Challenges of Ta Providers in Lac Implemention: Basis for Localized Lac Framework

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ABSTRACT

Learning Action Cell (LAC) is a session conducted by group of teachers who engage in collaborative learning sessions to solve shared challenges encountered in school. Though LAC projects a promising result for teachers in improving Teaching and Learning Strategies, it is somehow, not being maximized in the school.

This challenge of maximizing (LAC) brings life to Continuous Improvement CI Project BILLS, Boosting and Improving LAC Leaders and Strategies. And this, proposed research is anchored to the on going CI Project BILLS. This study in particular, tried to determine the challenges encountered by TA providers or LAC leaders in LAC implementation.

This study aimed to analyze the experiences and challenges, most especially, of the TA providers, 8 Head Teachers, and 18 Master Teachers towards LAC implemantation. This action research was plainly qualitative in nature and made used of interview as the research instrument. Consequently, coding and theming were used for data analysis.

This research revealed that TA providers 1. have difficulty in crafting the proposals and securing necessary attachments, 2. due to challenges encountered in LAC implementation by LAC leaders, the monitoring of teachers' performance was taken for granted, 3. the absence of monitoring and evaluation team was found as another reason on the low success rate of LAC implementation. TA providers also observed that 4. teacher-participants demonstrated less motivation and participation in the LAC session, 5. through the TA's initiative, they have found out that teachers' schedule have conflict with the LAC activity and the LAC topics are no longer new to the teacher-participants.

Meanwhile, the newly introduced LAC process through CI Project, was observed to have a more detailed, organized and systematic conduct of LAC. The most evident improvements are the following: 1. Presence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) all throughout the process, 2. Intervention of Learning and Development (L&D) Coordinator, 3. Posting of QATAME flow chart, 4. Proper conduct of LAC, 5. Presentation of LAC outputs and outcomes.

Keywords: Learning Action Cell (LAC), LAC Implementers, LAC Framework, LAC Proposal

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

The school performance is a shared responsibily among its stakeholders. Like all other institutions, it is challenged by multiple factors. However, by careful planning and its strategical implementation, these

challenges are being addressed.

Over the years, trainings and seminars have become excellent avenues to discuss, analyze, and later, solve issues in education. In the context of Mayamot National High school, like all other public schools for sure, the school yearly provides a three to five-day In-Service Training (In-SeT) twice at least.

Based on the results of the Individual Plan for Professional Development (IPPD) and Individual Performance and Commitment Review Form (IPCRF), topics are being selected. However, the identified topics delivered are broad and general in nature. As a result, topics shared by few individuals may not be included in the said In-SeT. On the other hand, teacher may opt to discuss common challenges and determine possible solution through Learning Action Cell (LAC).

Learning Action Cell or LAC as defined in DepEd Order No. 35, S. 2016 paragraph 9 as a session conducted by group of teachers who engage in collaborative learning sessions to solve shared challenges encountered in school. Likewise, paragraph number 11 of the same DepEd Order stated that LACs are the most cost-effective CPD process but may entail some expenses nonetheless funds can be sourced from the school's MOOE subject to it's utilization guidelines.

Though LAC projects a promising result for teachers in improving Teaching and Learning Strategies, it is somehow, not being maximized in the school. As a matter of fact, there is no or zero LAC sessions conducted by the Junior High School while five LAC sessions were spearheaded by the senior high school in school year 2019-2020.

This challenge of maximizing Learning Action Cell (LAC) brings life to Continuous Improvement CI Project BILLS, Boosting and Improving LAC Leaders and Strategies. And this, research proposed is anchored to the on going CI Project BILLS. This study in particular, tries to determine the challenges encountered by TA providers or LAC leaders in LAC implementation. Consequently, identified inputs to the existing LAC process may be considered to the projected localized LAC framework.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed to determine the experiences, challenges and feelings of technical assistance (TA) providers. Also known as Learning Action Cell (LAC) LAC implementers in Mayamot National High School. Moreover, this research attempted to design a localized LAC Framework which may lead to the improvement of LAC implementation in the school level.

Specifically it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by TA providers in LAC implementation?
2. How do these challenges affect the LAC Implementation?
3. What inputs can be in solicited in the existing LAC framework based on the identified challenges of TA providers?

