Learning Action Cell Sessions and Teachers' Lesson Plan Annotations for Indigenous Learners

An Action Research Proposal

[Copy for blind review: the proponents' names, positions, school and schools division are removed. The final copy lists them here.]

To be conducted December 2026 to May 2027

Learning Action Cell Sessions and Teachers' Lesson Plan Annotations for Indigenous Learners

I. Context and Rationale

Since November 9, 2026, a public school teacher whose class has no learners from indigenous groups is rated on how they would teach such learners, from annotations in a lesson plan. Memorandum DM-OSEC-OUHRODI-2026-0003, which took "immediate effect upon the issuance of this Memorandum" (Department of Education [DepEd], 2026a, item 26), gives each teacher one evaluative classroom observation in Term 2 or Term 3 of School Year 2026–2027 (item 11). A teacher whose class has learners from indigenous groups is observed on the indicator of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) under Strand 3.5, and that rating also counts for Strand 3.2 (item 15.a). A teacher whose class has none is observed on Strand 3.2, and "these teachers shall annotate their lesson plans to indicate culturally appropriate teaching strategies that may be employed to address the learning needs of learners from indigenous groups, consistent with the indicator under PPST Strand 3.5. These annotations shall serve as the basis for a separate rating under Strand 3.5" (item 15.b). The school year's rating tools accept as evidence an "Annotated lesson plan from any class period/sessions highlighting possible teaching strategies for learners from indigenous groups" and require only one such document (DepEd, 2026b).

Neither the memorandum nor the tools say what a good annotation contains. The tools' descriptors for Strand 3.5 name only the levels of the Classroom Observation Tool (COT), and the COT rubric describes what an

observer sees in a lesson: at Level 5, “The teacher employs strategies which are culturally appropriate in addressing the learning needs of learners from indigenous groups”; at Level 6, “a variety of strategies”; at Level 7, strategies for the “individual and group of learners from indigenous groups” (DepEd, 2025a, Annex E-1, p. 48). An annotation is a few lines on paper, written for learners the teacher does not have. Which of these words it can show, and how a rater should read it, are left to each school.

All 36 teachers of Grades 1 to 6 in our school fall under item 15.b. None of their classes has a learner whose enrollment record declares membership in an indigenous cultural community; the three Kindergarten teachers each handle a class with such a learner and are observed under item 15.a. An indigenous peoples learner is “a learner born of either or both parents who are IP as defined in R.A. No. 8371” (DepEd, 2025b, Sec. IV.g), and the record depends on families declaring it: the Basic Education Development Plan notes that “a degree of trust is a prerequisite to self-disclosure of IP identity” (DepEd, 2022, Sec. 3.1.2). Our classes may therefore include learners whose families have not declared it, and they may receive transferees from the upland districts of our schools division, where several indigenous cultural communities live. Nationally, “IP learners are in 41,731 public schools nationwide, or 79.19% of all public schools. IP learners represented 9.48% of enrollment in SY 2019-2020” (DepEd, 2022, Sec. 3.1.3).

The annotations carry two risks besides an uncertain rating. The first is the one Castagno and Brayboy (2008) name in their review of the writing on culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth, advocated for over

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40 years: they suggest that it "has had little impact on what teachers do because it is too easily reduced to essentializations, meaningless generalizations, or trivial anecdotes" (Abstract). An annotation such as "IP learners learn best through hands-on activities" assigns one trait to many peoples. In the Philippines, the implementation of the education provisions of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act has been described as "more of a tokenism" (Eduardo & Gabriel, 2021, Abstract). The second risk is harm to the communities themselves. DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2014 lists the concerns that communities raised, among them that "Indigenous knowledge is being tackled in class with interpretations and understanding not validated with the community," and rules that "Indigenous clothing or garments should not be referred to as 'costume' since the cultural context of these materials is not for show" (DepEd, 2014, Policy Background; On the Use of Indigenous Clothing and Related Paraphernalia). The Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework adds that teaching strategies "coming from outside the community shall be discussed with the community" (DepEd, 2015, Sec. V.B.2.c). A teacher who annotates without these rules in mind can plan exactly what the policies forbid.

What should a good annotation do instead? Ladson-Billings (1995) set three criteria for culturally relevant teaching: "an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (p. 483). The first two can show in a lesson plan: a strategy that keeps the lesson's competency and starts from what learners bring. The COT rubric's own clarifications point

the same way, defining learning needs as “essential learning tools (literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes)” and culture-based education as “an education that is grounded in the context of the indigenous communities’ life” (DepEd, 2025a, Annex E-1, p. 49). Studies of culturally responsive teaching in the Philippines have so far examined teachers who already teach indigenous learners: Tañon et al. (2026) found that teachers without training in Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) who were assigned Subanen learners adapted through “contextualization, translanguaging, use of indigenous materials, and collaborative learning” (Discussion). The teachers item 15.b addresses have no such learners in their classes.

