# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com  ISSN 2582-7421

# UNCOVERING CHALLENGES AND COPING PRACTICES IN PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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**ABSTRACT :**

This study explored multicultural literacy and teaching practices in promoting diversity in the classroom within the Province of Cotabato. Specifically, it examined the challenges encountered by teachers in fostering inclusivity and the coping practices they implement to address these barriers. Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach, the study gathered insights from key informant interviews with school administrators and educators. Thematic analysis revealed several challenges, including limited multicultural learning materials, time constraints, insufficient training, language barriers, and difficulties in managing diverse classrooms. Additionally, some teachers struggled with cultural unfamiliarity and avoided sensitive topics due to fear of conflict or discomfort among students.

To address these challenges, educators employed varied instructional strategies, such as contextualized examples, mother-tongue support, and locally sourced materials, ensuring relevance for diverse learners. Additionally, social-emotional learning, peer mentoring, learning action cell sessions, and community engagement emerged as key coping mechanisms in sustaining an inclusive classroom environment. Findings emphasize the importance of culturally responsive teaching, adequate resource allocation, and professional development programs in enhancing teacher preparedness and student inclusivity. This study contributes to the broader discourse on multicultural education, offering strategic recommendations for more inclusive classroom practices in culturally diverse settings.

## INTRODUCTION

Promoting diversity in the classroom presents significant challenges related to inclusion, representation, and equity. Teachers often struggle to integrate diverse perspectives while ensuring that every student feels valued and respected. This challenge is compounded by stereotypes, biases, and societal inequalities that affect teaching methods and materials, leading to disparities in student engagement and achievement.

Research underscores the importance of multicultural literacy and effective teaching practices in fostering diversity within educational settings. Landa and Stephens (2017) stated that multicultural literacy is crucial for creating an inclusive environment that honors students' diverse cultural backgrounds. Mancuso (2015) further emphasizes that educators with multicultural literacy are better prepared to integrate diverse perspectives into their teaching.

Multicultural literacy and effective teaching practices are essential for creating an inclusive environment where all students feel acknowledged and valued. Educators with multicultural literacy recognize and address cultural differences, tailoring their instruction to incorporate diverse perspectives (Awang-Hashim, Kaur, & Valdez, 2019). This approach enriches the educational experience, empowers marginalized students, and fosters a sense of belonging. Culturally responsive methods further reduce biases, promote cross-cultural understanding, and ensure equitable participation, leading to more inclusive classrooms. Such environments not only respect diversity but also equip students to thrive in an increasingly multicultural world (Canto, Jauregi, & van den Bergh, 2017).

Despite the recognized importance of multicultural literacy and teaching practices in promoting diversity, significant research gaps remain regarding their effective implementation and impact (Deal & Peterson, 2017). Much of the current literature focuses on theoretical frameworks rather than practical applications, leaving educators without concrete strategies to integrate these concepts into their classrooms. Additionally, Liu, Gill, and Li (2021) note a lack of empirical research on the outcomes of these practices related to student engagement, academic achievement, and social dynamics. There is an urgent need to explore multicultural literacy training programs for teachers and assess their long-term effects on classroom inclusivity.

The researcher aims to explore how educators can implement culturally responsive practices. This interest arises from observing the challenges teachers face in integrating diverse perspectives into their curricula and the gaps in research that leave them underprepared. By examining the impact of multicultural literacy on classroom dynamics, the researcher seeks to provide insights that can inform teacher training and promote a more equitable and inclusive learning environment.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Generally, this study aimed to explore the multicultural literacy and teaching practices: promoting diversity in the classroom in the Province of Cotabato .
1. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in promoting
   diversity in the classroom?
2. What possible coping practices do the teachers apply to address the

challenges encountered in promoting diversity in the classroom?

