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## Future-Proofing Teachers in Reframing Teacher Education Curriculum in the Philippines: Basis for Policy Recommendations

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study aims to examine how the pre-service teacher education curriculum in the Philippines can be future-proofed through a comprehensive reframing aligned with national policy mandates and global education trends. Specifically, it analyzes the legal foundations shaping curriculum reform—including Republic Acts 10533 and 7722, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)—while identifying current implementation challenges, exploring innovation opportunities, assessing the role of teacher educators, and developing evidence-based policy recommendations.

**Methodology:** Employing a qualitative conceptual analysis, the study draws from national laws and policies, academic journal literature, and global frameworks from UNESCO, SEAMEO, and the OECD. Through content extraction, conceptual clustering, and thematic synthesis, the research develops a policy-responsive framework for curriculum transformation.

**Results:** Findings indicate that while legal mandates provide a robust foundation for reform, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) continue to face structural challenges, including inadequate digital integration, limited inclusive education practices, weak theory-practice alignment, and insufficient global benchmarking. Additionally, teacher educators—despite being central to curriculum delivery—often lack institutional support, professional development, and leadership recognition.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that future-proofing teacher education requires more than curriculum redesign; it demands systemic reform in faculty development, policy coherence, and pedagogical innovation. A conceptual framework is proposed to link legal mandates, curricular innovation, and teacher-educator empowerment toward building a responsive, inclusive, and globally competitive education system.

**Recommendations:** Key recommendations include mandating digital pedagogy and inclusive education as core courses, expanding structured practicum experiences, institutionalizing national faculty development programs, and establishing monitoring systems aligned with Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) performance. These findings can serve as a strategic guide for select government agencies in leading transformative change in Philippine teacher education.

**Keywords:** *Teacher Education Reform, Curriculum Reframing, Future-Proofing, Teacher Educators, Education Policy Philippines*

### INTRODUCTION

The Philippine education system is in a period of transformation shaped by national reforms, global shifts, and technological innovations. The introduction of the K to 12 program under Republic Act 10533 and the institutionalization of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) have significantly altered the



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expectations for teacher competencies. However, the reforms in teacher education—particularly in pre-service curriculum development—have not kept pace with these evolving demands (Laguitao et al., 2021; Amihan, et al., 2023). To build a responsive and resilient education workforce, the pre-service teacher education curriculum must be reframed with an eye toward future-readiness, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Numerous studies have highlighted the growing disconnect between the realities of 21st-century classrooms and the preparation received by pre-service teachers. Challenges such as digital illiteracy, inadequate exposure to inclusive education practices, and underdeveloped competencies in AI and educational technology continue to hamper teacher effectiveness (Morales et al., 2022; Emia et al., 2022). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these gaps, exposing weaknesses in remote instruction preparedness and emphasizing the urgent need for curriculum reform grounded in resilience and technological adaptability (Laguitao et al., 2021; Carvajal, 2023; Meylani, 2024). These systemic issues call for teacher education programs that do more than fulfill regulatory compliance—they must anticipate future needs and enable teachers to thrive in diverse, dynamic learning environments.

The concept of “future-proofing” teachers refers to equipping educators not just with current knowledge but with adaptive skills, digital fluency, global awareness, and the ability to navigate complexity and uncertainty (Arek-Bawa & Reddy, 2024). In the Philippine context, this also includes cultural competence, community engagement, and the ability to contextualize instruction. Studies by Dimayuga (2023) and Obmerga and de Guzman (2024) stress that teacher educators themselves must be empowered as curricular leaders and agents of change if reform is to take root. A future-ready curriculum must reflect both national legal mandates and global benchmarks, balancing policy alignment with pedagogical innovation.

At the regional level, ASEAN integration and the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) demand internationally benchmarked teacher qualifications. This positions Philippine pre-service teacher education within a broader policy landscape that now includes SDG 4, Education 2030, and the rapid expansion of AI, blended learning, and analytics-based pedagogies (Picardal, 2025; Carvajal, et al., 2024; Macaranas, 2023). Teacher educators, therefore, play a central role in translating these macro-level goals into meaningful learning outcomes. Their capacities, competencies, and development pathways must be central to any serious conversation about educational reform and future-proofing.