How teachers learn to plan this way is less settled than the advocacy suggests. A systematic review of in-service programs for culturally responsive practice found “just 10 empirical studies” of their impact, and “none employed rigorous design features to allow causal inference” (Bottiani et al., 2018, p. 367). The review advises programs that coach teachers, let them practice and refine new skills on the job, and monitor and reinforce what they do in class (Bottiani et al., 2018). Teachers in a professional learning community on culturally responsive teaching changed their attitudes, but “need more time and detailed information on how to improve teaching materials” (Alhanachi et al., 2021, Abstract). In a randomized trial, teams of educators assigned to lesson study with a resource kit improved their own and their students’ knowledge of fractions more than the comparison teams (Lewis & Perry,

2017), and feedback from a teacher educator improved written lesson plans more than self-evaluation or peer evaluation (Ozogul et al., 2008).

DepEd already has the structure for such work. A Learning Action Cell (LAC) "is a group of teachers who engage in collaborative learning sessions to solve shared challenges encountered in the school" (DepEd, 2016a, item 9), and the memorandum names LAC sessions among the formative support schools may give (DepEd, 2026a, item 6). LAC sessions continue "within the Instructional Block" of the three-term calendar (DepEd, 2026c, item 22). The new lesson planning guidelines give the annotation a home: the ILAW plan's part "Opportunities for integration and contextualization" asks teachers to "incorporate relevant real-life, cultural, or community-based contexts that enrich learner understanding and engagement" (DepEd, 2026d, item 7.b.iv), and teachers "shall not be required to include components beyond those prescribed in the framework" (item 10).

This action research will test whether a three-session LAC series, built on a four-question annotation protocol and exemplar annotations, improves the quality of the annotations our teachers write, without adding a form, a separate plan or a rating that the memorandum does not allow. It addresses the Basic Education Research Agenda's theme of teaching and learning, whose topics on instruction include "Continuing professional development and support (e.g. coaching and mentoring, Learning Action Cell [LAC])," "Lesson planning and creation of Instructional Materials (IMs)," and "Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd)," and its cross-cutting theme of inclusive education (DepEd, 2016b).

II. Action Research Questions

Main question: Does a three-session Learning Action Cell series with a four-question annotation protocol and exemplar annotations improve the quality of the lesson plan annotations for learners from indigenous groups written by teachers whose classes have no declared learners from indigenous groups?

1. How do the teachers' weekly annotation scores, in total and on each of the rubric's four criteria, compare before and after their cluster's LAC series?
2. Does each cluster's annotation quality change when its own series begins, while the clusters still waiting stay as they were?
3. Is there a significant difference between the teachers' mean annotation scores before and after their cluster's LAC series?
4. Is there a significant difference between the teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching before and after the LAC series?
5. What do the teachers' reflection notes say about writing strategies for learners from indigenous groups whom they do not now teach?

Two null hypotheses will be tested at the .05 level of significance:

$H_0 1$: There is no significant difference between the teachers' mean annotation scores before and after their cluster's LAC series.

$H_0 2$: There is no significant difference between the teachers' culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy scores before and after the LAC series.

III. Proposed Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy

Innovation

The innovation is a four-question protocol for writing a Strand 3.5 annotation, with exemplar annotations for the lessons our teachers teach. Each question turns one part of the memorandum's sentence, or one rule on the use of indigenous culture, into something a teacher writes (Table 1).

Table 1

The Four-Question Annotation Protocol

Question	What the annotation states	Words of the COT rubric for Strand 3.5 it can show	What it avoids
1. What may I do?	A strategy concrete enough for another teacher to carry out	"culturally appropriate" (Level 5)	A good intention with no action ("respect IP culture")
2. Which learning need does it address?	The literacy, oral expression, numeracy, problem solving, knowledge, skill, value or attitude the competency asks for	"learning needs" (Levels 1 to 7 and 9); "individual and group of learners" (Level 7)	A trait given to a whole people ("IP learners are visual learners")
3. Where in the lesson?	The part of the ILAW plan, the step, and how the teacher will check that it worked	"a variety of strategies" (Level 6), with a check that it worked or strategies at two or more parts	"During the lesson," with no step
4. Whose context, and how would I learn it properly?	The learner's own community, and the channel through which its knowledge would be learned and checked: the learner and family, the Division IPEd Focal Person, culture bearers the community recommends	"contextualization" (Level 9); learners "suggest ways in which instruction or lessons might be modified or contextualized" (Level 8)	Costume, imitation, artifacts or symbols without permission, and knowledge not validated with the community (DepEd, 2014)

Note. The level words are quoted from DepEd (2025a, Annex E-1, p. 48). Which words an annotation can show on paper is the protocol's reading; no DepEd issuance converts an annotation into a COT level.