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach, to explore the challenges and coping practices in promoting diversity in the classroom. By focusing on the lived experiences of educators, the study sought to uncover the barriers they face in fostering inclusivity and the strategies they implement to create culturally responsive learning environments. Through in-depth discussions and thematic analysis, this research provides insights into how teachers navigate diversity and sustain equitable classroom practices. The structure as an item ought to be of sufficient quality to accomplish different validities legitimating (Brinkmann, 2018). Key Informant Interview was employed to gather issues and problems on the degree of promoting diversity in the classroom (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Then, the author employed correlation method to determine the relationship and influence of multicultural literacy and teaching practices in promoting diversity in the classroom (Field, 2016).

### Locale of the Study

The survey conducted in the Province of Cotabato where 2 schools division offices of Region XII namely: Kidapawan City Division and Cotabato Division with equitable representation from the 2 divisions.

### Research Instrument

An Interview Guide Questionnaire was crafted by the researcher that outlined issues and challenges encountered to promote diversity in the classroom. The questionnaire which was composed of open-ended questions was guided the researcher in understanding and exploring the subjects' opinions, behavior, experiences, and phenomenon.

### Research Participants

The Key Informant's face-to-face interview was conducted in the different school administrators and considered the availability of their time. The interview focused on the challenges encountered by the teachers to promote diversity in the classroom and the possible coping practices do the teachers apply to address the challenges encountered in promoting diversity in the classroom (Schwartz, 2017).

### Data Analysis

The transcribed data were analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis underwent the steps based on what Creswell & Plano Clark (2017). Suggestions and these are: first, becoming familiar with the data which means, the analyst read and reread the transcript; then generating initial codes; searching for themes from the coded data reviewing the themes since they were overlapping themes which could be fused into one; then defining the themes and developing subthemes when necessary; then last step was writing up the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Challenges encountered by the teachers in promoting diversity in the classroom**

The challenges encountered by teachers in promoting diversity in the classroom are described in global themes such as challenges in promoting diversity in the class; and challenges related to multicultural instruction in the classroom. The basic themes and core ideas for each of the basic theme are displayed in Table 1.

### Challenges in promoting diversity in the class

One of the global themes that emerged from the data is the challenges in promoting diversity in the classroom. Teachers encounter several barriers that hinder their ability to promote diversity and these challenges include: lack of learning material in promoting diversity; time constraints due to the core curriculum; limited training or exposure to multicultural pedagogies; and language barrier.

Lack of learning material in promoting diversity. One of the most frequently cited challenges by school heads was the unavailability of culturally inclusive instructional materials. Many noted that existing learning resources are not a representation of diverse cultural backgrounds, making it difficult for teachers to incorporate multicultural perspectives in their classroom instruction.

As one school head explained:

*Most of the instructional materials we have are generic. They do not reflect the rich cultural backgrounds of our learners kasi diba, nasa rural area kami (we are in rural area). SH2*

This sentiment was echoed by another, who pointed out that:

*We often rely on standardized textbooks that center on dominant cultures like those in Luzon and Visayas. There's very little space for local or ethnic diversity like mentioning the local tribes dito sa amin. SH5*

The findings reveal a significant challenge in the lack of culturally inclusive learning materials, particularly in rural areas where access to diverse content is limited. School heads noted that most instructional resources reflect dominant cultural narratives, often neglecting the identities of local, ethnic, and international students.

This aligns with Ford, Stuart, and Vakil (2015), who emphasized that using culturally relevant materials enhances student engagement and understanding by allowing learners to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Without such resources, teachers struggle to incorporate multicultural perspectives, making it harder to promote inclusive and representative learning. This issue highlights the importance of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, which not only values relevant content but also prioritizes strong teacher-student relationships built on trust and cultural respect (Forsman, 2016).

