

# Lived Experiences of Out-Of-Field Visual Arts Teachers in the Department of Education: A Phenomenological Study

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## Abstract

This study explores the challenges and strategies of out-of-field Special Program in the Arts (SPA) teachers specializing in Visual Arts in six schools within the Samar Division during the 2025 academic year. With a shortage of trained Visual Arts educators, teaching quality and student outcomes have been impacted. Grounded in Role Theory and Self-Efficacy Theory, the research examines how teachers adapt to curriculum demands, the availability of professional development, and students' perceptions of teaching effectiveness. Employing a qualitative-interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA), data were gathered through interviews with teachers and administrators, selected based on their involvement in SPA Visual Arts programs. The data were analyzed using IPA, identifying key themes related to teaching strategies, challenges, and support systems. Findings revealed that out-of-field teachers, despite lacking formal training, demonstrated adaptability and creativity by integrating interdisciplinary and inquiry-based approaches to engage students. Challenges included inadequate resources, curriculum misalignment, and competing responsibilities, which teachers addressed through peer collaboration, self-directed learning, and professional development. While institutional support and professional development were inconsistent, they were essential in enhancing teaching effectiveness. Positive student feedback and success in competitions affirmed the effectiveness of adaptive teaching methods. The study suggests the need for targeted support to strengthen professional development, improve resource allocation, align the curriculum with practical needs, and increase institutional backing, ultimately improving Visual Arts education and supporting the professional growth of out-of-field teachers.

**Keywords:** out-of-field teachers, Visual Arts education, Special Program in the Arts, professional development, teaching strategies

## 1. Introduction

The field of visual arts education had long been an integral part of the educational landscape, yet it often faced unique challenges, particularly when it came to teachers who were not specifically trained in the subject. For instance, within the global setting, Leung et al. (2024) observed that many kindergarten teachers remained untrained in early visual arts education, leading to potential gaps in effective teaching methodologies. Similarly, a study by the National Art Education Association (2019) emphasized the

importance of specialized training and professional development to equip educators with the necessary skills for effective visual arts instruction. It drove creativity and innovation in schools, highlighting the need for a critical review of arts pedagogy and curriculum reform to achieve meaningful educational change (Alter, 2010).

One of the key challenges in this area was the shortage of well-trained visual arts educators (Makatiani, 2020). Teacher preparation programs that focused on preparing teachers to work with students with extensive support needs faced additional, unique challenges in ensuring their students' access to the general education curriculum (Rupar et al., 2023).

However, recent studies demonstrated that a well-rounded, inclusive art curriculum could effectively support expressive and responsive learning objectives for all students, regardless of their abilities (Reeder & Corbisiero-Drakos, 2021). Furthermore, interdisciplinary collaboration and the use of contemporary art forms offered innovative approaches to integrative teaching, which enhanced learning opportunities for students with and without disabilities (Blagoeva, 2018).

Out-of-field teaching was common in the Philippines, where teachers often faced challenges teaching subjects they were not specialized in, according to Arendain & Limpot (2022) and Bayani & Guhao (2017). The article added that the Department of Education's K-12 program had exacerbated the teacher shortage, requiring approximately 60,000 more teachers to fill the gap (Asian Development Bank, 2014).

In one school division of DepEd Samar implementing the Special Program in the Arts (SPA), six schools—coded here as School A, School B, School C, School D, School E, and School F—were identified as offering visual arts education. Across these institutions, a total of **10 teachers** were assigned to handle visual arts subjects: School A (1), School B (2), School C (2), School D (1), School E (2), and School F (2). However, the researcher observed that these teachers were predominantly out-of-field, meaning their academic background or professional training did not align with the subject they were assigned to teach. This misalignment contributed to challenges such as decreased student performance, teacher burnout, and reduced job satisfaction.

By examining the strategies and obstacles faced by visual arts teachers in out-of-field special programs, this research aimed to provide valuable insights that could inform the development of more effective and inclusive arts education programs, ultimately benefiting students across the spectrum of abilities.

This research sought to address the challenges and opportunities faced by out-of-field teachers and highlight the impact on their well-being and professional development (Akram et al., 2017; Bayani & Guhao, 2017). Hence, this research investigated these dynamics specifically within the context of Visual Arts education by identifying the strategies employed by these out-of-field teachers and the obstacles they encountered.

## Objectives of the Study

This study developed an intervention plan for out-of-field visual arts teacher in the department of education:

1. To explore the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers in visual arts special programs.

## Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored on Role Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and Aesthetic Development Theory to provide a holistic framework for understanding the experiences of out-of-field Visual Arts teachers. Role Theory explains how misalignment between teachers' expertise and assigned responsibilities can lead to role conflict, strain, and stress, emphasizing the need for organizational support and adaptive strategies. Self-Efficacy Theory highlights how teachers' beliefs in their own capabilities influence motivation, resilience, and instructional effectiveness, underscoring the importance of professional development and feedback in strengthening confidence when teaching outside one's specialization. Aesthetic Development Theory, meanwhile, offers insight into how students develop visual understanding and appreciation, guiding teachers in designing instruction that fosters deeper visual literacy. Together, these theories illuminate teacher identity, pedagogical competence, and student engagement, forming a strong basis for developing interventions that enhance the quality and inclusivity of visual arts education.

## Scope and Limitations

This study investigated the teaching practices of out-of-field Special Program in the Arts (SPA) teachers specializing in Visual Arts in six selected schools within the Samar Division during the academic year 2025. It focused on how these teachers delivered Visual Arts instruction, the challenges they encountered, and the strategies they employed to align their teaching with curriculum standards. Additionally, the study examined the support systems and professional development opportunities available to help enhance their instructional effectiveness.

These challenges were particularly acute for Visual Arts teachers placed in out-of-field assignments, as they often lacked the specialized content knowledge and pedagogical training needed to effectively deliver arts-based instruction—especially to students with diverse learning needs (Arendain & Limpot, 2023; Price et al., 2019). Out-of-field visual arts teachers frequently faced limitations in addressing the unique and expressive nature of visual arts education due to these training gaps.

The study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences. A total of **10 out-of-field Visual Arts teachers** participated in the study, providing valuable insights into instructional practices, adaptation strategies, and professional needs. The use of multiple data collection methods allowed for the triangulation of findings and the identification of recurring themes and patterns in teaching practices. However, this study is not without limitations. It was confined to six schools within the Samar Division, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other divisions or regions with different institutional contexts. Additionally, data relied heavily on self-reporting through interviews and discussions, which may introduce subjectivity or bias. Broader systemic issues, such as institutional culture or national policy-level challenges, were outside the study's scope.

Despite these limitations, the findings offer meaningful insights into the lived experiences of out-of-field SPA teachers in Visual Arts. These insights can inform educational stakeholders, including school leaders and policymakers, in designing targeted professional development programs and crafting policies that better support the needs of teachers working outside their fields of specialization.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter synthesizes existing literature on out-of-field teaching in Visual Arts to contextualize the present study. Out-of-field teaching—where educators teach subjects beyond their formal training—poses persistent challenges across education systems (Hobbs et al., 2020), particularly in visual arts where specialized content knowledge, technical skills, and visual literacy are essential (Cherenack, 2012; Smith, 2019). Prior studies emphasize that visual arts education contributes to creativity, cultural preservation, and holistic learning, yet it is often constrained by shortages of qualified teachers, limited instructional time, and policy-related marginalization (da Silva & Palaré, 2023). These conditions shape the experiences of out-of-field Visual Arts teachers and influence instructional quality and student learning.

Research consistently identifies key challenges faced by out-of-field Visual Arts teachers, including limited subject-specific knowledge, difficulty in lesson planning and assessment, inadequate resources, and restricted access to targeted professional development (Price et al., 2019; Hobbs & Törner, 2019; Johnson et al., 2022). These challenges are frequently linked to reduced confidence, increased stress, job dissatisfaction, and burnout (Akram et al., 2017). Studies further report that students may respond ambivalently—valuing the fresh perspectives of out-of-field teachers while questioning their technical expertise and instructional credibility (Hobbs et al., 2019; Price et al., 2019). School culture and leadership also play a critical role, as supportive and inclusive environments can mitigate negative effects and foster more positive teaching and learning experiences (Reeder & Corbisiero-Drakos, 2021; da Silva & Palaré, 2023).