Teachers write the annotation in the ILAW plan they already prepare for the week, in its part “Opportunities for integration and contextualization” or as a note beside the step it changes. DepEd’s lesson planning guide already allows short notes: teachers “may use brief notes, integrated responses, or omit sections that are not applicable” (DepEd, 2026d, Annex B). The protocol card is a guide for that writing, not a form; schools “shall not require additional or expanded lesson plan templates, supplementary forms, or documentation” (DepEd, 2026d, item 21). Teachers write the annotations themselves, since DepEd bars the use of artificial intelligence for “designing learning experiences and instructional strategies (i.e. the ILAW Framework)” (DepEd, 2026d, item 25.a).

Intervention

The intervention is a series of three weekly LAC sessions of 60 minutes for each grade-level cluster, held on Fridays from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., after classes, within Term 3’s Instructional Block (Table 2). A one-hour weekly session is the length DepEd recommends: “One to two hours a week is strongly recommended” (DepEd, 2016a, item 17.5). The school’s LAC coordinator, a Teacher III, facilitates the sessions; on the two Fridays when two clusters meet, the school’s research coordinator leads one of them with the same session plan.

Table 2

The Three Sessions of the LAC Series

Session	Focus	What the teachers do	What they leave with
1	The indicator and the protocol	Read item 15.b and the COT rubric's words for Strand 3.5; sort six exemplar annotations by the four questions they answer; mark the ones that essentialize or break DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2014; draft an annotation for the next week's own lesson plan	A first draft and the protocol card
2	Feedback on the drafts	Exchange drafts in groups of three and write, for each of the four questions, one thing the draft does and one thing to add; read the facilitator's written comments on each draft; revise	A revised annotation
3	Where cultural content needs consent	Study the rules of DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2014 and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2015 with the Division IPEd Focal Person, invited as resource person; rewrite one annotation so that its fourth answer names the channel; plan the next weeks' annotations	An annotation that answers all four questions

Note. A closing session for all three clusters on March 12, 2027, after the last annotation is collected, shares one annotation from each teacher and lists what the school still needs, as DepEd Order No. 35, s. 2016 asks members to "report back" (item 19).

The design of the sessions follows the evidence above. Teachers practice on their own lesson plans (Bottiani et al., 2018), with a resource kit (Lewis & Perry, 2017) that holds the protocol card, the COT rubric's page for Strand 3.5, the relevant rules of DepEd Orders No. 51, s. 2014 and No. 32, s. 2015, and exemplar annotations for three lessons of Term 3's budgets of work. Feedback is written and tied to the four questions. A study of lesson study in a Philippine school found that "cultural norms often hinder open critique,"

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naming *pakikisama* and *hiya* (Espinosa & Elipane, 2025, Abstract), and written comments by question make it easier to say what a colleague's draft lacks. The facilitator's comments name what a draft does and one thing to add; they carry no level, score or mark, because formative activities "shall not … generate unofficial performance ratings" (DepEd, 2026a, item 10).

Strategy

The intervention reaches the three clusters in turn, in an order drawn by lot, and every consenting teacher writes one short annotation a week in the lesson plan they already prepare. The clusters still waiting show what happens to annotations in the same weeks without the series, under the same memorandum and the same observation season. The extent of the intervention is small by design: about ten minutes a week of writing in an existing plan, three sessions, and no new document. The memorandum itself warns against more: teachers "shall not be required to create, reproduce, reformat, print, bind, or otherwise repack documents solely for PMES" (DepEd, 2026a, item 18).

The study has limits that the proponents state at the outset. It measures what teachers plan, not what learners from indigenous groups learn, since no such learner is in the participating classes. It does not test whether a strategy works with any community, and it collects nothing from or about any community. A three-session series cannot replace the partnership between a school and a community that IPEd rests on (DepEd, 2015, Sec. V.A.1); it can only teach teachers when and through whom to seek it.

Five criteria for success are set before any data are collected:

1. The series runs as planned: every session follows at least 90% of the steps on the documenter's checklist, and at least 90% of the participating teachers attend all three sessions or a make-up session within the same week.
2. The raters agree: a quadratic-weighted kappa of at least .60 on each criterion, and an intraclass correlation for the total score whose 95% confidence interval has a lower bound of at least .75.
3. Visual analysis shows an improvement in each of the three clusters when, and only when, its own series begins.
4. The teachers' mean annotation scores after the series are higher than before, significant at the .05 level.
5. The annotation stays small: the teachers' median time spent on an annotation is no more than 15 minutes.

IV. Action Research Methods

Research Design

The study uses mixed methods. Its quantitative strand is a multiple-baseline design across three grade-level clusters, with the order in which the clusters start drawn by lot, and its qualitative strand is a reflexive thematic analysis of the teachers' LAC reflection notes. The two strands are analyzed separately and compared at the end.

