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Digital Learning Sessions in Teaching: Real Help or Just Hype

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Abstract

This study examined the experiences of teachers from Quezon Bukidnon Comprehensive National High School who participated in digital learning sessions, focusing on their motivations, challenges, and applications to teaching practice. Employing a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design, seven purposively selected teachers were interviewed through semi-structured questions. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: motivation, challenges, effectiveness, and recommendations. Teachers joined digital learning sessions to enhance student engagement, improve teaching strategies, and develop new technological and pedagogical skills. They viewed these sessions as valuable opportunities for sharing ideas and gaining updated knowledge, particularly in specific subject areas, but faced persistent issues such as unstable internet connections, power interruptions, and limited technical support. Despite these difficulties, teachers found digital learning sessions effective in improving lesson delivery, encouraging collaboration, and supporting continuous professional growth. Based on the findings, the study recommends structured and ongoing digital training programs, stronger digital infrastructure, responsive technical assistance, and session designs aligned with lesson objectives. Teachers are encouraged to prepare before sessions, check connectivity, review materials, and remain adaptable to new digital tools. The study concludes that digital learning sessions enhance teaching performance, strengthen collaboration among educators, and promote sustained professional development.

Keywords: Digital Learning Sessions, Teacher Experiences, Professional Development, Teaching Effectiveness, Technological Skills, Collaboration

1. Introduction

Digital technology continues to transform education across the world, reshaping traditional teaching methods and redefining how learners interact with knowledge. In the Philippines, the integration of digital tools in the education system has become more visible and necessary in recent years, particularly after the pandemic prompted a major shift toward online and blended learning. Teachers have increasingly participated in digital learning sessions such as webinars, virtual conferences, and online professional development courses. These sessions are designed to enhance instructional practices, expand access to learning materials, and promote collaboration among educators. As schools continue adapting to the digital era, understanding the real value and challenges of these sessions is crucial for sustainable educational improvement.

The Department of Education has reported a steady increase in the use of digital technology in both public and private schools since 2020. Teachers now rely more on virtual tools like Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom to conduct lessons and professional training. Digital learning sessions have also introduced more flexible opportunities for teachers to upgrade their skills, access global teaching resources, and connect with colleagues across regions. According to recent studies, such as Encarnacion (2021), online learning promotes active participation and self-paced study, while Viña et al. (2024) identified a positive relationship between digital access and student achievement. Similarly, Teofilo-Labitad and Paglinawan (2025) found that exposure to digital resources enhances learners' critical thinking and engagement, particularly in science and technology subjects. These findings suggest that when used effectively, digital platforms strengthen the quality of education and professional practice.

Despite these benefits, many teachers still experience barriers that affect the success of digital learning sessions. These challenges include unstable internet connectivity, lack of digital literacy training, limited access to quality digital tools, and the added workload required to prepare online materials. Teachers in rural areas are especially affected by infrastructure gaps that hinder their participation and learning experience. Additionally, not all digital learning sessions are designed with teachers' specific classroom realities in mind, leading to difficulties in applying what they learn to everyday teaching. These issues highlight the importance of examining teachers' perspectives, as their insights are key to improving the relevance and effectiveness of digital learning initiatives.

This study focuses on the experiences of teachers from Quezon Bukidnon Comprehensive National High School who participated in digital learning sessions. It explores how they perceive the benefits, challenges, and outcomes of their involvement, examining their motivations for participation, the obstacles they encounter, and the ways they apply the knowledge and skills gained to improve classroom instruction and professional growth. By centering on teachers' perspectives, the study addresses a gap in previous research that often emphasizes student performance instead of teachers' professional experiences.

