data to better understand the phenomenon under investigation by selecting individuals with relevant backgrounds. The participants of this study were the Senior High School students, both grade 11 and 12 of a private school in Laguna, Philippines. They came from the four different academic strands, namely, Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Home Economics (Cookery), and Home Economics (Tourism). The choice to conduct FGDs across the different strands recognizes the potential for variations in experiences, challenges, and perspectives among students pursuing distinct educational pathways.

The schedule and the participants for each FGD were set, and the participants were notified in advance. Prior to participation, informed consent and assent were obtained from each participant, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses. Each FGD consists of participants from the same academic strand to capture the unique experiences within each group. FGD sessions were organized in a comfortable and confidential setting. With participants' consent, and parents' assent, the FGDs were audio-recorded to capture the discussions accurately.

Audio recordings of the FGDs were then transcribed cleaned verbatim. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, themes, and insights from the FGD transcripts. Then, an intercoder reviewed the codes and the themes. This study adopted the thematic analysis approach guided by the framework outlined by Maguire and Delahunt (2017), which aligns closely with the method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). As suggested in the framework, the following steps were taken: (1) immersion in the data, and gaining familiarity with the content and context; (2) initial codes were generated to identify and label segments of text that capture relevant concepts, ideas, and patterns; (3) systematically searching for recurring themes or patterns within the dataset, grouping related codes together; (4) the identified themes underwent a rigorous review process to ensure their coherence and alignment

with the data; (5) themes were precisely defined and described to encapsulate the essence of the lived experiences of the participants; and (6) the final step involves writing a comprehensive report that presents the identified themes, supported by illustrative quotes and a thorough discussion of their significance. The data analysis procedure adhered to a structured and validated thematic analysis framework, ensuring rigor and consistency in the identification and interpretation of key themes.

This study was not only a pursuit of knowledge but a commitment to ethical principles. During the conduct of the study, numerous ethical considerations have been thoughtfully integrated into the research methods, prioritizing the utmost standards of research integrity and safeguarding the well-being of the participants and the institution being studied. By upholding ethical consent and authorization, informed consent and assent, confidentiality, privacy and security, and voluntary participation, this research endeavors to contribute to the academic discourse while respecting and protecting the rights and dignity of each participant.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

**Table 1**

*Generated themes and responses on students' perception of CVIF-DLP*

| Sub-Themes | Coded Response |
|---|---|
| Sub-theme 1. Unique Learning methods and strategies | • Learning Activity Sheet (LAS)<br>• Writing<br>• Independent Learning<br>• No Assignment<br>• Output Oriented |
| Sub-theme 2. Conducive Learning Environment | • Strategic Rest<br>• Unique Learning Experience<br>• Non-Monotonous Learning Experience<br>• Active Participation |
| Sub-theme 3. Interconnected Social Dynamics | • Teamwork<br>• Collaboration<br>• Overcoming Shyness |
| Sub-theme 4. Physical Impact and Emotional Response | • Exhaustion<br>• Writing-related discomfort<br>• Gratefulness<br>• Learning through hardships |

Table 1 shows participants often prioritize tangible aspects of learning, such as engaging with LAS and extensive writing tasks, as these represent tangible manifestations of their educational journey. But they do not only concentrate on schoolwork; they also address more general issues like the value of social interaction, difficulties like fatigue, and learning opportunities. This demonstrates how students understand the complex nature of education and how social and academic connections shape their learning results and general well-being. Their acknowledgment of fatigue underscores the physical and emotional demands of the learning process.

Participants demonstrated a strong connection with LAS, emphasizing how well they foster independent learning and critical thinking abilities. Students were given a framework by the organized nature of LAS to investigate ideas, apply what they had learned, and gain a greater comprehension of the course material. This fits with the program's pedagogy of developing independent learners who can handle challenging academic material.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"For me, it's essential to learn on your own. You need to learn even without a teacher in class. It means that even without someone teaching you, you should learn the lesson. You should be able to answer questions even if they haven't been taught yet. That's why you need to learn to be independent." (FGD 3, Participant 5)*

Participants also emphasized how the program's planned strategic rest offered a break from the responsibilities of their studies and promoted overall well-being. In addition to reducing academic stress, the allotted time for relaxation and renewal gave students the chance to engage in extracurricular activities and hobbies that complemented a healthy lifestyle. This is positive for students because participation in extracurricular activities may have a big impact on how their identity develops and can increase their sense of well-being and belonging (Winstone et al., 2020).