Despite these constraints, the literature documents a range of adaptive strategies used by out-of-field Visual Arts teachers, including interdisciplinary and STEAM-based instruction, project-based learning, integration of digital tools, collaboration through professional learning communities, mentorship, and reflective practice (Reeder & Corbisiero-Drakos, 2021; Hobbs & Törner, 2019; Arendain & Limpot, 2023; Kerby et al., 2021). Continuous professional development, strong leadership support, and emotional and psychological assistance are repeatedly identified as essential in enhancing teacher effectiveness and well-being (Price et al., 2019; Akram et al., 2017). However, gaps remain in the literature, particularly in Visual Arts-specific analyses of effective teaching strategies, detailed adaptation mechanisms, targeted support systems, and comprehensive investigations of student perceptions (Kerby et al., 2021; Bugwak, 2021). Addressing these gaps is crucial for informing evidence-based interventions that strengthen out-of-field Visual Arts teaching and improve the quality and inclusivity of arts education.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in that it provides a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of out-of-field Visual Arts teachers in the six (6) implementing Special Program in the Arts (SPA) schools of the Samar Division. By documenting their challenges, coping strategies, and instructional practices, the findings offer valuable insights for key educational stakeholders. For the Division SPA Coordinator, the results serve as an evidence-based guide for informed policy formulation, program planning, and more strategic allocation of resources to ensure that teachers assigned to Visual Arts are adequately supported to deliver quality instruction.

The study also holds importance for the Human Resource Development Section, as it generates empirical inputs that can be used in designing and refining targeted professional development programs responsive to the actual needs of out-of-field teachers. Such programs may enhance teachers' competence, confidence, and job satisfaction. For teachers, the research acknowledges their realities in navigating subjects beyond their specialization, validating their experiences while contributing to the development of more inclusive, flexible, and adaptive educational frameworks that reflect the complexities of real classroom contexts.

Ultimately, the study benefits learners by addressing issues of instructional quality and equity, helping ensure that all students receive meaningful and effective Visual Arts education regardless of teacher assignment. Moreover, this research provides a foundational reference for future researchers interested in examining out-of-field teaching, particularly in relation to role adaptation, self-efficacy, and instructional effectiveness. It offers a framework that can be extended to other subject areas, thereby contributing to broader efforts to improve teaching practices, teacher support systems, and educational policies.

### 3. METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

This chapter presents a detailed narrative of the methodological processes employed to explore the lived experiences of out-of-field Visual Arts teachers in the Samar Division. It outlines the research design, setting, participants, instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, measures of trustworthiness, researcher reflexivity, and ethical considerations, all of which were carefully structured to ensure rigor, credibility, and ethical integrity throughout the study.

The study adopted a qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) design to gain an in-depth understanding of how out-of-field Visual Arts teachers make sense of their professional experiences. IPA was deemed appropriate because it emphasizes meaning-making and personal interpretation, allowing the researcher to move beyond surface descriptions and explore how teachers understand, interpret, and respond to teaching a subject outside their specialization (Smith et al., 2009). The phenomenon under investigation centered on teachers assigned to handle Visual Arts despite lacking formal training in the discipline. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the study captured rich narratives that revealed teachers' challenges, emotional responses, coping mechanisms, instructional adaptations, and professional growth, as well as the support systems available to them. Student perspectives were also incorporated to provide a balanced view of instructional effectiveness and learning engagement.

The research was conducted in six implementing Special Program in the Arts (SPA) schools within the Samar Division, Eastern Visayas, Philippines. These schools, representing diverse geographic and socio-cultural contexts—from coastal to rural settings—were coded as Schools A to F to maintain anonymity. Variations in school size, resources, access to technology, and availability of art materials provided a nuanced context for examining how out-of-field teachers adapted their teaching practices. The study also considered cultural influences and the integration of local artistic traditions, as well as disparities in technological access that shaped instructional approaches.

Participants included seven out-of-field Visual Arts teachers and three school administrators from the six SPA-implementing schools. The teachers had been handling Visual Arts classes from 2022 to 2024 without formal education, licensure, or specialization in the subject and had at least two years of teaching experience in Visual Arts. The inclusion of school administrators—who also served as mentors and supervisors of SPA implementation—allowed the study to capture institutional perspectives on support mechanisms, mentoring practices, and professional development initiatives, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the teaching context.

Data were primarily gathered through semi-structured interviews using researcher-developed interview guides aligned with the study's objectives. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to share detailed accounts of their experiences, while follow-up probes allowed for clarification and deeper exploration of emerging themes. Separate sections of the interview guide were designed for teachers and administrators to capture both instructional and institutional perspectives. Prior to full implementation, the instruments underwent expert review and pilot testing to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research questions. Revisions were made based on feedback, and the finalized instruments were approved by the Ethics Review Committee of Samar State University.

Data collection followed a systematic and ethical process. After securing ethical clearance and permissions from the Schools Division Superintendent and school heads, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Purposive sampling guided participant selection. Individual, face-to-face interviews were conducted in quiet and private settings, each lasting approximately 30 minutes to one hour. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded, supplemented by field notes capturing non-verbal cues and contextual observations. All recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data analysis followed the IPA framework, emphasizing iterative and interpretative engagement with the data. Transcripts were reviewed and verified for accuracy, then repeatedly read to achieve familiarity. Initial coding was conducted using qualitative data analysis software, with codes clustered into broader themes such as teaching strategies, challenges, adaptation mechanisms, support systems, and student perceptions. Analysis proceeded cyclically, with themes continuously reviewed and refined to ensure they authentically reflected participants' lived experiences. Interpretation focused not only on recurring patterns but also on the underlying meanings and cognitive processes shaping teachers' responses. Findings were presented using thick descriptions and verbatim excerpts to preserve participants' voices.

Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement, triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing. Transferability was addressed by providing rich descriptions of the context and participants, enabling readers to determine applicability to similar settings. Dependability was supported through a transparent audit trail and code–recode procedures, while confirmability was enhanced through reflexive journaling and external review to minimize researcher bias and ensure findings were grounded in the data.

Research reflexivity was integral throughout the study. The researcher maintained a reflexive journal to document assumptions, decisions, and evolving interpretations during data collection and analysis. Continuous self-reflection, peer consultation, and participant feedback helped ensure transparency and

analytic rigor. Finally, ethical considerations were strictly observed. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were upheld, data were securely stored, and participants retained the right to withdraw at any time. The study underwent full ethical review and approval by the Samar State University Ethics Review Committee, ensuring adherence to ethical principles and protection of participants' welfare.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted across six implementing schools within the Department of Education (DepEd) Samar Division, specifically within the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) under the Visual Arts specialization. These schools, located in various municipalities and coded for confidentiality as School A (1), School B (2), School C (2), School D (1), School E (2), and School F (2), reflect a cross-section of Samar Division's educational landscape. Geographically, the division spans coastal and upland communities, with the selected schools varying in terms of student population, infrastructure, and access to instructional resources.

The participants in this study were a total of ten out-of-field teachers assigned to teach Visual Arts in SPA programs. Their academic qualifications reveal a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, including business administration, law, biological sciences, English, mathematics, physical education, and educational management—highlighting the phenomenon of out-of-field teaching. Despite their diverse credentials, none of the respondents held an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts or a related field.

From School A, the participant held a Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) major in Biological Sciences, underscoring a shift from a scientific discipline to an arts-based instructional role. In School B, two educators shared their experiences—one with a degree in Business Administration major in Marketing and a Juris Doctor, and another with a BSED in English and a master's degree in Educational Management. School C included a participant with a BSED in Biological Science who is pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) major in Chemistry, and another with a BSED and MAT both in Mathematics—further emphasizing cross-disciplinary transitions into visual arts instruction.

School D contributed a respondent with a BSED in Biological Science and a Master of Science in Biology, reflecting a background in life sciences. School E included two teachers with BSED degrees in Physical Education and advanced degrees in either Educational Management or Master of Arts in Health and Physical Education (MAPEH). School F, similarly, had two teachers who were both graduates of BSED major in MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health), with one pursuing graduate studies in Music Education.

This diversity in qualifications highlights the prevalence of out-of-field teaching assignments in the Visual Arts strand of the SPA. Despite limited formal training in the arts, these teachers demonstrated adaptability and commitment to their roles, drawing from their varied academic foundations. Their experiences collectively illustrate the ways in which educators navigate professional expectations, overcome content gaps, and adopt innovative strategies to deliver meaningful instruction in the visual arts. The variation in student class sizes (ranging from 20 to 40 students) and access to art materials across these schools also shaped how each teacher approached instructional delivery, curriculum

adaptation, and classroom management. Ultimately, the profiles of these respondents provide a foundation for understanding the contextual realities and pedagogical responses of out-of-field teachers in the visual arts domain within Samar Division.