Time constraints due to core curriculum. As noted by the school heads, there is the pressure teachers face in meeting curriculum standards, which significantly limits the time available for multicultural integration. As one school head described:

*Teachers are already under pressure to meet curriculum standards. They don't have enough time to go deeper on other instructional considerations like including the multicultural content. SH1*

Another school head also pointed out that:

*It's not that teachers don't value diversity. It's just that the curriculum is so packed. There's barely any time left for them to plan or include cultural elements in their lessons. SH10*

Based on the result, there is an issue about time for the teachers to include multiliteracies. However, Ladson-Billings (2021) argued that culturally relevant pedagogy must be embedded within the core academic content to be effective and transformative. To address this, educational leaders should help teachers and give space for cultural inclusion. Joint effort to promote multicultural literacy is indeed very important.

Limited training or exposure. Interviews with the school heads also revealed that teachers are not adequately trained in culturally responsive pedagogies. As a result, they often lack the knowledge and confidence to integrate multicultural content effectively into their subject areas. This gap in training prevents teachers from fully embracing inclusive practices in diverse classroom settings.

As one school head verbalized:

*Most teachers did not receive formal training on how to teach using culturally responsive approaches. They often rely on general strategies without realizing that every cultural context may require a different approach. SH3*

Another school head added that some teachers are willing, but they do not know where to start. This reveals a wider issue of teachers feeling unprepared, not due to resistance, but due to lack of clear instructional models and support.

*Teachers are unsure how to incorporate multicultural themes into math, science, or even language lessons in a meaningful way. SH9*

A similar concern was expressed another school head who noted that:

*Multicultural education is often not addressed enough in teacher preparation programs. New teachers enter classrooms without the foundational knowledge needed for inclusive instruction. Kung walang sapat na training, paano maisasama ang multicultural literacy sa leksyon? SH7*

The findings suggest that the successful implementation of multicultural education is heavily dependent on teachers' professional preparedness. When educators are not sufficiently trained in culturally responsive pedagogies, they are less likely to embed multicultural content into their instruction in meaningful and effective ways. This lack of preparation often results in missed opportunities to affirm students' identities and create inclusive learning environments. Dodd-Nufrio (2017) emphasized that ongoing professional development is essential for equipping teachers with practical strategies to address cultural diversity in their classrooms. Through regular training, workshops, and learning communities, educators can deepen their understanding of multicultural practices and become more confident in applying them.

Language barrier. Language differences emerged as a notable challenge faced by teachers when addressing multicultural diversity in the classroom. As noted by the school heads:

*the variety of mother tongues among learners sometimes creates confusion during instruction, especially when students are not fluent in the language of teaching. SH4*

In another point of view, a school head added that when students are unfamiliar with classroom instructions, they respond incorrectly, not because they do not understand the concept, but because of the lack of understand the language used.

*Marami kasi sa amin ibat-ibang tribu and gumagamit din in ibat-ibang dialect, kaya minsan may problema dyan kasi di sila nakakaintindi tapos si teacher, di rin marunong magtranslate sa ganong language. (In our area, there are many different tribes, and they also use different dialects, so sometimes there's a problem because the students don't understand, and the teacher also doesn't know how to translate in that language.) SH13*

The findings reveal that language barriers—particularly those arising from the use of multiple dialects and mother tongues pose a significant challenge to inclusive classroom instruction where multicultural literacy is the focus. When teachers themselves are not familiar with the local dialects spoken by their students, it becomes difficult to bridge these linguistic gaps, further deepening inequities in learning. Santoro and Kennedy (2022) advocated for the use of mother tongue-based multilingual education, especially in early grades, to ensure equitable access to quality education.

### *Challenges in Multicultural Instruction in the Classroom*

Another challenge faced by teachers is the limited knowledge of cultural backgrounds; classroom management challenges; and dealing with emotional sensitivity of topics are comprising the basic themes of generated from the responses of the school heads. A lack of understanding of learners' cultural backgrounds can lead to misinterpretations of behavior, ineffective classroom strategies, and unintentional biases.