Through this inquiry, the study aims to provide insights that strengthen teacher training programs, support evidence-based educational policies, and enhance the integration of technology into teaching practices. The succeeding sections describe the research design and methods used to examine teachers' experiences, present and interpret the themes derived from interviews and surveys, and offer recommendations for improving digital learning sessions as instruments for professional development and effective instruction among educators.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers at Quezon Bukidnon Comprehensive National High School experience and perceive digital learning sessions in teaching.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the reasons for teachers' participation in digital learning sessions?
2. What challenges do teachers encounter when participating in digital learning sessions?
3. How do teachers describe the effectiveness of digital learning sessions in their teaching practice?

4. What recommendations do teachers have for colleagues who wish to participate in digital learning sessions?

3. Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to gain a deep understanding of the lived experiences of teachers at Quezon Bukidnon Comprehensive National High School as they participated in digital learning sessions. This approach was chosen for its effectiveness in capturing the essence of teachers' perceptions, interpretations, and the rich meanings they attribute to the process of integrating digital learning into their teaching practice. Phenomenological research centres on investigating the experiences of participants in order to identify patterns and shared themes that characterize their realities.

Participants were chosen through purposive sampling. The selection process prioritized teachers who had firsthand and significant involvement in digital learning, ensuring their insights were grounded in actual practice. To enhance the diversity and breadth of perspectives, the study accounted for subject specializations, varying teaching experiences, and multiple levels of engagement in digital initiatives. Recognizing the value of broader representation and richer data, future research in this area could further improve methodological rigor by expanding the participant pool to include educators from other grade levels, disciplines, and even neighbouring schools.

Data collection relied primarily on semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. These instruments allowed teachers to openly express their motivations for participating, challenges encountered, reflections on effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement. Each interview was conducted in a comfortable and private setting, digitally recorded with participant consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim. To further strengthen the validity of the data, subsequent studies could employ triangulation methods, such as supplementing interviews with direct classroom observations or collecting teaching artifacts, to provide additional layers of contextual evidence and validation for the reported experiences.

The analytical process employed thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. After carefully reading the interview transcripts, significant statements were identified, coded, and grouped into broader themes that captured the central meanings of teachers' experiences. Steps to ensure analytic credibility included prolonged engagement with participants to build trust, member checking by soliciting feedback on preliminary findings from interviewees, and peer debriefing sessions where colleagues reviewed coding and interpretation decisions. Throughout the analysis, the researcher maintained reflexive notes to systematically bracket assumptions and minimize personal bias.

Strict adherence to ethical standards governed every stage of the research. Approval from the school principal was secured before data collection commenced. Participants were fully informed about the study's aims, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of involvement, and provided signed consent. All personal data were anonymized, and digital files were securely stored, guaranteeing confidentiality and safeguarding against unauthorized use. The systematic use of digital audio recording and data management tools enhanced the consistency, reliability, and accuracy of both the collection and analysis of data.

The qualitative methodological approach utilized in this study ensured a comprehensive and trustworthy exploration of teachers' digital learning experiences. To strengthen the

credibility and transferability of future findings, it is recommended to broaden the participant pool and integrate triangulation techniques, including classroom observation and instructional material analysis, as these methods further validate the research outcomes.

4. Results and Discussion

1. What are your reasons for participating in digital learning sessions in teaching?

Table 1. Themes and Supporting Responses on Teachers' Reasons for Participating in Digital Learning Sessions

Main Theme	Supporting Responses	Participants
Engagement and Effectiveness	Digital learning sessions improve student engagement, teaching effectiveness, and support varied learning styles while making instruction more efficient.	P1, P2, P3
Updated Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills	These sessions provide teachers with updated content knowledge (especially in science), new strategies, and exposure to the latest technology for teaching and sharing.	P4, P6
Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing	Digital platforms promote collaboration among teachers and students, and encourage the sharing of knowledge and teaching practices to improve student learning.	P5, P7

Table 1 presents the results showing the main reasons teachers participated in digital learning sessions, revealing three key themes: engagement and effectiveness, updating pedagogical knowledge and skills, and collaboration and knowledge sharing. Teachers expressed that digital learning sessions increase student engagement by supporting diverse learning styles and facilitating more efficient teaching methods. Additionally, many teachers appreciated the opportunity to stay updated with the latest teaching strategies and technological tools, especially in content areas such as science. Digital platforms also serve as essential venues for collaboration, allowing educators to exchange ideas and teaching practices. These findings align with recent studies which highlight that interactive digital tools promote differentiated instruction and improve both teacher and student motivation (Schindler et al., 2017; Noor et al., 2022; Qubahan Academic Journal, 2025).