In a multiple-baseline design, each cluster is measured repeatedly before and after the intervention, and the intervention starts at a different time in each. If annotation quality rises in each cluster when its own series

starts, and not when another cluster's starts, the change is hard to explain by anything but the series. The What Works Clearinghouse's standards for single-case designs ask for "at least three attempts to demonstrate an intervention effect at three different points in time," and for a phase to count, it "must have a minimum of three data points" (Kratochwill et al., 2010, p. 15). A multiple-baseline design meets the standards with reservations with "a minimum of six phases with at least 3 data points per phase," and meets them fully with at least 5 (p. 16). Three clusters give six phases, and the schedule in Table 3 gives every phase at least three weekly data points.

The design resembles a stepped-wedge trial, in which clusters cross from control to intervention in a random order until all have it (Hemming et al., 2015). With three clusters, the analyses of such trials do not apply well, and its main threat applies fully: since more clusters have the intervention late in the study, "the effect of the intervention might be confounded with any underlying temporal trend" (Hemming et al., 2015, Summary points). The multiple-baseline reading answers that threat by watching the clusters still waiting.

One threat is particular to a single school: teachers of a waiting cluster may see the protocol card or the exemplars before their own series begins. The resource kits are given out at each cluster's first session, teachers are asked not to pass them on before the closing session, and each week's slip asks whether the teacher has seen the protocol; annotations from teachers who have are flagged in the analysis.

The order of the clusters will be drawn by lot on Friday, January 8, 2027, in front of the participating teachers; the two raters are not present and are not told the order. Each of the six possible orders has the same chance. The lot keeps the proponents from starting with the cluster they expect to do best, and it allows a randomization test (Koehler & Levin, 1998), though with six orders such a test cannot give a *p* value below 1/6, or about .17.

Table 3

Schedule of the LAC Series and the Weekly Annotations, Term 3, School Year 2026–2027

Cluster, by the lot	LAC sessions (Fridays)	Weeks before the series	Weeks after it began
First	January 22, January 29 and February 5, 2027	Weeks 1 to 3 (3 annotations)	Weeks 4 to 10 (7)
Second	February 5, February 12 and February 19, 2027	Weeks 1 to 5 (5)	Weeks 6 to 10 (5)
Third	February 19, February 26 and March 5, 2027	Weeks 1 to 7 (7)	Weeks 8 to 10 (3)

Note. Week 1 begins January 4, 2027, the first day of Term 3, and week 10 ends March 12, 2027 (DepEd, 2026c, Annex B). The annotation of a week is handed in by noon on Friday, before that day's session, so a week with a cluster's first session still counts as before the series. Weeks 11 and 12 hold the Term 3 examinations (March 15–16 for moving-up and graduating learners, March 22–23 for other grade levels) and no data are collected.

a. Participants and/or other Sources of Data and Information

The participants will be all 36 teachers of Grades 1 to 6 of our school in School Year 2026–2027, six advisers in each grade, whose classes have no learner declared as a member of an indigenous cultural community. No sample is drawn: every teacher whom item 15.b covers in the school is invited. The three Kindergarten teachers, whose classes have such learners, are not participants. The school has no Master Teacher, so the school head rates every teacher in the Performance Management and Evaluation System

(PMES), with the Assistant Schools Division Superintendent as approving authority (DepEd, 2025a, Table 18). The teachers already meet in three grade-level LACs, which become the study's clusters (Table 4); DepEd allows LACs of "five (5) to 15 members" grouped "by key stage, grade level, learning area, or programs offered by the school" (DepEd, 2016a, item 17.3).

Table 4

Participants by Cluster

Cluster	Grade levels	Teachers	Learning areas they plan for
A	Grades 1 and 2	12	All learning areas of their grade
B	Grades 3 and 4	12	All learning areas of their grade
C	Grades 5 and 6	12	All learning areas of their grade
Total		36	

Note. Cluster letters name the grade pairs; the lot decides which cluster is first, second and third.

Sample Size

The number of teachers is fixed by the school. For the third research question, each teacher gives a pair of scores, the mean before and the mean after the series. With 36 pairs, a two-sided paired test at α = .05 has 80% power to detect a standardized mean difference of d_z = 0.48, computed in Python's statsmodels (Seabold & Perktold, 2010); a Wilcoxon signed-rank test needs slightly more. A meta-analysis of 60 causal studies of teacher coaching found "pooled effect sizes of 0.49 standard deviations (SD) on instruction" (Kraft et al., 2018, p. 547). Those effects compare coached teachers with others in standard deviations of the outcome, while d_z is in standard deviations of each teacher's change; the two match when a teacher's before

and after means correlate at about .5, so the study can detect an effect of that size if they correlate at least that much. One cluster of 12 teachers alone could detect only d_z = 0.89, so the comparisons within a cluster are descriptive. Teachers in a cluster share a facilitator and a session, so their scores are not fully independent, which lowers the effective number of pairs; the proponents report this as a limit.

Other Sources of Data and Information

Besides the teachers' annotations, self-ratings and reflection notes, the study uses the documenters' checklists and attendance sheets of the LAC sessions, the teachers' note of the minutes each annotation took, and the school's enrollment records only to confirm which classes have declared learners from indigenous groups.