ACTION RESEARCH METHODS

- **Parts and/or Other Sources of Data and Information**

This study tried to analyze the experiences and challenges, most especially, of the TA providers towards LAC implemantation. Therefore, the 8 department heads from the Junior high school and 18 Master Teachers from the senior High School were chosen purposively for this study. In consequence, the researchers elicited hands on experiences from the logically assumed participants for this study Lavrakas,

(2008).

The existing LAC framework in the school was also utilized and underwent document analysis.

- **Data Gathering Methods**

This study wished to determine the experiences of the 26 Technical Assistance (TA) Providers in both Junior and Senior High School of Mayamot National High School. Therefore, this action research was plainly qualitative in nature and made used of interview as the research instrument. Qualitative research refers to a purposive collection of information which intends to explore opinions, beliefs, viewpoints, experiences, and judgements about something.

In order to solicit feedbacks from the TA providers or LAC leaders, a semi-structured interview was conducted (Prieto, Naval, & Carey 2017). By doing that, they were able to comfortably share their thoughts, feelings, and challenges, most especially, towards the planning and implementation of Learning Action Cell (LAC).

Meanwhile, the LAC framework through CI Project BILLS underwent document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents and required that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin&Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007).

- **Data Analysis Plan**

The data collected underwent data analyis through coding and theming. In this qualitative research, the responses from the selected participants wwere marked multiple times and in different segments. Therefore, the similarities among answers will be itentified. The code set was then used for analysis and interpretation (Pritp, Naval & Carey, 2017).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTION

Challenges Encountered by TA Providers in LAC Implementation

QUESTION	RESPONSES	THEME/CODE	FREQUENCY
	"The challenges in conducting LAC session are the scheduling of the date and time wherein it has to be conducted, the availability of teachers, the implementation of activities and framework as well as the funding."	-schedule/time -LAC framework -Source of funds	11 10 14
What are the challenges you encountered in LAC implementation?	"Time schedule and documents required begore to conduct LAC"	-schedule/time -attachments	9 17
	"Selection of Topics, Teacher's Participation, Strategies in Implementing the Session"	-topics/content -LAC implementation itself	11 8

	"Many attachments and proposal"	-proposal	17
		-attachments	17
	"Working on the Idea or Title of LAC"	-LAC Title	11
	budget, resources and process	-Budget	14
		-resources	9

The table showed the challenges encountered by Technical Assistance providers in LAC Implementation. Out of 26 respondents, 17 of them or 65% showed difficulty in crafting the proposals and securing necessary attachments. Their next concern was budget or source of funds and other resources. Other secondary reasons why TA providers/LAC leaders struggle in LAC implementations were scheduling of teacher-participants and technical working committee, their understanding on the existing LAC framework, selecting topics an content, fomulating LAC title, and the LAC Implementation itself.

Implication of Challenges Encountered by TA Providers in Actual Implementation

| QUESTION	RESPONSES	THEME/CODE	FREQUENCY
	"Had conducted none due to complex process. Instead, FGD was implemented."	-did not concuct LAC	11
		-conducted FGD instead	11
How do you think will these challenges affect LAC Implementation	"Teacher-participants found the session inconvenient."	-teacher-participants's inconvenience	9
	"No proposal submiited."	-did not submit proposal	14
	"Failed to invite Monitoring and Evaluation Team"	-absence of M&E	15
	"Lack of follow up if the LAC session really helped the teacher-participants."	-no monitoring of teacher's performance	16
	"Teacher-participantsshowed lack of motivation toattend and participate in theLAC."	-lack of motivation and participation of teacher-participants	11

The table showed the observations which TA providers noticed about the LAC implementation in general. Furthermore, the challenges they have shared in table 1 lead to the results in the conduct of LAC.

It can be gleaned form the table that due to challenges encountered in LAC implementation by LAC leaders, the monitoring of teachers' performance was taken for granted. This activity should identify if the LAC session conducted helped teachers improved in the identified weakness, which was why LAC was conducted. 16 out of 26 or 61% of them shared this observation.

The absence of monitoring and evaluation team was found as another reason on the low success rate of LAC implementation. This is followed by the none submission of proposal. Thus, 11 out of 26 or 42% chose not to conduct LAC at all and resorted to conduct Focus Group Discussion (FGD) instead.

Meanwhile, TA providers also observed that teacher-participants demonstarted less motivation and participation in the LAC session, through the TA's initiative, ther have found out that teachers schedule have conflict with the LAC activity and the LAC topics are no longer new to the teacher-participants. These reasons affected the implementtaion of LAC in general.