Analysis of these findings in comparison with global research indicates that teachers' motivation is multifaceted. They are incentivized by the improved ability to engage students, which contributes positively to classroom dynamics and learning outcomes (Al-Said, 2023; He et al., 2025). Updated pedagogical knowledge through digital professional development sessions enhances teaching confidence and innovation, which is reflected in international contexts where digital PD is recognized as critical for developing technological, pedagogical, and content expertise (Lohr, 2024; Qubahan Academic Journal, 2025). Moreover, the collaborative nature of digital learning creates communities of practice that encourage ongoing professional growth, a finding that is well-supported by research on teacher networking and professional learning communities worldwide (Jalop & Paglinawan, 2025; Frontiers in Psychology, 2025).

Interpretation of these results suggests that digital learning sessions fulfill important roles in supporting teacher motivation both intrinsically and extrinsically. The engagement themes show that teachers value platforms that allow flexible instruction that meets various learner needs. The professional development theme demonstrates how digital platforms supplement traditional PD by offering access to current content and methodologies that can be immediately applied. Lastly, collaboration through digital means builds a supportive environment that sustains motivation and reduces professional isolation (Zhang, 2021; Salo et al., 2024). Teachers involved see these sessions as essential to their instructional improvement and professional resilience.

Although most teachers reported positive impacts on engagement and innovation, there were noticeable differences in experience depending on variables such as access to technology, type of training received, and student readiness. For instance, one participant reflected, "Although my students became more attentive during interactive lessons, some struggled due to unstable connections at home," while another noted that "ongoing support and more hands-on digital training remain critical for teachers who are newer to online platforms." These firsthand accounts echo international reports indicating that equitable infrastructure, regular skills training, and personalized support are needed for sustained improvement in digital education outcomes (Salo et al., 2024; Laurell et al., 2019; OECD, 2025). Without dedicated investments in technology access and continued professional development, disparities can persist and threaten both teacher and student success.

2.What challenges do you encounter when participating in digital learning sessions in teaching?

Table 2. Themes and Supporting Responses on Teachers' Challenges in Digital Learning Sessions

Main Theme	Supporting Responses	Participants
Technical and Connectivity Problems	Teachers experience unstable internet, software glitches, lack of technical support, and power interruptions. Examples include "Limited access to internet inside the school campus" (P1), "Technical issues like software glitches" (P2), "Low internet connection" (P3), "Inconsistent network connection during sessions" (P4), "Camera and mic problems" (P5), "Power interruptions during webinars" (P6), and "Lack of technical help for setup and troubleshooting, difficulty using new apps or platforms" (P7).	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7

Table 2 summarizes the primary challenges voiced by teachers in digital learning sessions, centering on technical and connectivity problems. Participants reported unstable internet access, software and device malfunctions, and inconsistent technical support. Direct quotations highlight the scope of the issue: "Limited access to internet inside the school campus" (P1), "Technical issues like software glitches" (P2), and "Low internet connection" (P3). Almost every teacher described similar difficulties, with P5 indicating "Camera and mic problems," while P6 mentioned, "Power interruptions during webinars." Multiple respondents stressed the lack of expert assistance and the struggle to adapt to new applications or platforms (P7). These comments display the persistent, multifaceted barriers confronting educators during online instruction.