*Annotated Exemplar:*

> *"For me, it's strategic rest. There are no assignments and no academic classes every Wednesday. But there are plenty of activities." (FGD 1, Participant 3)*

Participants stressed the value of collaboration in promoting learning and problem-solving in the CVIF-DLP methodology. Through cooperative exercises like group talks and peer tutoring, students may exchange ideas, clarify concepts, and encourage one another's academic success. In addition to fostering active involvement and collaboration in both academic and extracurricular interests, the focus on teamwork among students also promotes a sense of solidarity and collective responsibility.

*Annotated Exemplar:*

> *"Teamwork. Because sometimes one person's answer is everyone's answer. It's not always exact, but the ideas tend to align, especially in math." (FGD 6, Participant 7)*

A significant number of participants in the CVIF-DLP program indicated that long writing tasks had caused them to become physically uncomfortable, especially calluses. Students experience discomfort because of the demanding academic requirements and concentration on writing-intensive tasks. Even while calluses might not look like much, they highlight the physical consequences of extended writing sessions and the significance of ergonomics in learning environments.

*Annotated Exemplar:*

> *"For me, it's calluses. Calluses from writing! We're used to having calluses." (FGD 4, Participant 2)*

On a positive note, participants expressed their gratitude for being able to take part in the program and learn about CVIF-DLP. A sense of gratitude for the encouraging learning environment, stimulating curriculum, and chances for both academic and personal development provided is the foundation of gratitude. However, because of the program's

demands, students sometimes mentioned feeling emotionally and physically exhausted in addition to feeling grateful. Moreover, participants also underscored the value of resilience in overcoming obstacles and disappointments they may face while pursuing their education.

*Annotated Exemplar:*

> *"No pain, no gain. We learn and improve when we experience hardship. We may have calluses, but that's where we learn." (FGD 7, Participant 1)*

It is essential to include students' viewpoints and ideas in the educational process for several reasons. It gives students a sense of agency and ownership, enabling them to take an active role in directing their own learning. Students are more likely to participate actively in class activities and take responsibility for their academic achievement when they believe that their opinions are acknowledged and heard.

The results support the study of Alkhawaldeh (2023), which emphasizes the importance of managing cognitive load and catering to diverse learning styles in maximizing the effectiveness of tailored learning. This study reveals that students prioritize tangible aspects of learning, such as engaging with LAS and collaborative exercises. Although independent learning and critical thinking skills were developed among the students, it is equally important to consider minimizing the exhaustion experienced by the student to further improve the efficiency of the program.

Moreover, understanding students' perspectives on instructional techniques is crucial, especially in light of recent findings such as the PISA 2022 results indicating persistent challenges in Filipino students' performance (Chi, 2023). As this study highlighted several challenges, it emphasizes how important it is to address students' real-world experiences and obstacles in addition to the cognitive components of learning. A more adaptable and productive learning environment may be established by incorporating student voices and experiences into the educational process. This may ultimately improve the nation's educational results.

**Table 2**

*Generated themes on the students' lived experiences relevant to intellectual aspect*

| | |
|---|---|
| Sub-theme 1. Cognitive Development and Engagement | • Improved sentence construction and grammar<br>• Increased confidence in constructing sentences<br>• Pushes the student to think<br>• Helps student to learn on their own<br>• Encourage accountability and hard work |
| Sub-theme 2. Challenges and Adaptation | • Difficulty in understanding certain subjects<br>• Pose challenges for slow learners on specific subjects<br>• Mentally and physically exhausting<br>• Initial worries about the unique approach of DLP<br>• Some students struggle with comprehension |
| Sub-theme 3. Language Proficiency and Learning Strategies | • Writing enforces the student to read<br>• Learned how to translate into English<br>• Improved vocabulary<br>• Advantageous to English subject |
| Sub-theme 4. Independence and Equal Learning Opportunities | • Gives equal importance to all students<br>• Limited opportunity for advanced study<br>• Hands-on approach in certain subjects<br>• Cooperation emphasized over competitiveness |

Table 2 demonstrates the experiences of the students in the CVIF-DLP program highlighting an overarching theme acknowledging that the program encourages them to enhance their cognitive skills but requires some adaptation time. Although the curriculum successfully promotes the development of their cognitive skills, it also demands a time of adaptation. Students thank the curriculum for emphasizing a big impact on their intellectual development. Nonetheless, a lot of students also admit the initial difficulties they had acclimated to the program's teaching style and classroom setting. Students must overcome obstacles during this adaptation period, which is marked by novel teaching strategies and classroom dynamics as they become used to the increased academic demands.