Limited Knowledge of Cultural Backgrounds. For the school heads, in managing multicultural classrooms, they have observed that teachers have limited understanding of their learners' cultural backgrounds which then leads to misinterpretations of behavior and may have issues on learning engagement. Reflecting the first point, one school head said:

*Some teachers tend to misread respectful silence or lack of eye contact as defiance or disengagement when these may actually be expressions of cultural norms. SH5.*

*Ma-notice ko na sa class may breakdowns in communication kasi minsan maging offensive si teacher pero hindi sya aware non. SH12*

Another school head observed that students from certain cultural groups may naturally be more reserved or expressive, yet teachers may not be able to understand these.

*Teachers sometimes label these silent behaviors as inattentive or inappropriate without realizing their cultural basis. Like yong bata masyadong tahimik lang talaga sa klase...di nagssasalita, nahihiya...or minsan parang palaging galit...yon lang pala...hindi ito naintindihan.SH8*

When teachers are not equipped to interpret behavior or connect instruction within students' cultural contexts, the classroom environment can unintentionally become exclusive or misunderstood. This underscores the need for continuous professional learning focused on cultural competence and contextualized teaching approaches in diverse settings.

Classroom Management Challenges. This theme encompasses the idea that there are varied communication styles and behavior misinterpretations; and teachers may misread culturally influenced behaviors as misbehavior or non-compliance.

Due to varied cultural norms, what may be considered respectful or appropriate in one culture might be perceived differently in another. One school head shared that teachers often struggle with how some students communicate.

*Halimbawa, yong bata ayaw tumingin sa teacher na nagsasalita or di kaya, iba yong way nya dahil soft-spoken sya... (For example, a student may avoid eye contact or speak softly out of cultural respect, but the teacher interprets this as a lack of interest or defiance). SH6.*

One major challenge in promoting respect for diversity in the classroom is that many teachers have limited knowledge about their students' cultural backgrounds, especially in areas with Indigenous or highly diverse communities. Because of this, students may feel misunderstood or left out when their identities are not reflected in the lessons. When teachers are not trained to handle cultural differences, they may struggle to talk about sensitive topics like ethnicity or religion, or to adjust their teaching to meet different student needs.

Respecting diversity requires more than good intentions—it requires proper skills, knowledge, and support. However, without school-wide efforts, it becomes difficult for teachers to create inclusive and respectful classroom environments. Battiste (2021) highlighted the importance of recognizing Indigenous knowledge in education, while Grant and Haynes (2015) emphasized that valuing students' cultural and religious identities is key to promoting equity and inclusion in schools.

Dealing with Emotional Sensitivity of Topics. As described by the school heads, talking about topics like race, religion, gender, or discrimination of tribal groups can be really emotional—for both teachers and students. These are sensitive issues that bring up personal beliefs, experiences, and even pain. Because of this, some teachers tend to avoid them in the classroom.

*Some teachers are afraid they might say the wrong thing or accidentally offend someone, so they just stick to the safer, more general topics. SH7*

As implied based on the results, teachers often avoid sensitive topics such as race, religion, gender, and especially discrimination against certain tribes, because they are unsure how students will react or worry that the conversation might become too emotional or uncomfortable. When topics like tribal discrimination are left out of classroom conversations, it can unintentionally send the message that these issues are not important or are too difficult to address. O'Connor (2017) emphasized that creating opportunities for open, respectful dialogue in the classroom helps break down stereotypes and builds understanding among students. For this to happen, teachers need proper support and training to confidently lead these discussions and ensure they are handled with care, respect, and cultural sensitivity.