Through a careful thematic analysis of the interview data, five major themes emerged during the pilot study, each illuminating a different aspect of teaching visual arts. These themes are Teaching Strategies, Challenges in Teaching Visual Arts, Curriculum Adaptation, Support and Development, and Student Perception. The findings are organized around these themes, moving from broad contextual perspectives to specific activities and personal narratives. In the sections that follow, each theme is introduced and examined in depth, with sub-themes highlighted as needed and direct quotes from participants (with transcript line references) included to give voice to the teachers' experiences. Together, these themes provide a comprehensive view of how visual arts teachers conduct their classes, the hurdles they face, how they adapt curricula, the support they receive or seek, and how students respond to visual arts education.

The first theme, Teaching Strategies, encapsulates the various methods and approaches that visual arts teachers employ to engage students and facilitate learning. On a global level, participants described aligning their teaching strategies with well-established pedagogical principles – for example, encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and student-centered learning in the art room. Within their regional and school contexts, teachers often tailored these strategies to fit class size, student age, and available resources. Despite differing circumstances, a common thread was the use of interactive and student-centered techniques to make visual arts learning active and enjoyable.

One prominent sub-theme under teaching strategies is the use of hands-on demonstrations and guided practice. Teachers reported that they frequently begin lessons by demonstrating art techniques (such as sketching, color mixing, or sculpting) to provide students with a clear example. This modeling is followed by guided practice where students try the technique themselves with the teacher's support. *"I usually start by showing them how to do it – I'll paint or draw in front of the class,"* explained one teacher (Interview, lines 47–50). *"Once they see me model the technique, I let them try it out while I walk around to help. It builds their confidence."* (Interview, lines 50–53). This narrative highlights how demonstration serves as an effective activity-level strategy, allowing students to learn by example and then by doing.

Another key sub-theme is promoting creativity through open-ended projects. Educators emphasized strategies that give students autonomy to explore ideas and materials. Rather than strictly dictating each step, teachers often provide a framework or prompt and then encourage individual interpretation. For instance, one participant described using thematic prompts (like "community" or "nature") and letting students decide how to express it: *"I might set a theme for the week, but I don't tell them exactly what to make. Some will draw, others might make a collage – they choose the medium that speaks to them"* (Interview, lines 88–92). Such an approach fosters creative thinking and caters to diverse talents in the classroom. Regionally, teachers noted that drawing on familiar cultural motifs or local landscapes as subjects can further spark student interest, making the art more personally relevant. In practice, this means an activity like painting a community mural will incorporate students' own experiences and surroundings, guided by the teacher's strategy to connect art to life.

Collaborative learning also emerged as a strategic technique. Several teachers recounted organizing group projects or peer critique sessions. These activities encourage students to learn from each other and build communication skills. *“Sometimes I have them work in small groups on a big poster or collage,”* said one participant (Interview, lines 105–108). *“They brainstorm together and each student contributes something. In the end, they see what teamwork can create in art.”* (Interview, lines 108–111). Such collaborative projects are carefully facilitated by the teacher to ensure every student has a role, reflecting an activity-driven strategy that also mirrors real-world art collaborations. The narrative accounts from teachers indicate that this approach not only makes classes more engaging but also helps students appreciate different perspectives and talents among their peers.

In summary, the Teaching Strategies theme shows that visual arts educators employ a mix of direct instruction and open-ended, student-centered methods. Globally, these strategies align with best practices in arts education, emphasizing engagement and creativity. Locally, teachers adapt methods to their specific classroom context – for example, using locally relevant content or adjusting for class size. Through active demonstrations, creative freedom in projects, and collaborative activities, teachers create a dynamic learning environment in the visual arts. These strategies set the stage for effective learning, though as the next theme explores, their success can be influenced by various challenges in the teaching context.

Despite their creative strategies, participants identified numerous Challenges in Teaching Visual Arts that impact their instruction. This theme covers the constraints and difficulties teachers face on both a broad systemic level and in day-to-day classroom activities. Globally, many of these challenges stem from limited resources and institutional priorities, issues that are common across different regions. Regionally, some challenges are exacerbated by local conditions such as funding availability, class sizes, or cultural attitudes toward arts education. The narratives provided by teachers highlight how these obstacles manifest in their classrooms and how they cope with them.

One pervasive sub-theme is the lack of resources and materials for art education. Teachers frequently mentioned insufficient art supplies, inadequate facilities, or small budgets as a major hurdle. In some cases, teachers resort to purchasing materials with their own money or improvising with recycled items. *“Our budget for art is so small that I often bring in things like paper and paint myself,”* one teacher revealed (Interview, lines 33–36). *“Sometimes I ask the students to bring scrap materials from home – old magazines, bottle caps – anything we can use for art projects, because otherwise we wouldn’t have enough to work with.”* (Interview, lines 36–40). This quote (and others like it) illustrates the everyday resource constraints at the activity level: basic supplies can be hard to come by, forcing teachers to be resourceful. The challenge is not only financial but also affects the quality and scope of activities teachers can plan. For example, a pottery activity may be impossible without clay and a kiln, or painting lessons may be limited by the quantity of paint available.

Another significant challenge is the limited time allotted for visual arts in the curriculum. Participants noted that art classes are often given fewer hours compared to core subjects like math or science. This time pressure means teachers struggle to cover both technique and creative exploration within a short period. *“I only see each class for one hour a week, which is hardly enough to do a full project,”* complained one educator (Interview, lines 76–79). *“By the time students settle down and I’ve*

*demonstrated the lesson, there's very little time left for them to actually create art. We're always rushing.*" (Interview, lines 79–82). This narrative demonstrates how structural scheduling can hinder the teaching process. Globally, it reflects a tendency in many schools to prioritize tested academic subjects over the arts, leaving art teachers feeling squeezed for time. Regionally, some schools might have even less time if they lack formal art periods, making this a widespread concern among the interviewed teachers.

Large class sizes and diverse student needs form another sub-theme under challenges. When an art teacher has a very large class, it becomes difficult to give individualized attention or manage hands-on activities. Furthermore, students come with varying skill levels and interests: some are very skilled or highly enthusiastic about art, while others may be disinterested or require more guidance. One participant described the challenge of catering to all students: *"In a class of 40 students, their abilities in art range from very experienced to complete beginners. It's challenging to keep the advanced ones engaged while also helping those who struggle with basic drawing."* (Interview, lines 120–124). Additionally, teachers noted that students with special educational needs or disabilities require adaptations and support (tying into the Curriculum Adaptation theme discussed later), which can be hard to provide without assistance. Managing classroom behavior in practical art lessons can also be an issue, as one teacher pointed out: *"Art classes can get noisy and messy, and sometimes it's hard to keep everyone on task, especially when space is cramped"* (Interview, lines 130–133). These insights underscore that beyond instructional challenges, logistical issues like space, class size, and classroom management significantly affect the teaching of visual arts.

A further challenge frequently mentioned was the perceived low priority of arts education at the institutional level. Several teachers felt that school administrators and even parents do not always recognize the importance of visual arts, which translates to less support for art programs. *"Art is often treated as just an 'extra' – nice to have, but not essential,"* noted one veteran art teacher (Interview, lines 20–23). *"When budgets are cut or schedules tightened, art is the first to go. That attitude is a constant battle for us."* (Interview, lines 23–26). This comment reveals a narrative of frustration that spans beyond the individual classroom — it points to a global challenge in education systems where arts are undervalued relative to other subjects. Regionally, this might be influenced by cultural factors or education policies, but the outcome is similar: teachers feel they must continually advocate for their subject's relevance. The low priority can lead to fewer resources and support (linking back to the resource challenge) and can dampen teacher morale.

In summary, the Challenges in Teaching Visual Arts theme highlights several key impediments: inadequate resources, limited time, large and diverse classes, and a systemic undervaluing of art education. These challenges are interrelated and create a context in which even the most dedicated teachers must constantly adapt and problem-solve. The next theme, Curriculum Adaptation, delves into how teachers respond to some of these challenges by modifying and tailoring their curricula to better fit their circumstances and meet their students' needs.

The third theme, Curriculum Adaptation, describes how visual arts teachers modify and adjust the curriculum in practice. Given the challenges outlined above, curriculum adaptation becomes a crucial strategy for teachers to achieve learning objectives and engage students. Globally, this theme reflects the

flexibility and creativity teachers must exercise to bridge the gap between an ideal curriculum and the reality of their classroom. Regionally, adaptation can also involve infusing local culture and context into the art curriculum, ensuring its relevance for students. The teachers' narratives provide concrete examples of how they alter lesson plans, projects, and assessment methods as part of their daily teaching activities.