Participants frequently reported having improved their grammar and sentence structure, which suggests that the interactive format of the CVIF-DLP, particularly in LAS, helps them hone their communication abilities. They also demonstrated a noticeable improvement in their linguistic self-confidence when they interacted more actively by expressing greater confidence while constructing sentences.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"This helps us improve our sentence and paragraph construction. We also become more conscious of grammar. We are practicing, so to speak." (FGD 1, Participant 3)*

Most participants reported that the CVIF-DLP challenges their cognitive abilities, requiring them to think critically and come up with answers on their own. The focus on self-directed learning and addressing issues fosters a mindset of inquisitiveness, enabling learners to assume responsibility for their own educational path.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"There's a thrill in DLP because you need to think through your answer. Since the lesson hasn't been taught yet, you need to understand the lessons on your own." (FGD 8, Participant 3)*

Moreover, participants reported feeling more agency and autonomy in their academic endeavors when dynamic learning approaches, such as inquiry-based tasks and collaborative learning experiences, were used. They noted that there was no bias or partiality in the program's teaching methods, which highlighted its dedication in providing fair learning opportunities. In the classroom, collaboration is valued more highly than competition, which highlights the program's commitment to advancing diversity and creating a feeling of community among students.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"Before, the focus was often on who already knew. You really felt that. Here in this system, everyone will learn. Everyone is equal." (FGD 6, Participant 8)*

On the contrary, participants also faced difficulties, especially those who studied at a slower phase. Participants highlighted situations in which subjects like mathematics provided significant difficulties. In addition, the early concerns raised by students about the DLP's distinct methodology represent the process of adaptation needed. As such, they need to become

used to this new teaching approach. These difficulties highlight how different students have different learning demands and how important it is to use adaptable pedagogical techniques to meet different learning styles and rates.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"There are subjects where DLP fits perfectly, especially in theoretical subjects like English, Philosophy, Research, and others. But in Math, it's difficult because students have different strengths."*
> *(FGD 6, Participant 7)*

The acknowledgment of the adaptation phase accentuated how crucial it is to take students' transitory experiences into account when putting cutting-edge educational initiatives like CVIF-DLP into practice. To provide a more seamless transition, educators need to be aware of and prepared to handle the difficulties that students can have throughout the adjustment period. Through the provision of suitable support mechanisms, scaffolding, and resources, educators may assist students in overcoming early challenges and achieving maximum engagement with the curriculum. Besides, acknowledging the adaptation process as a normal aspect of educational transition highlights the need to create a safe and encouraging learning environment for students that promotes experimentation, resilience, and ongoing development. By carefully weighing the advantages and difficulties of creative curricular methods, teachers may create a learning environment that supports students' holistic growth.

The results are consistent with Emig (2022) emphasizing that writing requires the brain to work to its maximum potential, which means that both the left and right hemispheres must actively participate in the process. The results show that through the help of writing LAS, students were required to think, thus perceiving improved cognition in the process. However, it is important to underscore the necessity of the adaptation time to this teaching methodology. The acknowledgment of an adaptation phase within the CVIF-DLP curriculum highlights the importance of accommodating students' transitional experiences. In addition, the experiences of the students were coherent with the results of the improved National Achievement Test (NAT) of the implementers of the DLP (Bernido & Bernido, 2020). Thus, confirming that the CVIF-DLP has a positive impact on the intellectual development of the students.