Consent and Withdrawal

The LAC series is the school's professional development on a requirement every teacher must meet, so every teacher attends it. The study's own tasks are for consenting teachers only: the weekly annotations it collects and the self-efficacy scale. A teacher who declines writes only the one annotated lesson plan PMES asks for (DepEd, 2026b), and their reflection notes stay in the LAC's records. At the orientation on Monday, January 4, 2027, after classes, the proponents will explain the study and give each teacher a consent form; a teacher returns it signed or not, in a sealed envelope, to the research coordinator by January 7. A teacher may withdraw at any time by telling the research coordinator, without giving a reason; their data are then removed. Taking part, declining and withdrawing have no effect

on any teacher's performance rating, and the school head, who rates every participant in PMES, will not know who consented.

b. Data Gathering Methods

The data gathering methods follow the questions: weekly annotations scored with a rubric answer the first three questions, a self-efficacy scale the fourth, and reflection notes the fifth. Table 5 links each instrument to its question and its timing.

Table 5

Instruments, Research Questions and Timing

Instrument	Research questions	Who gives it	When
Annotation rubric, applied to one annotated lesson plan a week	1, 2, 3	Two trained raters, blind to the teacher and to the order of the clusters	Annotations from weeks 1 to 10, rated March 15–24, 2027
Culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy scale, 8 items	4	The teachers themselves	Week 1 (January 8) and week 10 (March 12, 2027)
Reflection notes, three prompts	5	The teachers themselves	At the end of each of their three LAC sessions
Documenter's checklist and attendance	Success criterion 1	Each session's documenter	Every session
Minutes spent on the annotation	Success criterion 5	The teachers themselves	Every week, on the slip clipped to the copy

The Annotation Rubric

The rubric scores each annotation on four criteria, one for each question of the protocol, from 0 to 3 (Appendix A). Its level descriptors use the words of the COT rubric for Strand 3.5 that an annotation can show on paper ("culturally appropriate," "a variety of strategies," "individual and group of learners," learners who "suggest ways" the lesson might be "contextualized")

and the rules of DepEd Orders No. 51, s. 2014 and No. 32, s. 2015. The fourth criterion gives its lowest score to an annotation that plans what those orders forbid or that stereotypes a people, and its highest to one tied to a specific community's context through the channels those orders name. Scores range from 0 to 12. The rubric is analytic and specific to its topic, and the raters train on scored exemplars, the conditions under which rubrics give reliable scores (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). The rubric's scores are research data only: they are not COT levels, and no score is converted into one.

Content validity will be checked by eight reviewers in December 2026: the Division IPEd Focal Person, the schools division's Senior Education Program Specialist for planning and research, a Public Schools District Supervisor, two Head Teachers of IPEd-implementing schools in the division, a school head of another school, and two teachers who teach learners from indigenous groups. Each reviewer will rate each criterion, each level descriptor and each item of the self-efficacy scale as "essential," "useful but not essential," or "not necessary." For each, the content validity ratio is CVR = $(n_e - N/2) / (N/2)$, where n_e is the number of reviewers who rate it essential and N the number of reviewers (Lawshe, 1975). With eight reviewers, the critical value is .75 in both Lawshe's table and Ayre and Scally's (2014) exact recalculation, so a descriptor or item stays only if at least seven reviewers call it essential; one that does not is revised and rated again.

Raters and Their Training

The two raters are Kindergarten teachers of our school. They teach learners from indigenous groups, rate no teacher in PMES, take no part in the

LAC series, and are not told which teacher wrote an annotation or the order of the clusters. They will be trained in two 90-minute sessions in weeks 8 and 9, after classes, on 45 anchor annotations that the proponents write for other lessons of the budgets of work: 15 scored anchors to study and two sets of 15 for practice; no study annotation is used in training. Following the frame-of-reference method, the raters first study the rubric with the scored anchors until they share one picture of each level (Roch et al., 2012). Each then scores a set of 15 practice annotations alone, the weighted kappa is computed, the disagreements are discussed and the descriptors' wording is clarified, and the round is repeated with the second set until the kappa reaches at least .60 on every criterion, the minimum the What Works Clearinghouse accepts for Cohen's kappa (Kratochwill et al., 2010, p. 15); if a third round is needed, the first set is scored again in a new order. Koh (2013) trained raters in rounds in the same way and reached at least .80 before rating the rest of a study's lesson activities, and the proponents aim for .80, since quadratic weights usually give a higher kappa than the unweighted statistic on a scale of ordered levels. Setting this level before rating, and reporting it, is the usual practice when raters are trained (Hallgren, 2012).