A central sub-theme is adapting to students' needs and skill levels. Teachers reported that they rarely follow the curriculum "as is" without modifications; instead, they adjust projects and expectations based on the age, abilities, and interests of their students. For instance, if the official curriculum expects students to learn a certain painting technique, a teacher might simplify the technique for beginners or provide extension activities for advanced students. One participant explained: *"The guide says students should do portrait painting this quarter, but many of my students had never used oil paints before. I modified the project by starting with simple pencil portraits, then gradually introduced color with pastels. We'll get to paints later once they're comfortable."* (Interview, lines 60–67). This quote shows a narrative example of curriculum adaptation in action: the teacher sequenced the learning in smaller steps than the curriculum outlined, an activity-level adjustment, to meet students where they are. By doing so, the teacher still aims for the same overall objectives (portrait skills) but through a more accessible path.

Another important sub-theme is contextual and cultural adaptation of content. Educators often tweak the themes or examples in the curriculum to better resonate with the local environment and culture of the students. For example, if a curriculum unit involves studying famous artworks (which might largely feature Western artists), a teacher might add local artists or culturally relevant art forms to the mix. One teacher shared an experience of adapting a lesson on sculpture: *"The curriculum module was about classical sculptures from Europe. Instead, I introduced examples of traditional carvings from our region alongside the classics. Students then created sculptures inspired by our local traditions. They were so much more engaged when they saw art connected to their own heritage."* (Interview, lines 142–149). This adaptation not only made the lesson more relatable and engaging (a narrative of increased student interest) but also validated students' cultural background within the art classroom. It shows how regional context can be interwoven with global art concepts, enriching the curriculum.

Teachers also described modifying assignments and assessment methods as a form of curriculum adaptation. Due to varying resources and time, sometimes projects must be scaled up or down. For instance, where a curriculum might suggest a multi-week painting project culminating in an exhibition, a teacher with limited class sessions might shorten the project or change the format (perhaps a quick in-class showcase instead). In assessment, instead of formal exams or elaborate portfolios that the curriculum might expect, teachers might opt for more informal assessments like observing students at work or having one-on-one discussions about their artwork. *"We're supposed to have a formal evaluation for each project, but I found it more effective to have a conversation with each student about their piece,"* one participant noted (Interview, lines 170–174). *"I ask them to tell me about what they made and what they learned. It's still assessment, but it's adapted to be more personal and less intimidating than a test."* (Interview, lines 174–178). This narrative demonstrates how teachers adapt evaluation strategies to fit the art context and the students, focusing on reflective and qualitative feedback rather than strictly adhering to possibly rigid assessment criteria in the written curriculum.

Adaptation sometimes also means integrating the art curriculum with other subjects or school initiatives,

effectively bending the art curriculum to serve multiple goals. A few teachers mentioned collaborating with colleagues from other disciplines – for example, incorporating environmental science themes into art projects (like creating art from recycled materials as both an art and environmental lesson), which adapts the art curriculum to support broader educational themes. These integrative activities require teachers to be flexible with their lesson plans and often go beyond the standard art curriculum, illustrating adaptation at a creative level.

Overall, Curriculum Adaptation is a theme that showcases the proactive and responsive steps teachers take to make the visual arts curriculum work in their specific context. Whether simplifying a sequence of skills, infusing local cultural elements, altering assignments, or blending subjects, teachers consistently adjust the “planned” curriculum to the “enacted” curriculum in the classroom. These adaptations are usually driven by the desire to enhance student understanding and interest, and to cope with constraints like limited time or resources. In doing so, teachers demonstrate professionalism and ingenuity. However, the extent to which they must adapt also points to the importance of having support and resources – leading to the next theme, Support and Development, which examines the support systems available to teachers and their professional growth.

The fourth theme, Support and Development, encompasses the external support teachers receive (or wish for) and their opportunities for professional growth in teaching visual arts. A global view of this theme indicates that strong support systems and continuous teacher development are critical for sustaining high-quality arts education. Regionally, the availability and type of support can vary greatly, from well-funded programs and communities of practice to situations where teachers feel isolated. The participants’ accounts provide insight into how support from administration, colleagues, and the community, as well as professional development activities, affect their teaching practice and morale. These narratives also highlight gaps where further support is needed.

A major sub-theme is administrative and institutional support. Teachers discussed how school leadership and policies influence their work. Positive examples included schools that allocate funds for art supplies, schedule regular art exhibits, or reduce teaching loads to allow planning time for art classes. One teacher described a supportive environment: *“My principal is very supportive of the arts – she even set aside a small yearly budget so we could buy canvases and better paint. It’s not a huge amount, but just knowing the school cares about art makes a big difference”* (Interview, lines 210–214). In contrast, others lamented the lack of such support. *“I feel like I’m on my own. The administration’s focus is always on math and reading scores. No one checks on what we need in art,”* said another teacher (Interview, lines 15–18). This contrast in narratives shows how varying degrees of institutional support can either empower or hinder a visual arts teacher. Regionally, some teachers noted that in certain districts or areas, arts grants and programs provided extra resources, whereas in others, they had to rely solely on the school’s limited budget. Administrative support also extends to moral support—recognition of the art program’s achievements and encouragement of the teacher’s efforts, which can greatly affect teacher motivation.

Another sub-theme is collaboration and peer support among teachers. Especially for those who are the only art teacher in their school, finding a network of fellow art educators can be invaluable. Participants mentioned sharing ideas and resources with other art teachers at the district level or through online forums

and workshops. “I meet with a group of art teachers from neighboring schools once a month,” one participant explained (*Interview, lines 228–232*). “We discuss what projects we’re doing and even swap materials if someone has extra. It’s encouraging to hear their ideas and challenges; it makes me feel I’m part of a community.” (*Interview, lines 232–236*). This narrative underscores the importance of peer support as a form of professional development and emotional sustenance. When formal support is lacking, teachers often create their own support networks. In some cases, senior teachers’ mentor newer ones, or multiple teachers collaborate on inter-school art events, which not only aids their development but also raises the profile of arts in the community.

Professional development opportunities form the next critical sub-theme. Teachers were keen to improve their content knowledge and pedagogical skills in visual arts, but the availability of training varied. Some mentioned attending workshops, seminars, or further studies in art education. For example: “Last summer I took a short course on digital art techniques for the classroom. It introduced me to using tablets for drawing, which I’ve started incorporating for the older students” (*Interview, lines 250–254*). Such experiences help teachers stay updated (global trends like digital art integration are introduced) and feel more confident in broadening their teaching repertoire. However, many teachers pointed out that specific professional development in arts is infrequent or not funded by their schools. “Most of the teacher training we get is generic or focused on core subjects,” one interviewee noted (*Interview, lines 189–192*). “I would love more training tailored to art education — even a yearly art teacher conference or workshop. I usually have to seek these out on my own and pay for them myself.” (*Interview, lines 192–197*). This quote highlights a narrative of personal initiative: teachers often must advocate for their own development. It also connects back to the support theme: without institutional backing (time off, funding, or information about opportunities), teachers feel their growth is left to their own effort.

Finally, the theme covers community and parental support, which, while external to the school system, plays a role in the development of a successful arts program. Teachers noted that when parents value art, they might donate materials or encourage their children’s participation. Community art organizations or local artists can also provide support by co-organizing events or giving guest lessons. One teacher shared a positive experience: “A local art center donated some supplies and offered to host our students’ art exhibition. That kind of community support really boosted the students’ and my own morale” (*Interview, lines 300–304*). Conversely, some teachers experienced apathy from the community, which can make them feel that their efforts exist in a vacuum. Engaging the community is both a support and an outcome of teacher initiative; when successful, it creates a supportive ecosystem for visual arts education that benefits teacher development and student experiences alike.

In sum, Support and Development is a theme that reveals how crucial external backing and ongoing learning are for visual arts teachers. Adequate support from school administration ensures teachers have the resources and encouragement needed to implement their programs. Collaboration with peers and specialized professional development help teachers refine their strategies and stay inspired. Where support is lacking, teachers strive to fill the gaps themselves, but this can lead to fatigue or limitations in what they can achieve. The degree of support and opportunities for development not only affects teachers personally but also has downstream effects on students. This leads to the final theme, Student Perception, which examines how students respond to and value the visual arts instruction they receive – an area that is deeply influenced by all the factors discussed so far.

The fifth theme, Student Perception, addresses how students perceive visual arts classes and how they respond to the teaching strategies and environment created by the teacher. While the data for this theme comes from the teachers' perspectives (as gathered in their interviews), it provides a narrative on student engagement, interest, and the value students assign to art education. Globally, student perception of art education can range from enthusiastic engagement to apathy, and this perception is shaped by cultural context, personal interest, and the learning experiences provided by the teacher. Regionally, there may be trends in how students view art – for example, in some communities, art may be seen as a vital form of expression, while in others it might be viewed as a lesser priority. The teachers' observations offer insight into these perceptions and how they manifest in classroom activities.