**Table 1    Themes on the challenges encountered by the teachers in**

**promoting diversity in the classroom**

| Global Themes | Basic Themes | Core Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| Challenges in Promoting Diversity in the Class | Lack of learning material in promoting diversity | • resources often lack representation of diverse cultural perspectives<br>• Materials may reflect only dominant cultures |
| | Time constraints due to core | • Teachers lack of time to deal with multicultural |

| | curriculum | contents |
|---|---|---|
| | Limited training or exposure | • Many educators are not adequately trained in culturally responsive pedagogies |
| | | • lack of understanding of how to integrate multicultural content effectively into subject areas |
| | Language barrier | • diverse linguistic backgrounds cause misunderstanding |
| Challenges in Multicultural Instruction in the Classroom | Limited Knowledge of Cultural Backgrounds | • Teachers lack a deep understanding of their students' cultural identities, leading to unintentional misunderstandings or misrepresentations. |
| | | • Teacher's unfamiliarity of culture making it difficult to connect learning |
| | Classroom Management Challenges | • communication styles, behavior misinterpretations |
| | | • Teachers may misread culturally-influenced behaviors as misbehavior or non-compliance. |
| | Dealing with Emotional Sensitivity of Topics | • Discussing race, religion, gender, or historical oppression can be emotional |
| | | • Teachers may avoid multicultural topics for fear of conflict or discomfort of learners |

## Coping practices teachers apply to address the challenges encountered in promoting diversity in the classroom

The teachers apply coping strategies in order to address the challenges in promoting diversity in the classroom. The global themes for these include: use of varied materials and strategies; and giving support to teachers. The corresponding basic themes and core ideas are presented in the following sections.

**Use of varied materials and strategies**

To address the challenges in promoting diversity in the classroom, teachers use varied materials and strategies. The basic themes to describe these are: tailored instruction and contextualized examples, mother-tongue-based instructional support, integration of social-emotional learning, and locally sourced materials.

Tailored instruction and contextualized examples. As observed by the school heads, in culturally diverse classrooms, teachers adjust their teaching strategies and lesson content to suit their learners. This includes using tailored instruction to support different learning needs, and contextualized examples to connect learning with students' lived experiences.

Supporting varied teaching strategies for diverse learners is essential in multicultural settings. Teachers make adjustments to their methods based on the cultural and language backgrounds of their students.

*Some teachers use visual aids, group activities, or story-based lessons to help learners who struggle with language barriers. SH3*

*Madalas ina-adjust ng mga guro kung paano nila itinuturo ang aralin, depende sa klase—lalo na kung may mga estudyanteng galing sa iba't ibang tribu or may ibang lingwahe.* Teachers often modify how they present content depending on the class composition, especially when there are students from different tribe or linguistic groups. SH6

The participants also shared that teachers are also encouraging real-life and culturally relevant lesson content makes learning more meaningful. Lessons become easier to understand and more engaging when they reflect students' day-to-day lives.

*Minsan gumagamit ang mga guro ng halimbawa mula sa palengke, pista, o pagsasaka—mga bagay na nakikita ng mga estudyante sa araw-araw—para ipaliwanag ang mga lesson sa Math o Science. Teachers sometimes use examples from local markets, festivals, or farming—things that students see in their daily lives—to explain concepts in Math or Science. SH4*

These practices help bridge gaps between students' cultural experiences and classroom learning, promoting inclusion and deeper understanding. For the school heads, teaching this way will eventually address the multicultural learning issues. When educators integrate students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into lessons, they make learning more meaningful and accessible. This approach not only affirms students' identities but also promotes deeper understanding and connection to the material.

Creating inclusive spaces where diverse experiences are reflected encourages participation and empathy among learners (Hooks, 2015). By recognizing the value of students' languages and experiences, teachers can design content that resonates with their realities, enhancing both motivation and academic success (García & Wei, 2017).

Integration of social-emotional learning. As discussed by the school heads, one of the ways to address the challenges in promoting diversity is the integration of social-emotional learning like by fostering empathy, respect, and inclusivity requires deliberate classroom practices. These practices promote collaboration and cultural awareness.