**Table 3**

*Generated themes on the students' lived experiences relevant to physical aspect*

| | |
|---|---|
| Sub-theme 1. Limited Influence on Physical Well-being | • DLP has no special impact on the physical aspect<br>• Fewer days for Physical Education |
| Sub-theme 2. Physical Fatigue and Mental Strain | • Physically tiring when using the mind<br>• Compelled attendance even physically ill<br>• Physical activities on Wednesday are tiring<br>• Exhausted for long DLP hours<br>• DLP has exhausting activities |
| Sub-theme 3. Rest and Recovery Opportunities | • Beneficial for physical rest |

Table 3 shows the overarching theme of the participants' experience in the CVIF-DLP in terms of physical aspects. It illustrates that, even though there is no clear emphasis on physical health in the program's design, students frequently report feeling physically exhausted. The primary cause of this weariness is thought to be mental strain brought by the DLP's demanding academic requirements and cognitive involvement. In an educational context, there is a complicated interaction between mental and physical well-being that is highlighted by the responses of the participants.

Participants see the DLP's effects on their physical well-being as being similar to those of conventional teaching methods, with no appreciable improvements or changes. The results pertaining to the limited impact on physical well-being offer multiple perspectives on the comprehensive effects of DLP on students. It seems that the program places more focus on academic and cognitive growth than it does on organized physical activity or health promotion campaigns. Also, while the DLP emphasizes academic rigor and cognitive engagement, the absence of programs specifically for physical enhancement highlights areas in which the curriculum should be improved.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"For me, DLP doesn't have a direct effect on our physical improvement. The program is normal, but it also doesn't harm us."*
> *(FGD 5, Participant 2)*

The participants also reveal a widespread feeling of weariness among students who experience mental exhaustion due to the demanding academic curriculum of the program. This frequently manifests as physical fatigue, demonstrating the intricate relationship between mental and physical health. According to the study conducted by Xu et al. (2018), mental fatigue can hinder physical performance since it reduces one's capacity for motor control. The relationship between mental weariness and academic rigor implies that the program's design may unintentionally exacerbate students' physical exhaustion.

Annotated exemplar:

> "It's a bit draining to write and think all day. We study from 7 to 5. So it's really draining. The tendency is that you're already tired because you still have things to do at home." (FGD 4, Participant 2)

On a positive note, participants express gratitude for the breaks provided by the DLP, which include fewer physical education classes and weekends without homework. These breaks offer crucial chances for rest and recovery. These responses emphasize how important relaxation is for maintaining students' general well-being and raise the possibility that the program's design unintentionally encourages rest and recuperation times, which would enhance students' educational experiences and make them more well-rounded.

Annotated exemplar:

> "In terms of physical activity, we only have PE every Wednesday. But if you include getting proper rest at home, that's a big help for our physical well-being. It's better compared to staying up late doing assignments." (FGD 4, Participant 2)

The prevailing occurrence of physical exhaustion highlights the significance of implementing a comprehensive strategy for student assistance within the academic environments. One way to tackle this issue would be to incorporate techniques for handling psychological fatigue and encouraging physical toughness into the program's structure. In order to help students achieve balanced and sustainable learning experience, instructors may

help alleviate the effects of mental tiredness by including wellness activities, stress management approaches, and chances for rest and recuperation.

The findings of the study align closely with the balanced approach advocated by Bernido and Bernido (2020). The findings show that even though the program places a strong emphasis on academic rigor and cognitive engagement, students usually get physically exhausted as a result of the rigorous curriculum. This tiredness emphasizes how closely physical and mental health are related in an educational setting. Participants do, however, also indicate appreciation for the DLP's pauses, emphasizing the significance of relaxation and recuperation for preserving overall well-being. In addition, these findings resonate with the notion put forth by Bernido and Bernido (2020) that a well-rounded educational strategy that incorporates scheduled breaks and recreational activities can improve students' general well-being and lead to more pleasurable and long-lasting learning opportunities.

**Table 4**

*Generated themes on the students' lived experiences relevant to emotional and aspects*

| | |
|---|---|
| Sub-theme 1. Building Relationships and Cooperation | • Helps build relationship<br>• Improves interaction among class<br>• Creates cooperation among class<br>• Promotes peer tutoring<br>• Improves closeness |
| Sub-theme 2. Promotes Personal Development | • Build personal confidence<br>• Teaches us to be generous<br>• Develops leadership skills<br>• Builds social pressure |
| Sub-theme 3. Challenges and pressures | • Issue on academic integrity<br>• Creates social discomfort<br>• Creates social conflict<br>• Lesser teacher-student interactions |

Table 4 depicts the overarching theme of the students' experiences with respect to their social and emotional aspects. Most participants view the program as a spark for forming personal connections and developing oneself. Although there have been incidents of social unrest, questions about academic honesty, and fewer teacher-student exchanges, students recognize the program's critical role in creating deep relationships with classmates and encouraging personal development. Within the DLP framework, students are given chances

for leadership development, peer interactions, and collaborative activities that foster a feeling of empowerment.