The Self-Efficacy Scale

Self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching will be measured with the eight items of Comstock et al. (2023), on their scale of 0 to 10. Comstock et al. adapted the items from the scales of Guyton and Wesche (2005) and Siwatu (2007), shortened them in their published table, and published them under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license. Their items speak of "my

students"; since our teachers have no learners from indigenous groups, a stem is added, "How confident are you that you could do the following for learners from indigenous groups, if they were in your class?", and the words for the learners change (Appendix B). The reworded items go through the same content validation as the rubric, and Cronbach's alpha is computed at both administrations, with .70 as the least acceptable. At both administrations every teacher receives the scale with a printed code and drops it, filled in or blank, into a closed box, so no one sees who answered; the research coordinator, who holds the key, keeps only consenting teachers' sheets and shreds the rest. Self-reports of culturally responsive practice are prone to social desirability bias (Bottiani et al., 2018), which is why the scale is secondary to the blind-rated annotations.

Reflection Notes

At the end of each session, each teacher writes a short note in answer to three prompts: what they changed in their annotation and why; what they still do not know about the learners their annotation is written for; and what would help them write it better. The notes are part of the LAC's own documentation (DepEd, 2016a, item 35.6); only those of consenting teachers are copied for analysis.

Procedure

Each consenting teacher will hand the research coordinator a photocopy or photograph of one annotated lesson plan of the week by noon on Friday, from week 1 (January 4–8, 2027) to week 10 (March 8–12, 2027): 360 annotations if all consent. The teacher chooses the lesson. A slip clipped

to the copy records the minutes the annotation took and, before the teacher's own series, whether they have seen the protocol card. The research coordinator types each annotation, with the lesson's competency, into a rating file under a random code and keeps the key; names, dates, grade levels and sections are removed. The competency stays, since an annotation is read against it, so a rater could infer the grade band, which is the cluster, and from the budget of work roughly the week. The raters are therefore not told the order of the clusters and are not present at the lot, and for one annotation in ten they record their guess of its phase, which is reported as a check on blinding. After week 10, the 360 annotations are shuffled into one order, with 36 of them repeated to check whether a rater's standards drift, and each rater scores all of them alone, after classes from March 15 to 24, 2027, around the end-of-year early childhood development checklist their own classes take from March 15 to 19 (DepEd, 2026c, Annex B). Agreement is computed before any discussion; the score analyzed is the mean of the two raters' totals.

Data Recording and Storage

Paper forms are kept in a locked cabinet in the research coordinator's room, and the typed files in a password-protected folder on the school's laptop. Only the research coordinator holds the key that links codes to names, and it is destroyed when the report is accepted. A teacher's name, scores and notes are personal information under the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173, Sec. 3(g)). No personal information will be entered into any artificial intelligence tool, which DepEd prohibits (DepEd, 2026e, Sec. VI.1.3), and the study uses no such tool for its data.

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Keeping Research Scores Out of PMES

The rubric's scores are produced by the two raters, held by the research coordinator, and reported only as cluster medians and group statistics. No teacher's score is shown to the school head, the facilitator or any PMES rater, and none is used in PMES. The teacher chooses which annotated plan to submit as PMES evidence, and the school head, the teacher's rater, rates it under DepEd's rules. Every cluster finishes its series by March 5, 2027, before the year-end performance review, so a teacher in the cluster drawn last loses nothing in PMES.

Scope: No Indigenous Community Is Studied

The study's participants are teachers, and its data are their annotations, self-ratings and reflection notes. It recruits no learner, collects no information from or about any indigenous community, and documents no Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs). DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017's provisions for researches "that will involve Indigenous Peoples (IP) learners, Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs), Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs), and Indigenous Learning Systems (ILSs)" (DepEd, 2017, Sec. V.B.ii.a) therefore do not apply. An annotation names what a teacher "may" do. A lesson that would actually draw on a specific community's knowledge or cultural expressions lies outside the study and needs that community's permission through the Division IPEd Focal Person, as DepEd Orders No. 51, s. 2014 and No. 32, s. 2015 require. If the design were ever changed to consult elders, record community knowledge or include learners from indigenous groups, it would need the community's consent

before any planning (DepEd, 2017, Annex 9) and would be resubmitted for review.

c. Data Analysis Plan

The analysis follows the five questions. Table 6 summarizes it.

Table 6

Data Analysis by Research Question

Research question	Data	Analysis
1. Scores before and after	Mean of the two raters' scores, total and by criterion	Each teacher's mean before and after; the cluster's median and range
2. Change when each series begins	Weekly cluster medians of the total score	Visual analysis of the multiple-baseline graph; nonoverlap of all pairs; randomization test over the six orders
3. Difference in mean scores ($H_0 1$)	Each teacher's mean before and after	Wilcoxon signed-rank test with the matched-pairs rank-biserial correlation; paired t test with d_z and its 95% confidence interval as a check
4. Difference in self-efficacy ($H_0 2$)	Each teacher's mean of the eight items, week 1 and week 10	Wilcoxon signed-rank test with the matched-pairs rank-biserial correlation; Cronbach's alpha
5. Reflection notes	108 notes, if all consent	Reflexive thematic analysis in six phases
Rater agreement	Both raters' scores of all 360 annotations	Quadratic-weighted kappa per criterion; intraclass correlation for the total

For the first question, each teacher's mean score before and after the series is described with the median and range of each cluster, in total and for each criterion, with the number of annotations the raters flag for planning what DepEd Orders No. 51, s. 2014 or No. 32, s. 2015 rule out.