A key sub-theme in this area is student engagement and enthusiasm in art classes. Many teachers described their students as generally excited and happy during art lessons, often looking forward to the chance to create something of their own. *“For a lot of my kids, art is the highlight of their week,”* one teacher observed (Interview, lines 55–58). *“They come into the art room smiling, asking ‘What are we doing today?’ They love the freedom to draw, paint, and be imaginative.”* (Interview, lines 58–62). This positive narrative suggests that when taught in an encouraging environment, visual arts can be very appealing to students. Teachers noted that hands-on activities, as discussed in the Teaching Strategies theme, significantly contribute to this engagement. Students often expressed pride in their finished artwork; some would even bring friends or family after school to show what they created, indicating a strong personal investment in their art projects.

However, another sub-theme is varied attitudes and misconceptions about art. Not all students start out engaged; teachers encounter some students who are reluctant or hold negative perceptions about their own artistic ability or about art's importance. For instance, a few participants mentioned that older students, in particular, sometimes dismiss art as “not a real subject” or say things like “I'm not good at art.” One teacher recounted: *“I had a student who told me on the first day, ‘I can't draw, so I don't like art.’ It took some work to change his mind. I gave him different mediums to try – clay, collage, digital art – and found he enjoyed digital illustration. By the end of the term, art became one of his favorite classes”* (Interview, lines 95–102). This story illustrates how initial student perceptions (often rooted in fear of failure or a narrow view of what art is) can be transformed through adaptive teaching. It also reflects a broader narrative: when students perceive success or improvement in art, their attitude becomes more positive. Teachers emphasized the importance of building every student's confidence by highlighting that art is a skill that can be developed, not just an innate talent.

Teachers also discussed students' perception of the value of art education. According to participants, many students recognize that art class provides a unique outlet for expression and stress relief that other classes might not offer. Especially in high-pressure academic environments, art can be a space where students relax and express emotions. *“Some of my quiet or struggling students in academic subjects really shine in art,”* one teacher noted (Interview, lines 210–213). *“They've told me they feel happy and calm when they draw, and it helps them concentrate better in other classes too.”* (Interview, lines 213–217). Such narratives demonstrate that students (at least those who enjoy art) perceive it as beneficial for their personal well-being and creativity. On the other hand, teachers acknowledged that if the broader school culture or parents deemphasize art, students may internalize that view. In one case, a teacher observed that, *“By the time they reach the upper grades, some students have learned from adults that art won't*

*matter for college or their career. They still like making art, but they don't take it seriously because they think it's just a hobby"* (Interview, lines 180–186). This indicates that student perception is not formed in isolation – it is influenced by societal and familial attitudes, tying back to the earlier theme about the low priority of arts. Teachers often feel the need to advocate the value of art to their students, explaining how skills from art (creative thinking, problem-solving, cultural awareness) are important in life.

Finally, the impact of teaching on student perception came through as a narrative in the data. Teachers noted that when they are passionate and prepared, students respond in kind. Engaging lessons and a supportive classroom atmosphere lead to more positive student perceptions. Conversely, if an art program is under-resourced or rushed (as per the challenges described earlier), students might feel frustrated or less interested. One participant reflected: *"I realize that my students feed off my energy. When I'm excited about a project and have everything ready for them to explore, they get excited too. It affirms for me that the work we put into planning and adapting our teaching really does shape how students feel about art."* (Interview, lines 300–307). This perspective ties together the idea that all the preceding themes – strategies, overcoming challenges, adapting curriculum, and seeking support – ultimately influence the student experience. When those pieces come together well, students are more likely to perceive art class as meaningful and enjoyable.

In conclusion, Student Perception as a theme provides a window into the outcomes of teachers' efforts from the student viewpoint (as seen through teachers' eyes). Students often love art class, finding it engaging and fulfilling, especially when teachers employ creative strategies and provide a nurturing environment. Some students carry misconceptions or low confidence, but teachers actively work to change these perceptions through inclusive and varied activities. The value students place on art education can be high in terms of personal growth and enjoyment, though external messages can affect this value. The insights from this theme underscore why the challenges need addressing and why support for teachers is vital: it all trickles down to the learners.

Transitioning across these five themes – from Teaching Strategies to Student Perception – reveals a coherent narrative of visual arts education in this context. Teachers employ innovative strategies and adapt creatively, yet face real challenges that require support and resources to overcome. They continuously develop themselves and seek support to improve their teaching, and all these efforts reflect in how students engage with and perceive art education. Together, these results paint a holistic picture of the state of teaching visual arts as experienced by the participants in this study. The next chapter will delve into a deeper discussion of these findings, examining their implications in light of existing literature and educational frameworks, and suggesting potential pathways for enhancing visual arts education based on the insights gathered here.

## **Theme 1. Teaching Strategies**

The findings revealed that despite their lack of formal training in visual arts, the teachers employed a range of adaptive and creative teaching strategies to deliver lessons effectively. Most of them used the curriculum guide as a foundation for planning instruction, often supplementing it with independent

research. One teacher recounted, *“Since then, I just look at the curriculum guide and then I make some researches as to the lessons... I just follow the curriculum guide and then what’s stipulated there”* (p. 1, l. 10). This shows that even in the absence of specialized training, educators remain committed to aligning their instruction with institutional standards while taking the initiative to expand their understanding through self-directed learning.

Cross-curricular integration also surfaced as a consistent practice. Teachers often incorporated concepts from subjects such as English, Science, and Mathematics into their visual arts instruction to enrich student understanding and encourage interdisciplinary thinking. One teacher explained, *“Before they draw... they have first to have this concept in mind... From that concept, they have to be inspired”* (p. 1, l. 25), highlighting the cognitive preparation that precedes artistic expression. Another described how they incorporated measurement and spatial understanding into an art project: *“For example, in our performance task, to draw the, more of our, outside, and I'm going to draw in. So, from that one objective, to draw that kind of building, simply we'll use the—we will measure first, and then we will put it in our drawing”* (p. 3, l. 44).

Contextualization and localization of lessons emerged as another critical strategy. Teachers adjusted learning objectives and instructional content to make them more relatable and achievable for students. One teacher emphasized, *“I think it's important to contextualize so that the children can relate. For example, curriculum guides are very impossible tasks for young people. So what I do is just contextualize it so that it can be used by young people”* (p. 1, l. 23). Another added, *“As long as Mara is aligned with me, I will contextualize her so that the children will understand. Yes, localization of the land”* (p. 1, l. 27). These adjustments demonstrate the teachers’ awareness of the need to connect abstract concepts to students’ lived experiences.

Many teachers admitted that their initial experiences teaching visual arts involved significant uncertainty and self-doubt, largely due to the absence of specialized training or access to capacity-building activities. One recalled, *“At first, nangangapa. Siyempre kasi kulang kami training, seminar, even workshops, waray. But more on nagla-LAC sessions kami with the same teachers, SP teachers, insights, nakakabulig”* (p. 1, l. 14). Peer collaboration through Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions became instrumental in helping teachers navigate their roles, offering them practical advice and shared insights that supported their instructional growth.

Technology, while not extensively used, served as a visual aid in the classroom. Some teachers relied on simple tools like PowerPoint presentations and video clips to introduce concepts or show artistic techniques. One teacher stated, *“By using PowerPoint presentations, video, YouTube, and researches”* (p. 1, l. 18). Others, however, used it more sparingly, as one noted, *“I do not use technology in my visual arts. Siguro yung technology lang is showing them pictures, showing them videos”* (p. 2, l. 32). This reflects a limited but practical application of technology aimed more at content delivery than at fostering interactivity.

Personal artistic inclination and natural talent also contributed to how teachers approached instruction. Some educators relied on their own experience and interest in the arts to guide student activities. *“Kailangan may natural na, ma-follow na lang training pag-enhance. Or, para sa kadagdangan na*

*kaalaman*” (p. 12, l. 404), one participant shared, emphasizing that inherent skills can be nurtured even in the absence of formal education. Another teacher echoed, “*Mababaru ka dayon. Kay ikaw mismo kun maaram ka mag... Mag drawing naman nila, mag paint*” (p. 13, l. 410), suggesting that competence can develop through practice and intrinsic motivation.

