

Marie Grace C. Reoperez, Philippines
Professor, University of the Philippines
mcreoperez@up.edu.ph

ALS Literacy Programs for Filipino Adult Learners: Whose Goals Are Being Realised?

In the Philippines, adult education remains to be a low priority area in policy making. The major education reforms in the recent years place so much importance on the education of its young population both in the formal and non-formal setting. In fact, the recently reconfigured curriculum of the Alternative Learning System (ALS), the main provider of basic literacy education for marginalized learners addresses more of the literacy needs of the out-of-school children (OSY) and out-of-school-youth (OSC) rather than the literacy needs of adult learners. Using an ethnographic approach, the existing ALS curriculum and sample lessons were analyzed and interviews with five instructional managers, six former ALS students, and one ALS director were conducted.

The study which views literacy as social practices and literacy education as transformative, empowering, and emancipatory described the ALS experiences and life goals of the participants and analyzed them vis-a-vis the goals and content of the ALS curriculum. Major findings showed that the irrelevant content; formalization of instructional approaches; and the foreign context and language of the instructional materials invalidate the previously acquired literacy skills and practices of the adult learners and threaten to erode their hopes of achieving productive lives in the future.