For the second question, the weekly median of each cluster's total scores is plotted in three panels, one per cluster, with a line where its series begins. The graph is read for the six features the standards name: "level,"

"trend," "variability," "immediacy of the effect," "overlap," and "consistency of data patterns across similar phases" (Kratochwill et al., 2010, p. 18). An effect is demonstrated in a cluster when its median rises after its series begins and the clusters still waiting stay within their earlier range. The overlap between each cluster's weeks before and after is measured with the nonoverlap of all pairs (Parker & Vannest, 2009). A randomization test compares the mean change of the real order with the changes the five other orders would have given; it is reported, but with six orders its smallest possible p is about .17, so the conclusion rests on the graph and the effect sizes.

For the third question, each teacher's mean score after the series is compared with their mean before it in a Wilcoxon signed-rank test, two-sided, at the .05 level, with the matched-pairs rank-biserial correlation as its effect size (Kerby, 2014). A paired t test with d_z and the 95% confidence interval of the mean difference checks the result. This comparison does not adjust for time, as Hemming et al. (2015) warn of within-cluster comparisons, which is why the second question watches the waiting clusters. As a sensitivity analysis, a linear mixed model of the weekly scores will include the week and the cluster as fixed effects, whether the teacher's series has begun, and a random intercept for each teacher. With only three clusters, it is reported as exploratory.

For the fourth question, the same signed-rank test compares each teacher's self-efficacy in week 1 and week 10.

For the fifth question, the reflection notes are analyzed with reflexive thematic analysis in Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases: familiarizing

oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The phases are recursive, not a line (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). The first proponent, who facilitates the sessions, writes a reflexivity statement before coding, since reflexive thematic analysis treats the researcher's subjectivity as a resource and its themes as interpretations the researcher builds, not patterns waiting in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). No inter-coder agreement is computed for the notes: Braun and Clarke (2021) argue that measuring coding reliability does not fit reflexive thematic analysis. Agreement statistics belong to the rubric scores.

Rater agreement is computed before the raters discuss any score. For each criterion, the quadratic-weighted kappa (Cohen, 1968) is reported. For the total score, the intraclass correlation is computed as a two-way random-effects model of absolute agreement (Koo & Li, 2016), for a single rater, held to the threshold in the success criteria, and for the mean of the two raters, the score analyzed. The 36 repeated annotations give each rater's agreement with themselves. Pearson's correlation is not used for agreement, since two raters can correlate perfectly while one scores every annotation higher.

The analysis uses Microsoft Excel for the graphs, descriptive statistics and nonoverlap of all pairs; jamovi for the Wilcoxon and t tests and Cronbach's alpha; and Python, with the pingouin, scikit-learn and statsmodels packages, for the intraclass correlations, the weighted kappas, the randomization test and the mixed model. The reflection notes are coded in a spreadsheet.

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V. Action Research Work Plan and Timelines

The study runs from December 2026 to May 2027, within the six months DepEd allows a school-level action research funded by the Basic Education Research Fund (DepEd, 2017, Sec. V.C.i.2). Table 7 gives each activity, its dates and the persons responsible.

Table 7

Work Plan and Timelines

Activity	Dates	Persons responsible
Endorsement by the school head; submission to the Schools Division Office	November 27, 2026	Proponents, school head
Content validation of the rubric and the scale by eight reviewers; revisions	December 1–11, 2026	Proponents, reviewers
Expected action on the proposal by the Schools Division Office	By December 17, 2026	Schools Division Office
Anchor annotations and exemplar annotations written; resource kit printed	December 7–14, 2026	Proponents
Orientation; consent forms, returned by January 7	January 4, 2027	Proponents, school head
Lot for the order of the clusters; self-efficacy scale (first administration)	January 8, 2027	Proponents
Weekly annotations collected	January 4 to March 12, 2027 (weeks 1 to 10)	Teachers, research coordinator
LAC series, first cluster	January 22 and 29, February 5, 2027	Facilitator
LAC series, second cluster	February 5, 12 and 19, 2027	Facilitator, co-facilitator
LAC series, third cluster	February 19 and 26, March 5, 2027	Facilitator, co-facilitator
Rater training	February 22 to March 5, 2027 (weeks 8 and 9)	Proponents, raters
Self-efficacy scale (second administration); closing session for all clusters	March 12, 2027	Proponents, teachers
Rating of all annotations	March 15–24, 2027	Raters
Analysis; preliminary results at the INSET	March 29 to April 1, 2027; April 5, 2027	Proponents
Report writing and submission	May 10–31, 2027	Proponents

Activity	Dates	Persons responsible
Results to the School Governance Council and the Annual Implementation Plan	June 2027	Proponents, school head

Note. Dates follow DepEd Order No. 009, s. 2026, Annex B. No activity falls in the Year-End Break (December 19–31, 2026) or the teachers' end-of-school-year break (April 9 to May 9, 2027). The Schools Division Office's time comes from the DepEd Citizen's Charter 2026, which gives its service on research proposals a total of 11 days, 4 hours and 5 minutes.