Analysis of the findings, bolstered by global literature, reveals the persistent nature and scale of these barriers. Frontiers in Education (2025) details how technical infrastructure remains unequally distributed, particularly in remote or resource-limited school settings. A 2024 Time for Class report also found that about one-third of instructors in higher education surveyed across several countries are concerned about students' and teachers' reliable access to devices and networks. While platforms and digital tools have increased in number, persistent network instability and hardware shortages disrupt learning continuity and diminish both instructor and student participation. Raffi et al. (2025) and Keane et al. (2024) similarly note growing teacher frustration with unreliable systems, which often lead to lost instructional time and increased workload.

Teachers in this study linked technical setbacks not only to lost time but also to diminished learner interaction and confusion. Research by Salo et al. (2024) confirms that a lack of responsive technical support is closely tied to educator stress and reduced teaching focus, particularly during system outages or software failures. Studies in Indonesia and the United States found that teachers without access to timely troubleshooting services are more likely to report lower job satisfaction, significant delays in lesson delivery, and decreased student engagement due to technology-related disruptions. Numerous international reports suggest that digital inequality whether in bandwidth limitations, outdated equipment, or lack of hands-on device training contributes to persistent gaps between best intentions and classroom realities.

The interpretation of these results points to the compounded impact of uneven digital infrastructure, minimal support systems, and rapid platform changes on teaching efficacy. While some schools are able to update devices or troubleshoot software, many remain reliant on teachers solving problems on their own, at the expense of instructional quality. Responses such as "lack of technical help for setup and troubleshooting" (P7) echo findings from the SETDA UCI report (2025), which noted that inadequately maintained systems and infrequent training increase anxiety among instructors and lead to missed opportunities for student learning. Rather than viewing all teachers as equally equipped, the evidence points to widening disparities in digital readiness both within and across schools.

Synthesis with the broader literature leads to several clear directions for institutional policy and practice. Schools must prioritize investment in stable internet infrastructure, regular maintenance of devices, and accessible, on-demand technical support for staff. Continuous, adaptive digital literacy training confirmed in studies by Rahmi et al. (2024) and Tyton Partners (2024) facilitates greater confidence, faster troubleshooting, and improved morale among teachers. Addressing both infrastructure and skill development is shown to reduce interruptions and support sustained digital instruction, leveling the field for educators and their students.

Finally, the study reinforces the need for responsive, institutionalized support systems and ongoing assessment of both hardware and professional development needs. Monitoring teachers' experiences, seeking feedback regarding specific technical problems, and developing scalable solutions should remain part of school policy agendas. As evidenced in current global research, reducing the incidence and impact of digital learning barriers remains a shared priority for administrators, policymakers, and educators worldwide, who seek to maintain productive learning environments and equitable access for all.

3. How would you describe the effectiveness of digital learning sessions in teaching?

Table 3. Themes and Supporting Responses on the Effectiveness of Digital Learning Sessions in Teaching

Main Theme	Supporting Responses	Participants
Teaching and Learning Improvement	Teachers explain digital learning improves delivery, encourages active engagement, and helps develop teaching skills. Examples include "Digital learning promotes active learning and collaboration" (P1), "It improves instructional delivery when tools fit lesson goals" (P2), "You gain practical strategies from webinars and apply them in class" (P3), "Interactive features and instant feedback make lessons engaging" (P4), "Students become more confident and attentive" (P5), "Sessions help you stay updated and connected with new trends" (P6), and "Student outputs increase when digital tools allow flexible access to learning tasks and feedback" (P7).	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7

Table 3 presents feedback from teachers regarding the effectiveness of digital learning sessions in teaching, highlighting improved instructional delivery, increased student engagement, and the practical application of professional learning. Teachers described that digital learning supports active and collaborative learning, noting examples such as more frequent classroom interaction and the acquisition of new strategies through online webinars and workshops. Participants observed better alignment between digital resources and specific lesson goals, and many found that features like instant feedback and resource accessibility led to more attentive and confident students. These points are echoed by responses describing growth in student outputs when digital tools allowed flexible, on-demand access to learning materials.