Diagram: Current LAC Implementation in Mayamot National High School based on the Technical Assitance (TA) Providers
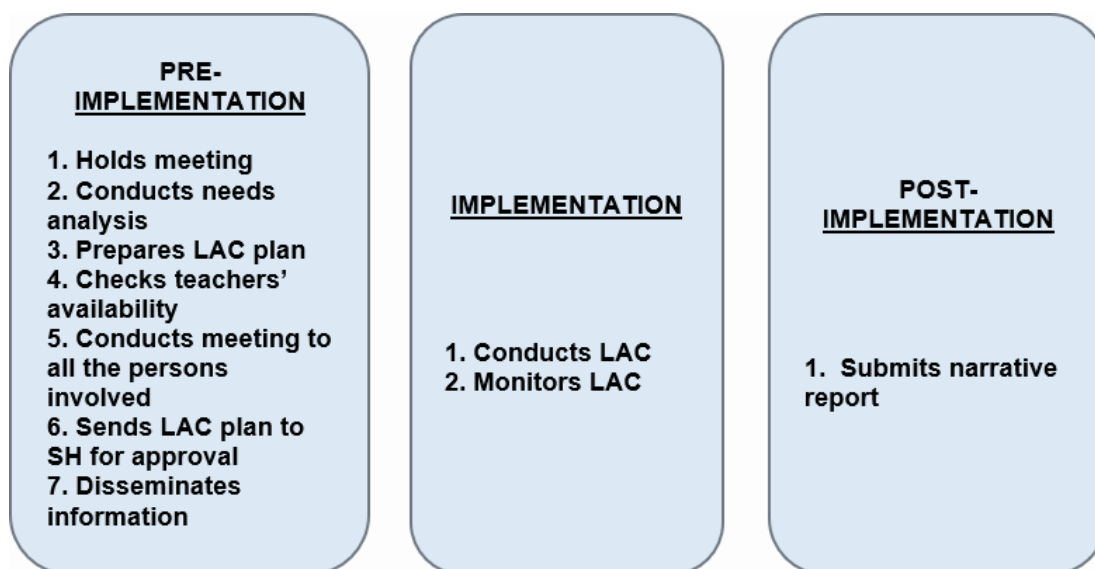
The diagram showed the school's practice in LAC implementation based on the interview of CIP BILLS to the TA providers such as Head Teachers and Master Teachers. Though Learning Action Cell (LAC) is defined and explained, in DepEd Order # 35 se. 2016, it seemed that confusion still arose on the current school's practice on LAC.

Though needs analyis, was identified as sub-step in the pre implementation, Table 1 clearly showed that LAC leaders found identifying topic for LAC a challenge and this resulted in teachers' lack of motivation and participation during the LAC session as presesnted in Table 2.

TA providers in general practiced crafting LAC plan, yet as shown in Table 1, 17 or 65% of them have difficulties in crafting proposal and securing attachments. Also, TA providers, as shown in the diagram, considered teacher's schedule, yet in Table 2, they have noticed that teachers found the LAC session inconvenient due to conflict with classes and other teacher-related activities.

Meanwhile, the diagram showed that under pre-implementation, people involved conducted meeting and it seemed that Monitoring and Evaluation team was not invited as shown in Table 2 which resulted to lack of

follow up on monitoring if the LAC helped teachers' performance as shown in the same Table.

In the implementation, the presence of M&E became evident. However, as M&E functions, it should be part of the entire process from the pre-implementation, implementation and until post-implementation.

Consequently, the absence of M&E in the post-implementation resulted to the enabling problems of teacher-participants in applying the learnings acquired in the LAC session as shown in Table 2.

In conclusion, the TA providers shared their struggles and challenges in LAC implementation. The results of those identified challenges showed great effect in the implementation itself and its purpose of improving and helping teachers.