VI. Cost Estimates

The study will be funded from the school's Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), since "Funds for the LACs may be sourced from the school's Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), subject to its utilization guidelines" (DepEd, 2016a, item 11). The LAC series is included in the school's Annual Implementation Plan for 2027, since school MOOE funds activities "as specifically determined in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP)" (DepEd, 2019, Sec. V.D, item 1). A grant from the Basic Education Research Fund follows its own yearly call and could not start in Term 3; any later application would follow that call. The budget has no meals, honoraria or equipment (Table 8).

Table 8

Cost Estimates

Activity	Item	Quantity	Unit cost (PhP)	Total (PhP)	Justification
LAC series	Bond paper, A4, 70 gsm	6 reams	260.00	1,560.00	Resource kits, consent forms, scales, reflection forms, rating files
LAC series	Black ink for the school's printer	4 bottles	350.00	1,400.00	Printing the same
LAC series	Plastic folders with slide fasteners	40	20.00	800.00	One resource kit for each of 36 teachers, the facilitator, the co-facilitator and the two raters

Activity	Item	Quantity	Unit cost (PhP)	Total (PhP)	Justification
LAC series	Manila paper	20 sheets	6.00	120.00	Sorting the exemplar annotations in Session 1
LAC series	Permanent markers	12	35.00	420.00	The same
LAC series	Sticky notes, 3 x 3 inches	6 pads	55.00	330.00	Written peer feedback in Session 2
Data gathering	Long brown envelopes	50	8.00	400.00	Sealed consent forms, each session's reflection notes and the rating files
Dissemination	Printing and binding of the report	4 copies	250.00	1,000.00	Copies for the school, the Schools Division Office, the LAC files and the proponents
Total				6,030.00	

VII. Plans for Dissemination and Utilization

The results will be shared first with the teachers who took part, then with the school's governance bodies and the schools division (Table 9). DepEd asks researchers to discuss results "in the area/office/governance level where the study was conducted, preferably attended by the respondents," and names LAC sessions, in-service training, the School Governing Council, the School Improvement Plan and the School Report Card as venues (DepEd, 2017, Sec. V.B.viii).

Table 9

Dissemination and Utilization Plan

Audience	Channel	Message	Timing	Evidence of use
The 36 teachers	Closing session; INSET	Which questions of the protocol their annotations answered better after the series, by cluster	March 12 and April 5, 2027	The protocol kept in the school's LAC plan for School Year 2027–2028
School head and LAC coordinator	Written summary	What the annotations show and what the series needs to continue	May 2027	The series in the 2028 Annual Implementation Plan

Audience	Channel	Message	Timing	Evidence of use
School Governance Council	Council meeting	What teachers now plan for learners from indigenous groups, and the school's channel to the IPEd office	June 2027	Minutes of the meeting
Schools Division Office	Report; division research forum, if one is held	The protocol, the rubric and the results	May 2027 onward	Requests for the kit from other schools

Note. The results describe teachers' plans. Any presentation that showed a community's knowledge would first need that community's permission (DepEd, 2017, Sec. VI.C); the study collects none.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Annotation Protocol and Rubric

The four criteria and their levels, 0 to 3, with the words of the COT rubric each level uses, are in the separate file of the rubric and annotation guide. Total scores range from 0 to 12. The scores are research data and are never converted into COT levels.

Appendix B. Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale

Stem: How confident are you that you could do the following for learners from indigenous groups, if they were in your class? Answer from 0 (not at all confident) to 10 (completely confident).

1. Adapting instruction to meet their needs.
2. Using a variety of teaching methods.
3. Using developmentally appropriate practices.
4. Creating positive relationships in the classroom.
5. Using their cultural backgrounds to help make learning meaningful.
6. Adapting instructional materials to appropriately represent cultural groups.
7. Helping them feel like important members of the classroom.
8. Explaining new concepts using examples from their everyday lives.

The items are adapted from Comstock et al. (2023, Table 2), whose article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license; Comstock et al. shortened the items for their table and adapted them from Guyton and Wesche (2005) and Siwatu (2007). The stem, the anchor words and the words for the learners are the proposal's.

Appendix C. Sample Annotated Lesson Plans

Three ILAW lesson plans from Term 3's budgets of work (Grade 2 Mathematics, Grade 4 Science, Grade 6 Science), each with an annotation that answers the four questions, are in the resource kit.

Appendix D. LAC Session Plans and Rater Training Protocol

The plans of the three sessions and the closing session, with the documenter's checklist, and the raters' training protocol are in a separate file.

Appendix E. Teacher Consent Form

The consent form is a separate file.