Recent research strongly affirms these experiences. Digital learning platforms broaden access to quality instruction and personalize learning by enabling differentiated tasks, interactive activities, and immediate, constructive feedback. Empirical studies based on AI-driven and gamified platforms such as Smart Sparrow, ALEKS, and Khan Academy report substantial improvements in achievement, especially among learners who benefit from real-time support and a tailored pace (Dela Cruz, 2023; Tenório et al., 2018). Blended and hybrid models, combining digital and face-to-face learning, are also associated with higher academic performance and sustained engagement.

Analysis of both local data and global research shows that teaching effectiveness in digital settings depends on the thoughtful match between platform features and instructional strategy. Adaptive technologies and collaborative tools allow real-time monitoring, adjustment to learner needs, and group interaction, helping teachers address diverse classroom requirements efficiently. Professional learning that connects directly to evolving technologies in the form of webinars, online courses, and communities of practice has been recognized for keeping teaching methods current and relevant (Salo et al., 2024).

Interpretation of feedback suggests digital learning sessions contribute meaningfully to both teaching quality and sustained professional growth. Teachers observed a rise in student attentiveness, confidence, and participation when digital formats were well-matched to lesson objectives, and this trend holds in broad literature reviews. Consistent use of digital learning supports ongoing skill development for teachers and encourages collaborative planning for

curriculum improvement. Such engagement is credited with making instruction more responsive and keeping teachers up to date with trends and innovations in education technology.

Synthesis points to foundational conditions necessary for digital learning success: supportive infrastructure, access to user-friendly digital tools, sustained teacher training, and active communities of peer support. Current evidence urges educational leaders and policymakers to maintain ongoing investment in digital capacities at both systems and classroom levels, as these investments are closely related to better student outcomes and higher professional satisfaction for educators.

4. What recommendations can you give to teachers who wish to participate in digital learning sessions?

Table 4. Themes and Supporting Responses on Teachers' Recommendations for Digital Learning Sessions

Main Theme	Supporting Responses	Participants
Preparedness and Adaptability	Teachers emphasize thorough preparation, including testing technology beforehand, learning digital tools, seeking technical support when needed, selecting resources aligned with lesson objectives, continually updating skills through webinars and communities, reviewing session materials for missed content, and maintaining flexibility to adapt to new technologies. Examples include "Test your internet and devices before sessions" (P1), "Learn how to use digital platforms and tools" (P2), "Ask for help or technical support when needed" (P3), "Choose digital resources that fit your lesson objectives" (P4), "Join webinars and online communities to update your skills" (P5), "Review session materials and recordings for missed content" (P6), and "Stay flexible and adapt to new technologies" (P7).	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7

Table 4 presents teacher recommendations for digital learning, primarily highlighting the importance of preparation and adaptability as recurring themes in responses. Teachers described core practices including verifying technology and connectivity prior to starting lessons, becoming familiar with new tools, seeking support quickly when difficulties arise, and intentionally selecting resources that closely match instructional objectives. Such practices help prevent instructional disruptions and establish a structured foundation for each digital session. International guidelines and sector reports back these approaches, advising proactive preparation, resource selection, and ongoing skill reinforcement to strengthen readiness for effective teaching.

Current research demonstrates that professional development is crucial in building digital competence and adaptability. Gu et al. (2025) and the OECD (2025) describe how continuous, targeted professional learning through webinars, micro-courses, or educator communities builds confidence and instructional skill for managing a range of digital learning challenges. Research by Ahmad (2025) adds that teachers with higher levels of digital adaptation consistently report improved teaching effectiveness, highlighting the importance of up-to-date training and practical exposure to varying technologies. Studies also emphasize that

ongoing development leads to lower stress and greater satisfaction when integrating technology into daily teaching routines.