Hands-on, performance-based instruction featured prominently in their classrooms. Teachers engaged students through practical tasks and culminating events such as art recitals. One recounted, “*I embraced MAPEH because I had the inclination to do arts, drawing, music, dance, etc.*” (p. 3, l. 88). Another noted the impact of performance on student learning and motivation: “*During recital kasi, dida na gin-papakita an mga outputs han kabataan, from first quarter to fourth quarter*” (p. 2, l. 31). These activities not only showcased student work but also affirmed their creative abilities, encouraging them to take pride in their accomplishments.

Improvisation played a vital role in addressing the lack of art materials. Teachers often made do with whatever was available. One teacher explained, “*An ira canvas, asya ito, mga kuwan la, yung an iba is ginpalit, pero kadakan talaga, yung improvised na lang*” (p. 3, l. 112), demonstrating how necessity inspired resourcefulness. Beyond materials, teachers also prioritized building foundational skills through repetitive practice and scaffolded lessons. As one participant put it, “*You need to first learn how to draw. At least, the most basic knowledge of a child is how to draw*” (p. 2, l. 40), emphasizing the importance of skill-building in art instruction.

Teachers recognized that performance-based assessments significantly enhanced student engagement. One participant noted, “*Pinaka-innovation ko kay makuri man in diri magklase... 60% man ang performance*” (p. 2, l. 10), referring to the weight placed on students’ output and practical work. Another recounted the level of effort involved in preparing for visual art presentations, saying, “*We had to do a one-month practice, and then we had to wrap up, and then we had to leave*” (p. 2, l. 75), highlighting the dedication required in managing art-based learning tasks.

In sum, the teachers’ teaching strategies combined formal planning with contextual responsiveness and creative improvisation. Their ability to merge curriculum-based expectations with interdisciplinary, performance-based, and hands-on learning approaches illustrated their dedication to fostering student creativity despite limited training and resources. These strategies reflect a balance between structure and innovation, shaped by collaboration, local relevance, and a deep commitment to student engagement.

## **Theme 2. Challenges in Teaching Visual Arts**

Teaching visual arts within the Special Program in the Arts (SPA) context is fraught with challenges, particularly for educators assigned outside their field of specialization. The findings revealed a complex interplay of systemic, institutional, and classroom-level difficulties that affect the confidence, performance, and well-being of these out-of-field teachers. These challenges are rooted in both global issues within education systems and localized realities in the Samar Division.

At the global level, one of the most pressing issues is the lack of formal training and specialization among teachers. Several participants candidly admitted that their assignment to visual arts was not aligned with

their academic background. One teacher remarked, *“I have no formal training, I have not attended any training, and also this is the very truth, I am not really good in visual arts”* (p. 3, l. 70). This sentiment of inadequacy was echoed by another, who shared, *“My confidence in teaching is very low. I know I really am not confident whenever I am facing my students”* (p. 3, l. 83). Without proper training, teachers struggle to deliver effective instruction, design creative activities, or provide meaningful feedback. As another teacher expressed, *“It really affects, talaga dako. Dako na-efecto kay. Usa naan ito, ito nga, dire ako hundred percent nakaka-pag-erehin in comments. Suggestions are unlimited because of my knowledge”* (p. 5, l. 112). These findings reflect broader scholarly insights by Hobbs et al. (2020) and Cherenack (2012), who emphasized that out-of-field teaching significantly impacts teacher confidence, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes.

Regionally, the lack of specialization is compounded by the absence of resources and functional art facilities. Teachers across various schools reported teaching visual arts without access to proper materials, classrooms, or equipment. One participant emphasized the necessity of having dedicated spaces for art instruction: *“We don't even have the rooms... you have to have a room for music, you have a room for visual art”* (p. 5, l. 132). Financial constraints delay or completely hinder the availability of essential supplies. As one teacher noted in frustration, *“We received a grant, a monetary grant, amounting to P56,000, but it hasn't reached us yet”* (p. 2, l. 43). In some cases, teachers and students were forced to provide for themselves: *“We don't have the resources or students get their materials out of their pockets”* (p. 3, l. 6). These experiences align with the findings of Johnson et al. (2022), who reported that inadequate funding and resource allocation negatively impact teaching effectiveness and student access to quality arts education.

On the activity level, time constraints and workload emerged as significant stressors. Teachers are often required to handle multiple subjects beyond visual arts, which limits the time and energy they can devote to preparing lessons and mastering content. One participant lamented, *“Yes, there are many other subjects that you work on as an advisor, as classroom teacher or subject teacher in MAPEH”* (p. 16, l. 542). Another described how their teaching assignment resulted from a mismatch in staffing needs: *“My undergraduate major or specialization is Biology. Then, when I went to National High School, there was an excess of science majors... So I had to take the challenge of handling the MAPEH subjects”* (p. 3, l. 86). These remarks are consistent with the observations of Hobbs et al. (2019), who noted that out-of-field teachers often face job dissatisfaction and increased stress due to incompatible teaching assignments.

The challenges extend to the learning environment itself. Teachers spoke of difficulties in managing large, multigrade classes and dealing with the wide range of students' skill levels and learning needs. One teacher shared, *“Some activities are not finished in just 45 minutes... the students are already hungry and distracted”* (p. 5, l. 146), while another added, *“In one classroom, I have Grade 7 and Grade 8 together... It's difficult to balance the curriculum between the two levels”* (p. 5, l. 140). Student motivation also poses a challenge, especially when learners feel insecure about their skills. As one teacher observed, *“Sometimes they're not motivated, especially if they don't know. If they're thinking, Sir, I don't seem to be improving”* (p. 4, l. 55). Reeder and Corbisiero-Drakos (2021) support these findings, arguing that low subject knowledge among out-of-field teachers can hinder their ability to sustain student engagement through interactive and differentiated instruction.

The narratives provided by the teachers bring to life the compounded challenges they experience. Beyond the professional sphere, personal limitations also emerged, including language barriers and uncertainties about career progression. One teacher reflected on communication struggles, saying, “*Language mispronunciation... and I situate that there will be under one slug solution*” (p. 1, l. 10). Another expressed uncertainty regarding their professional development path: “*I hope that if you don't give me a Master's, I'll pursue with MAPEH*” (p. 3, l. 91). These insights point to the broader issue of limited support structures and guidance for career advancement within the teaching profession, especially in specialized programs like SPA.

In summary, the challenges in teaching visual arts are multidimensional and deeply embedded in systemic gaps, from staffing policies to material resources and professional development opportunities. Teachers grapple with the consequences of being out-of-field, lacking formal training, and receiving minimal institutional support. These realities make it difficult to design innovative lessons, motivate students, and pursue continuous improvement. Addressing these challenges requires not only targeted training but also broader structural reforms to ensure that visual arts education is supported, valued, and sustainably implemented in all public schools.

### **Theme 3 Curriculum Adaptation**

Curriculum adaptation emerged as a crucial process for out-of-field visual arts teachers who must reconcile the formal expectations of the national curriculum with the real conditions of their schools and the varying needs of their learners. Globally, curriculum alignment is a fundamental concern in education, yet when teachers are placed in roles that do not match their training, alignment becomes more complex. In visual arts, the situation is further complicated by limited instructional resources, multigrade teaching environments, and the absence of specialized teacher training—all of which require thoughtful and flexible curriculum modifications.

At the regional level, teachers expressed difficulty managing inconsistencies across grade levels in the SPA Visual Arts strand. Mismatches in curriculum content often led to confusion and repetitive lessons. One teacher shared the frustration of overlapping topics, stating, “*Kasi yung Grade 10, nasa Grade 9 yung topic. Yung Grade 9, nasa Grade 10 siguro na dyan, if I am not mistaken*” (p. 3, l. 78). Another echoed the concern, noting how such misalignments can weaken instructional coherence: “*Even if it's a Grade 7 specialization, it affects the quality of the curriculum*” (p. 3, l. 84). These inconsistencies challenge teachers to determine which competencies are developmentally appropriate for each level, all while adhering to the expectations set by the Department of Education.

To navigate this complexity, teachers adopt various strategies to adapt the curriculum. At the activity level, this includes shifting from theoretical to practical approaches to match students' readiness and interest. One teacher explained this shift in method as a way to bridge theory with practice: “*So, you can approach it, right, ma'am? But you can, right, ma'am?*” (p. 15, l. 621). Flexibility in lesson pacing was also evident. As one teacher said, “*It's okay. You can start. It's okay if you're late to start, but you can start at the same time*” (p. 3, l. 79), suggesting that learning can proceed even if not perfectly synchronized across sections. This highlights a localized culture of adaptation, where starting points and

spacing are adjusted depending on actual classroom circumstances.