In a brighter side, those TA providers also showed willingness to adapt to better practices of the school in LAC Implementation.
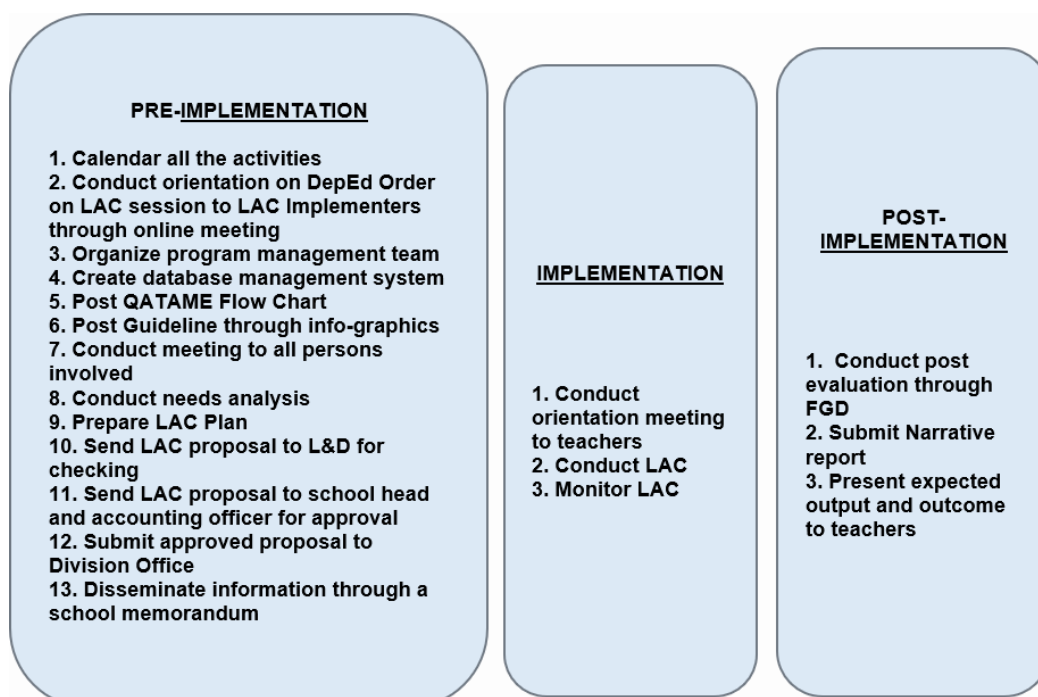
INNOVATION, INTERVENTION, AND STRATEGY

The results of the study became one of the bases of the designed school-based LAC framework. Mostly, the innovation used in the school to improve LAC session was based on the CIP BILLS, Boosting and Improving LAC Leaders and Strategies.

The researchers, and at the same time, CI members were able to improve the LAC implementation process. In general, the team was able to produce a school-based LAC implementation. The diagram below shows the improved LAC process.

After the conduct of the study, the researchers together with CI Project BILLS team spearheaded a LAC session to the LAC Implementers via Google Meet or Zoom. The newly designed school-based LAC framework was introduced and was subjected for pilot testing. Its effectiveness will open another research opportunity as well which will focus on its effectiveness.

Diagram: Newly Introduced LAC Process through CI Project BILLS

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

1. Calendar all the activities
2. Conduct orientation on DepEd Order on LAC session to LAC Implementers through online meeting
3. Organize program management team
4. Create database management system
5. Post QATAME Flow Chart
6. Post Guideline through info-graphics
7. Conduct meeting to all persons involved
8. Conduct needs analysis
9. Prepare LAC Plan
10. Send LAC proposal to L&D for checking
11. Send LAC proposal to school head and accounting officer for approval
12. Submit approved proposal to Division Office
13. Disseminate information through a school memorandum

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Conduct orientation meeting to teachers
2. Conduct LAC
3. Monitor LAC

POST-IMPLEMENTATION

1. Conduct post evaluation through FGD
2. Submit Narrative report
3. Present expected output and outcome to teachers

In the diagram, it can be observed a more detailed, organized and systematic conduct of LAC. The most evident improvements are the following: 1. Presence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) all throughout the process, 2. Intervention of Learning and Development (L&D) Coordinator, 3. Posting of QATAME flow chart, 4. Proper conduct of LAC, 5. Presentation of LAC outputs and outcomes.

Moreover, technical assistance spearheaded by L&D coordinator are provided to LAC implementers. As a matter of fact, LAC leaders are paired like "Buddy-buddy" system was conducted to share best practices among them. Those with approved proposals from Division Office are paired with those who were working on the LAC from the crafting of proposal to its implementation. Another improvement of the LAC process was the approval and technical assistance from the Division Office whether the LAC involves MOOE budget or not.

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