*Kapag pinagsasama-sama ang mga estudyante sa iba't ibang grupo o hinihikayat silang magbahagi ng kwento nila, mas naiintindihan nila ang pananaw ng iba. Doon nabubuo ang respeto at koneksyon sa isa't isa. (When students are placed in diverse group settings or encouraged to share their stories, they begin to understand different perspectives, ultimately nurturing mutual respect and emotional connection.) SH10*

When students feel emotionally secure, they are more likely to engage actively in learning. School heads emphasize the importance of emotional check-ins and teacher training in social-emotional strategies. These initiatives foster trust between students and staff, allowing early identification of emotional needs and promoting a culture of care.

The responses from school heads highlight the practical application and positive impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies in creating inclusive and supportive school environments. The recognition of students' diverse linguistic and cultural identities within SEL practices reflects a shift toward more culturally responsive education. This aligns with the argument of Gay (2018), who asserts that culturally responsive teaching bridges the gap between home and school experiences, enhancing students' engagement and sense of belonging.

Locally sourced materials. The participants also believed that integrating locally sourced materials into classroom instruction plays a significant role in making learning more relevant and meaningful to students. When students see their culture and environment reflected in lessons, they are more engaged and motivated to participate. Moreover, adapting learning resources to local contexts helps ensure that education remains inclusive and accessible.

Integrating locally sourced materials into classroom instruction helps bridge the gap between academic content and students' real-life experiences. As Banks (2015) notes, culturally grounded pedagogy supports equity in education by ensuring that instruction respects and reflects learners' backgrounds. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (2021) argued that culturally relevant teaching builds a connection between home and school, fostering academic excellence and cultural competence.

### *Giving support to teachers*

Another way to cope with the challenges in promoting diversity in the classroom is through giving support to teachers such as: learning action cell sessions, peer mentoring, support from the administration, and community engagement.

Learning action cell (LAC) sessions. For the participants, LAC sessions provide a safe and collaborative space for teachers to share effective teaching strategies that address the needs of culturally diverse learners. By discussing real classroom experiences and locally relevant solutions, teachers deepen their understanding of how to make lessons more inclusive and responsive.

*Kapag LAC session, doon talaga kami nakakapagbahagi ng mga paraan kung paano namin hinahandle ang iba't ibang kultura sa klase. Nakakatuwa kasi minsan may simpleng strategy lang pala ang ibang guro na pwedeng gayahin ng mga guro. (During LAC sessions, that's really where we get to share how we handle different cultures in the classroom. It's great because sometimes another teacher has a simple strategy teachers can try themselves). SH1*

The findings suggest that Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions are a valuable tool for promoting culturally responsive pedagogy through peer collaboration and contextualized professional development. When teachers use LACs to share multicultural teaching strategies and collaboratively address diversity-related challenges, they build a professional learning culture that enhances inclusivity and responsiveness in the classroom.

This aligns with the broader understanding that continuous professional development is essential for equipping teachers to navigate the complexities of diverse learning environments. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2019) emphasize, training programs focused on culturally responsive pedagogy provide educators with the tools, knowledge, and reflective practices needed to respond effectively to student diversity.

Peer mentoring. Peer mentoring through collaboration with master teachers provides a strong support system for professional growth. For the school heads, master teachers serve not only as content experts but also as mentors.

*Sa amin, ang mga master teachers ay laging handang tumulong lalo na sa mga bagong guro. Madalas silang magbahagi ng lesson plans na gamit nila na akma sa mga estudyanteng iba-iba ang pinagmulan. (In our school, master teachers are always ready to help, especially the new ones. They often share lesson plans they've used that work well with students from diverse backgrounds.) SH9*

*Nagkakaroon kami ng peer observation kung saan pinapanood namin ang klase ng isa't isa. Pagkatapos, nagbibigay kami ng feedback. Maganda ito kasi may natutunan kang bago sa bawat session. (We do peer observations where we watch each other's classes and give feedback afterward. It's helpful because you always learn something new each session.) SH3*

As shared by the school heads, peer mentoring also plays a crucial role in the promotion of inclusive instructional techniques. Through coaching sessions, teachers are exposed to practical strategies for managing diverse classrooms.