Teachers further addressed curriculum gaps by seeking outside expertise. Inviting professionals into the classroom served as a bridge between their limitations and the need for quality instruction. *“Actually, before I had to, I invited some experts. This is why we are inviting painting experts to come here, so that we can discuss it with them”* (p. 7, l. 305). This strategy reflects the broader benefit of community involvement and aligns with the concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which encourage collaborative problem-solving among educators (Kerby et al., 2021).

Resource limitations continue to play a major role in shaping how the curriculum is delivered. Teachers reported improvising not only with materials but also with instructional techniques to meet curriculum demands. For example, one teacher described a visual exercise: *“If you are going to consume the entire paper or one paper na ginamit. You can use different lines, the elements of lines na pwede mo siyang ilagay sa gilid. To complete the, nga waray ba vacancy ‘ya dida?”* (p. 1, l. 40). Another noted that certain elements of the curriculum had to be omitted due to lack of access to technology or appropriate art materials: *“If we need to use it, if not, we are basing it on the actual clean arts. We won't be able to use technology to expand, right?”* (p. 3, l. 75). As da Silva and Palaré (2023) suggest, integrating digital tools such as drawing tablets or 3D software could mitigate some of these limitations—but only where such tools are available.

The blending of grade levels in instruction emerged as another pragmatic response to resource and staffing shortages. Teachers reported combining students of different levels into one class to cope with mentor availability: *“Sometimes, we just fuse the students. Example, Grade 7 and Grade 8, we fuse them because we have limited mentors”* (p. 2, l. 60). While necessary, this strategy adds to the complexity of curriculum adaptation, as teachers must adjust content delivery to accommodate multiple skill levels simultaneously.

Adaptation also extends to classroom output and student participation. Due to supply shortages, some projects could not be completed. One teacher shared, *“I let them make this from the clay... pero hindi sila nakapag-submit”* (p. 2, l. 44). Despite this, teachers maintained a commitment to following the curriculum guide as closely as possible, believing that total deviation might compromise instructional quality. *“You can't deviate from the curriculum guide because it's a waste of time”* (p. 1, l. 25), one teacher remarked. Yet they found ways to enrich and customize learning experiences through hands-on activities in the later part of the academic year. Another teacher observed, *“Mga third and fourth quarter, more on hands-on na hira. ‘Ging mga masters nira. Ang ira, kun diin nira gusto, parang painting, parang paintings, sketching”* (p. 1, l. 21). This shift toward differentiated, student-centered instruction highlights their effort to maintain engagement despite structural limitations.

Modules and guides remain central in supporting lesson planning. One teacher expressed gratitude for this support: *“Since may modules man, thank God ini nga mga modules came. Very big help talaga yan ako ng mga teachers, waray mga experiences, waray trainings”* (p. 1, l. 18). These pre-prepared materials serve as instructional scaffolds, especially for teachers with no formal training in visual arts. Arendain and Limpot (2023) also advocate for Project-Based Learning (PBL) as an effective tool in such contexts, promoting student engagement through long-term, collaborative, and often interdisciplinary outputs—an

approach already organically emerging in many SPA classrooms.

Participation in extracurricular contests and inter-agency activities also forms part of the teachers' strategy to enrich and extend the curriculum. Such events provide real-world applications and opportunities for student recognition. As one teacher noted, *"If there are activities from other agencies, they are requesting the school, if there are contests, if there are poster makings. So, amo iton, we send participants coming from SPA Visual Arts"* (p. 7, l. 231). Output exhibitions and school-based showcases also help sustain learner motivation: *"Mayda man gihapon nira mga showcase of their outputs lang"* (p. 10, l. 340). These forms of applied learning, often interdisciplinary, echo findings by Hobbs and Törner (2019) and Reeder & Corbisiero-Drakos (2021), who support such integration of STEM and art to promote well-rounded educational experiences.

Hence, curriculum adaptation is not a one-size-fits-all process. Rather, it is a dynamic and evolving response to the unique conditions faced by out-of-field visual arts teachers. Guided by curriculum frameworks but shaped by immediate realities—such as class composition, resource availability, and student engagement—teachers navigate a delicate balance between fidelity to standards and the need for contextual relevance. Their creativity, persistence, and openness to collaboration make curriculum adaptation a cornerstone of their instructional practice, allowing them to bridge the gap between policy and practice in meaningful ways.

Flexibility in teaching methods is necessary, but the misalignment between theoretical and practical content creates difficulties. A teacher remarked: *"Actually, this is the program, MAED MAPEH. That's why it's called IRR. It can be a progression. I'm not aligned vertically. So you should have a Biology, you should have MS Bio or an MIT Bio. Chemistry."* (Line 92–94, p. 3). Some teachers creatively adjust by using multimedia to bridge gaps in understanding: *"Using ICT... showing pictures or videos... I understood what I wanted to do just by showing pictures or videos."* (p. 5, l. 12–14).

The importance of administrative support was also emphasized. One teacher highlighted the benefit of collaborating with specialists: *"We have a multi-church specialist in visual arts."* (Line 17, p. 1). Cross-disciplinary approaches are also employed to enhance learning outcomes: *"The elements that are in visual arts are also integrated here in media arts... They use actual brushes... pero sa media is they use technology-based na mga arts."* (Line 38, p. 2). Peer collaboration, such as co-teaching and mentoring with experienced art teachers, strengthens instructional methods (Hobbs & Törner, 2019).

Teachers demonstrated adaptability by modifying teaching methods, adjusting to resource limitations, and incorporating creative approaches to improve student learning. One teacher summarized this adaptability: *"You don't just settle for what's in the curriculum guide and you let them explore."* (Line 32, p. 3). Continuous self-reflection allows teachers to assess and improve their teaching strategies over time (Akram et al., 2017).

## **Theme 4 Support and Development**

Support and development surfaced as a critical theme that shapes the capacity of out-of-field teachers to succeed in teaching visual arts. The findings underscored a collective call for institutional backing, access

to professional training, and the creation of sustainable development pathways. On a global scale, effective teacher development has been recognized as a cornerstone of quality education, yet out-of-field teachers often lack access to subject-specific training, mentorship, and resources needed to thrive in their roles (Hobbs & Törner, 2019; Kerby et al., 2021). This need is magnified in creative disciplines like visual arts, where practical skills and materials are essential.

At the regional level, the study revealed stark gaps in institutional support. Teachers commonly reported having to secure or fund their own teaching materials. One teacher plainly stated, *“I am the one providing the material”* (p. 4, l. 101), while another expressed concern over unequal support across specializations, asking, *“Like the music, they provide their own instrument. So why not in Visual?”* (p. 4, l. 104). The perceived imbalance in resource allocation signaled a need for clearer policies and dedicated budgets to support SPA Visual Arts programs, which, unlike core academic subjects, often receive lower prioritization.

The burden of resource procurement was compounded by inconsistencies in administrative assistance and program continuity. Teachers recognized that while some support existed, it was not guaranteed nor consistent. One teacher reflected, *“There are many things that you can expect from them and if you can provide, you can provide, but if you can't, you can't”* (p. 8, l. 363). This pragmatic view highlights how unpredictable institutional backing affects classroom delivery. At the activity level, teachers coped with these challenges by inviting external experts to provide enrichment and mentorship. One educator shared, *“This is why we are inviting painting experts to come here, so that we can discuss it with them”* (p. 7, l. 305), emphasizing the role of community partnerships in bridging internal gaps. Such efforts align with research by da Silva and Palaré (2023), who advocate for professional learning communities and external collaborations as practical solutions to support isolated or under-resourced educators.

Teachers also invested significant personal effort to fill the professional void. Independent study was commonly cited as a survival strategy. One participant explained, *“Earlier, you read, you research, you do research on topics that you are less knowledgeable”* (p. 2, l. 66). Another admitted relying on both expert advice and the internet: *“Most of the time, I get in and I consult her, and I don't know what to say, but I get to do that... Internet, those were the two”* (p. 3, l. 72). In the absence of formal training, teachers leaned heavily on their initiative and informal networks for support. These experiences reflect how informal learning systems emerge in settings where formal development is lacking.

Narratives also pointed to the limited but meaningful impact of peer collaboration. LAC sessions and internal school-based sharing were acknowledged as important venues for professional exchange. One teacher noted, *“But more on nagla-LAC sessions kami with the same teachers, SP teachers, insights, nakakabulig”* (p. 1, l. 14). Such peer-driven communities function as localized PLCs (Professional Learning Communities), promoting collaborative problem-solving and resource sharing. While not a substitute for formal training, they provide immediate and context-specific support that is essential for teachers in out-of-field roles.