Adaptability is essential, not only for mastering software but also for revising and improving instructional approaches as circumstances change. Findings from Najjar (2025) and Priante et al. (2025) show that instructors who demonstrate classroom adaptability whether by shifting platforms or reworking activities in response to student needs achieve higher rates of participation and learning inclusivity. Flexibility is linked to a willingness to experiment with resources, adjust lesson pacing, and tailor content delivery to support all learners, characteristics that align with other evidence on effective digital pedagogy.

The literature and responses taken together indicate a process of continual learning and reflective practice. Teachers who review recordings, take part in ongoing technology integration activities, and collaborate within professional networks repeatedly enhance their skills, as affirmed by Stutchbury (2023) and Asmare (2025). These habits reinforce positive shifts in both lesson design and classroom management when using digital platforms.

Collective findings point to teacher preparedness, openness to refining practice, and ongoing investment in digital skill-building as core contributors to sustained digital education effectiveness. Models for professional growth stress targeted support, peer interaction, and the persistent alignment of learning resources with evolving goals, all of which encourage robust teaching and equip teachers to respond confidently to the demands of a changing educational context.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of the study show that teachers' participation in digital learning sessions plays an important role in improving teaching performance and professional growth. Teachers join these sessions to strengthen student engagement, enhance teaching effectiveness, and develop new pedagogical and technological skills. They view digital learning to gain updated knowledge, particularly in specific content areas such as science, and to exchange effective strategies with colleagues. The collaborative nature of these sessions fosters teamwork and shared learning, leading to improved instructional quality.

Despite the benefits, teachers face several challenges related to technology and connectivity. Unstable internet connections, software errors, power interruptions, and limited technical assistance often disrupt participation and reduce the efficiency of learning. These difficulties emphasize the need for stronger infrastructure and responsive institutional support to help teachers engage productively in digital learning sessions.

Teachers also perceive digital learning as effective in improving lesson delivery and encouraging active participation among students. The use of interactive tools and accessible digital resources helps teachers create engaging lessons, provide timely feedback, and sustain learner interest. Participation in these sessions promotes continuous professional development by keeping teachers informed about current instructional strategies and technological innovations that improve classroom teaching.

Teachers emphasize preparation, adaptability, and consistent learning as key elements for success in digital learning. Testing devices, becoming familiar with online platforms, and aligning materials with lesson goals are viewed as essential steps for effective participation.

Reviewing session recordings and adjusting to new tools further help teachers build competence and confidence in applying digital strategies.

The findings indicate that digital learning sessions contribute significantly to improved teaching practices, collaboration among educators, and ongoing professional advancement. To strengthen these positive outcomes, schools need to enhance technological infrastructure, ensure stable connectivity, and provide continuous training and support that prepare teachers to use digital tools effectively. Institutional commitment combined with teacher readiness promotes meaningful integration of digital learning into professional practice and classroom instruction.

Based on the study's findings, the study has the following recommendations.

1. For the reasons for participation. Schools should organize structured and continuous digital professional development programs that focus on improving student engagement, strengthening teaching effectiveness, and promoting collaboration among teachers. These programs must include opportunities for sharing strategies, updating pedagogical knowledge, and integrating technology in classroom instruction.
2. For the challenges encountered. Educational institutions should invest in improving digital infrastructure by ensuring stable internet connectivity, providing reliable power sources, and maintaining functional devices. A dedicated technical support team must also be available to assist teachers in resolving software and hardware issues quickly.
3. For the effectiveness of digital learning. Program organizers should design digital learning sessions that align with specific lesson objectives and include interactive features to encourage teacher and student participation. Monitoring systems should be established to evaluate how digital learning influences teaching performance and student outcomes.
4. For teachers' recommendations. Teachers are encouraged to prepare before sessions by testing devices, checking connectivity, and familiarizing themselves with the required platforms. They should also select digital materials suited to lesson goals, seek technical help when necessary, participate in online learning communities for continuous development, review session recordings to reinforce understanding, and remain open to adopting new digital tools and teaching methods.

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