With a variety of cooperative exercises, including LAS copying, peer tutoring sessions, and shared learning experiences, students had plenty of chances to interact, share ideas, and work together to solve problems in the classroom. The DLP also played a key role in helping students develop deep connections with one another. In the classroom and beyond, students reported feeling more connected to one another and more camaraderie when a culture of inclusion, cooperation, and support was fostered. The program's focus on teamwork also became apparent as a major idea, with students actively engaging in cooperative learning activities, particularly LAS, and utilizing one another's advantages to meet shared academic objectives.

*Annotated exemplar:*

> *"Before, I was quite silent, but because of peer tutoring, I was forced to speak to other people. Before, it was almost prohibited to talk inside the class, but now it's allowed." (FGD 2, Participant 5)*

Participants reported an evident gain in their confidence and self-assurance through a variety of peer interaction, collaborative learning, and skill-building exercises. Furthermore, students who actively engaged in peer tutoring, information sharing, and giving of LAS to their peers demonstrated that the DLP had instilled in them a spirit of generosity. It also shows that the program was crucial in helping students acquire leadership abilities. Students acquired essential experience in problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication through classroom activities, managing events, and leadership responsibilities. This experience enhanced their leadership talents and equipped them for future difficulties.

*Annotated exemplars:*

> *"Being asked for advice boosts confidence. It feels like you're doing well because others come to you for help." (FGD 8, Participant 3)*

*"The program (DLP) often encourages you to be generous because you have classmates who really have nothing, so you give them." (FGD 3, Participant 7)*

While encouraging teamwork, the program's emphasis on collaboration and peer tutoring occasionally resulted to social friction and disputes among peers. Participants point out difficulties with maintaining academic integrity, especially regarding the desire to commit academic dishonesty, including duplicating answers in LAS. They also perceived that there was a decline in the amount of interaction between teachers and students because students perceived a lower degree of direction and assistance from teachers, particularly when it came to answering LAS. These emphasized the difficulties in putting collaborative learning techniques into practice within the DLP framework and the necessity of taking preventive measures to deal with demands from the classroom and society at large.

*Annotated exemplar:*

*"However, sometimes they become abusive when you help them, this is just my opinion. For example, they always want help. If you don't help them once, they immediately call you selfish." (FGD 2, Participant 1)*

This highlights students' flexibility and resilience when faced with obstacles in cooperative learning settings. Students understand the program's transformative influence in improving their interpersonal skills, gaining confidence, and creating a supportive community, despite the challenges associated with collaborative learning methodologies. Through an emphasis on connection building and personal development, the CVIF-DLP prepares students for success in the academic, professional, and personal domains of life by fostering their social-emotional well-being in addition to providing them with fundamental academic competencies.

The results support Cheng et al. (2021) on the role of collaborative learning in forming students' social and emotional experiences. Even with obstacles including societal unrest and problems with academic integrity, students recognize the program's value in promoting meaningful relationships with classmates and personal development. Students' confidence and leadership development are enhanced by collaborative activities like interactive LAS sessions

and peer tutoring. However, there are issues with upholding academic integrity and reducing teacher-student engagement. Effective collaborative learning tactics can improve student satisfaction and provide a more pleasant learning environment. Hence, this study argues the necessity to adapt the program to optimize the benefits of collaborative learning across different learning institutions.

## 5. Conclusion

By exploring the experiences of students under CVIF-DLP, students provide a complex story that includes setbacks, adjustments, and chances for personal development. Their struggles with anything from heavy writing assignments to managing classroom dynamics highlight how complex teaching is within the CVIF-DLP paradigm. Despite the varied perspectives and encountered challenges, students agree that the program helps them improve intellectually and personally. Therefore, this study concludes that senior high school students have unique positive and negative experiences while studying under the CVIF-DLP. Given the lived experiences of the students, this study recommends refinement of the program based on the context of institutional characteristics and capabilities.

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