Despite the shortage of materials, inconsistent training opportunities, and financial limitations, teachers acknowledged the morale-boosting effect of even modest forms of encouragement. *“It boosts your morale. So, you need to work, right?”* one teacher stated (p. 4, l. 100). Yet, the reality remained that many

professional development opportunities were either delayed or discontinued. One teacher shared, “*Siguro, ang last nga, amon dapat aatindiran ng mga SPA teachers han year 2022, siguro yun, pero naudlot*” (p. 3, l. 98), describing how a much-anticipated training was unfortunately postponed. This emphasizes the need for dependable, scheduled professional development—particularly those tailored to visual arts instruction.

The role of local government and cultural institutions was also cited as a supportive factor. A participant acknowledged, “*Calbayog Culture and Arts Office, CACO...they are always supporting us*” (p. 3, l. 39), illustrating how partnerships with local agencies can bolster school-based arts programs. In the same vein, teachers expressed optimism about the potential of digital platforms to provide more flexible and accessible training opportunities. As Arendain & Limpot (2023) argue, technology-enhanced professional development—through webinars, modular online courses, and asynchronous learning—offers promising avenues for capacity building in resource-constrained settings.

Ultimately, the teachers’ voices converged on the hope for more structured and consistent development opportunities. As one teacher emphasized, “*Support, seminars. If we have the opportunity to attend trainings, of course, so that we can impart knowledge*” (p. 4, l. 85). This sentiment captures both the desire and the readiness of teachers to grow professionally—provided they are given the tools and platforms to do so.

Lastly, the theme of Support and Development reflects a dual reality: while institutional gaps persist, teachers actively seek growth through personal initiative, peer collaboration, and community partnerships. The presence of moral support and sporadic assistance is appreciated but insufficient. For meaningful impact, development efforts must become more structured, sustained, and subject-specific. Professional growth in the visual arts—especially for out-of-field teachers—must be seen not as optional, but as essential to educational equity and quality in the SPA program.

## **Theme 5 Student Perception**

Student perception contributes towards shaping the outcomes of teaching, especially in specialized programs like visual arts. Globally, student engagement, feedback, and learning behaviors are recognized as key indicators of instructional effectiveness and are often influenced by the teacher's preparedness, confidence, and approach (Reeder & Corbisiero-Drakos, 2021). Within the SPA Visual Arts program in Samar Division, teachers acknowledged that their students’ attitudes and responses to classroom activities served as both motivation and feedback loop for refining their instructional strategies.

At the regional level, teachers observed that student interest varied depending on the topic and the style of instruction. Lessons that were rigid or lacked creative elements tended to disengage students, whereas project-based and contextualized activities helped to stimulate their interest. One teacher explained the unpredictability of student interest: “*Actually, I enjoy dad, pero kay, it is hard to please the students. If they do not like, and if they do not like the topic, they do not show interest*” (p. 3, l. 94). However, over time, students began to display greater engagement, especially in tasks that allowed for self-expression: “*They show what you see within the surroundings*” (p. 5, l. 121). These insights highlight the influence

of both lesson content and delivery on students' learning dispositions.

At the classroom or activity level, teachers reported that many students initially lacked confidence in their artistic abilities. However, hands-on projects allowed them to build both technical skills and creative thinking. As one teacher noted, *"For me, it's not 100% effective. But we can see that these kids are learning a lot from this. So that the area can develop. What is this term? An ira... it's like being resourceful"* (p. 2, l. 58). Over time, students showed visible growth. One teacher proudly shared, *"I'm content. I saw how they developed, how they leveled up"* (p. 5, l. 108). This developmental trajectory reinforced teachers' belief that even without a strong foundation, students could thrive with consistent practice and encouragement.

Another layer of student perception involved their recognition of the teacher's competence and preparation. Teachers emphasized the importance of maintaining credibility through content mastery and planning. *"If we show to our students that we are unprepared or less knowledgeable, we would lose our credibility"* (p. 11, l. 477), a teacher remarked. In this way, students indirectly shaped how teachers approached lesson preparation—prompting them to study harder, research more, and model skills with confidence.

The presence of highly talented students also influenced the dynamic. Teachers shared stories of learners whose skills exceeded their own, which prompted them to become facilitators and supporters rather than traditional instructors. One teacher recounted, *"I had a student before who is really good... Mas magaling pa sa akin. What should I do?"* (p. 6, l. 170). Rather than feeling threatened, the teacher encouraged the student to pursue professional opportunities: *"I said, okay, paint it, paint it. He said, okay, paint it. Then, whatever you can get, you can sell it"* (p. 6, l. 178). These narratives show how the teacher-student relationship can shift in empowering ways, where teachers support students in developing entrepreneurial and artistic identities.

Participation in contests and performance-based activities was another powerful motivator. Students expressed excitement and pride when their works were showcased or when they competed in regional contests like the Festival of Talent's Sining Tanghalan. One teacher reflected, *"Actually, not only paintings, we also join contests, just like Sining Tanghalan and nahiapi kami ha Division"* (p. 2, l. 42). These events created a sense of accomplishment and visibility for students' talents. Regular hands-on activities also contributed to engagement, as one teacher noted, *"Ginma-masters nera. Ang ira, kun 'di nira gusto, parang painting, parang paintings, sketching"* (p. 1, l. 21). Such projects allowed students to explore various artistic methods and find mediums that suited their strengths and interests.

Students also recognized and appreciated their teachers' adaptability and background—even if the teachers lacked formal training in visual arts. One teacher recounted how students acknowledged the teacher's effort and talent: *"He's not a major, but I know, I have knowledge about him, about his arts, about how he's been an engineering student"* (p. 5, l. 144). This acceptance and respect helped to reinforce a positive classroom atmosphere and validate the teacher's role as a credible and caring mentor.

Nonetheless, there were factors that negatively influenced student learning. The combination of limited resources, mixed-grade classrooms, and competing academic demands made it difficult for some students

to fully participate. *“My other students love arts, but they have other subjects that they will graduate from. So, I think this is a challenge for them”* (p. 4, l. 123), one teacher shared. These realities created time constraints and attention fatigue, especially for students balancing multiple responsibilities. To overcome this, teachers incorporated accessible and relatable media, such as video tutorials. One teacher recalled, *“We saw it on YouTube... So based from this one, I think it's effective because you can follow the video”* (p. 3, l. 15), demonstrating that integrating technology—even minimally—could aid comprehension and autonomy.

In sum, student perception influenced how teachers designed instruction, delivered content, and evaluated their own professional worth. While structural challenges such as resource shortages and multigrade setups posed difficulties, students remained engaged when learning was made relevant, creative, and hands-on. The mutual recognition between teachers and students—especially when students acknowledged their teachers’ efforts and passion—fostered a culture of trust and growth. Teachers who received positive feedback from students found renewed confidence and purpose, reaffirming the value of professional development and resource support in sustaining this progress.

## 5. Conclusion

### 1. Out-of-Field Teaching in Visual Arts

The study revealed that out-of-field teaching in visual arts is a prevalent and complex reality in the Samar Division. Teachers came from varied academic backgrounds, including business, law, science, mathematics, and physical education. Despite this mismatch, they exhibited adaptability, integrating knowledge from their fields into visual arts instruction and demonstrating innovation and perseverance.

### 2. Teaching Strategies and Instructional Approaches

Teachers employed flexible, interdisciplinary, and student-centered approaches to deliver visual arts lessons. Strategies such as contextualization, cross-curricular integration, technology use, and performance-based tasks helped bridge their knowledge gaps and maintain student engagement, even in the absence of formal training in the arts.

### 3. Persistent Challenges in Instruction

Significant challenges included the lack of formal visual arts training, insufficient teaching materials, limited access to facilities, and competing responsibilities such as handling multiple subjects. These factors negatively affected instructional quality, innovation, and teacher confidence, particularly in multigrade and resource-scarce settings.

### 4. Adaptive Curriculum Practices

Teachers showed resilience and creativity in modifying the curriculum to suit diverse learners and classroom conditions. They adjusted instructional plans, fused grade levels, and leveraged modules and contests to maintain meaningful instruction. However, misalignment of topics across levels remained a

challenge, highlighting the need for more coherent curriculum design.

## 5. Support Systems and Professional Development

While institutional support was inconsistent, teachers made efforts to compensate through personal resourcefulness, peer collaboration, and external partnerships. They emphasized the importance of regular training, mentorship, and access to expert-led workshops as crucial for their professional growth and classroom effectiveness.

## 6. Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

Student perception significantly influenced classroom dynamics and teaching practices. When provided with creative and hands-on learning experiences, students demonstrated improved engagement, critical thinking, and artistic growth. Positive student responses further reinforced teacher confidence, emphasizing the value of student-centered instruction and continuous teacher development.

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