*May pagkakataon na ang mga master teacher ay nagtuturo ng paraan kung paano i-adapt ang lesson para sa mga batang may ibat-bang culture at beliefs. Isa ito sa focus namin sa coaching ngayon. (There are times when senior teachers teach how to adapt lessons for children with special needs. That has been one of our coaching focuses recently.) SH3*

*During LAC sessions, we have time where in our mentoring sessions also focus on teaching inclusive practices using localized materials and others. SH8*

The responses from school heads highlight peer mentoring as an effective and sustainable approach to improving teaching practices in diverse classrooms. Master teachers guide colleagues in using inclusive strategies, while peer coaching encourages the exchange of practical techniques suited to varied learner needs. Hobson et al (2019) emphasized that mentoring enhances teaching quality and supports professional growth, especially for newer educators. These efforts also align with Villegas and Lucas (2020), who stress that collaborative, ongoing development is key to implementing culturally responsive teaching effectively.

Community engagement. This is done by engaging the stakeholders in school to ensure that culture is acknowledged. Engaging the community—especially parents, elders, and local cultural groups—creates strong partnerships between the school and the community. This collaboration enriches the educational experience by connecting classroom learning with local wisdom, practices, and values.

*Inaanyayahan namin ang mga magulang at barangay elders tuwing may aralin tungkol sa kultura o kasaysayan ng lugar. Mas meaningful sa mga bata kasi mismong taga-komunidad ang nagtuturo. For example, during IP Day... (We invite parents and community elders whenever we tackle lessons on culture or local history. It becomes more meaningful for the students because the people teaching them come from their own community). SH2*

In addition, school heads also shared that they are organizing school events that celebrate cultural diversity helps foster respect and appreciation for different traditions among students. These events promote a sense of pride in students' heritage and encourage dialogue across diverse backgrounds.

*May taunang 'Buwan ng Wika' celebration at may IP Day din maliban sa mga fiesta kung saan ipinapakita ng mga bata ang kanilang kultura sa pamamagitan ng sayaw, awit, at pagkain. Inimbitahan din ang mga magulang. (We have an annual 'Buwan ng Wika' celebration and also an IP (Indigenous Peoples) Day, aside from town fiestas, where students showcase their culture through dance, songs, and food. Parents are also invited.) SH9*

The findings highlight that active community engagement plays a crucial role in building inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. Involving parents, elders, and cultural groups in educational activities strengthens school-community relationships and affirms students' cultural identities. These showcase a good practice in addressing multiculturality. As Cohen et al (2019) emphasize, schools that institutionalize respect for diversity create environments where students feel emotionally safe, valued, and supported. This means that educators must go beyond classroom-level practices and work collaboratively with school leaders, parents, and the broader community

**Table 2    Themes on the coping practices teachers apply to address the challenges**

| Global Themes | Basic Themes | Core Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| Use of varied materials and strategies | Tailored instruction and Contextualized examples | • Supporting varied teaching strategies for diverse learners<br>• Allowing flexibility in tasks, content, and assessments<br>• Encouraging real-life, culturally relevant lesson content<br>• Linking topics to students' backgrounds and community settings |
| | Mother-tongue based instructional support | • Providing language support using native languages<br>• Using familiar terms and translations for clearer understanding |
| | Integration of Social-emotional learning | • Fostering empathy, respect, and inclusivity<br>• Building a safe and emotionally supportive classroom or school |
| | Locally sourced materials | • Using cultural artifacts and local references in lessons<br>• Adapting learning resources to reflect local realities |
| Giving support to teachers | Learning action cell sessions | • Sharing practices and strategies on multicultural teaching<br>• Collaborating with colleagues to address diversity challenges |
| | Peer mentoring | • master teachers support and exchange of ideas with teachers<br>• Promoting coaching about inclusive instructional techniques |
| | Community engagement | • Involving parents, elders, and cultural groups<br>• Organizing events that celebrate cultural diversity |

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