This study sought to address the urgent need for a comprehensive, policy-informed framework to reframe the pre-service teacher education curriculum in the Philippines. By analyzing the legal and institutional foundations, identifying structural and pedagogical challenges, and exploring transformative opportunities, the research will develop a conceptual model and policy recommendations to guide the future-proofing of Filipino teachers. In doing so, it aims to contribute not only to academic discourse but also to national policy dialogues spearheaded by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Teacher Education Council (TEC), and the Department of Education (DepEd).

## Background of the Study

Over the past decade, the Philippine education system has undergone a series of reforms intended to modernize, expand, and align it with global standards. The implementation of the K to 12 Program, the PPST, and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) commitments have placed teacher education at the heart of these reforms. A critical component of this transformation is the need to future-proof teachers—a process that goes beyond compliance and toward adaptability, resilience, and leadership in changing educational contexts. However, the curriculum of many Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) still lags in responsiveness to current realities and emerging global challenges.

Recent laws introduced after the release of the 2017 CHED PSGs underscore this urgency. These include Republic Act No. 11713 (2022), the Excellence in Teacher Education Act, which mandates the alignment of teacher education with national and global standards of excellence. Complementary to this are laws such as RA 11650 (2022) on Inclusive Education, RA 12028 (2024) on Academic Recovery, and RA 12080 (2024) which promotes mental health and well-being in basic education. Each of these pieces of legislation redefines the competencies required of teachers and by extension, the expectations from pre-service training. Despite this evolving policy context, there is insufficient integration of these mandates into the current pre-service teacher education curriculum, and even less focus on how teacher educators are prepared to lead such reforms.

Compounding this issue is the persistent gap between theoretical preparation and real-world classroom demands. Studies have shown that pre-service teachers feel underprepared in addressing inclusive education, implementing differentiated instruction, and utilizing digital tools—skills that are now essential in the post-pandemic,

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AI-influenced educational environment (Laguitao et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2022; Arek-Bawa & Reddy, 2024). Although RA 11476 (2020) on GMRC and RA 11510 (2020) on Alternative Learning Systems emphasize values-based and flexible learning, their curricular integration at the TEI level remains weak or unsystematic. Additionally, RA 11106 (2018) on Filipino Sign Language and other inclusion-related laws remain inconsistently implemented, revealing deep structural and pedagogical gaps.

At the core of this issue lies the teacher educator—the faculty member tasked with designing, delivering, and evaluating teacher preparation programs. Yet existing research seldom focuses on teacher educators as agents of curriculum innovation and transformation. As Obmerga and de Guzman (2024) note, faculty professional development is often seen as a compliance exercise rather than a sustained engagement in educational leadership and futures thinking. Dimayuga (2023) also highlights the lack of institutional frameworks that systematically prepare teacher educators to integrate AI, inclusive pedagogies, and community-responsive education into their teaching. Despite the passage of laws such as DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2024, which amended policy guidelines for the MATATAG Curriculum, TEIs still face limitations in aligning training outcomes with new mandates.

The research gap, therefore, lies in the absence of a conceptual and policy-informed framework that guides the future-proofing of teacher educators within the reframed teacher education curriculum. While existing literature covers aspects of digital pedagogy, curriculum standards, and inclusion, few studies comprehensively examine how laws and policies—especially those enacted after 2017—are being operationalized at the institutional level through teacher educators. This study addresses that gap by conducting a conceptual analysis of the intersections between policy, practice, and pedagogy to develop structured policy recommendations for CHED, TEC, and TEIs.

### Significance of the Research

This research carries substantial significance for policy makers, teacher education institutions, teacher educators, and the broader educational landscape in the Philippines. At a time when the education system is undergoing rapid transformation, this study responds to the critical need to align pre-service teacher education with national reforms, global educational standards, and future-ready competencies. By examining how teacher educators can be future-proofed through curriculum reframing, the study provides a unique contribution to educational reform discourse at both policy and institutional levels.

For policy makers and governing bodies such as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Teacher Education Council (TEC), this study provides evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in the latest national legislation—including the Excellence in Teacher Education Act (RA 11713), the Inclusive Education Act (RA 11650), and recent 2024 reforms such as the MATATAG Curriculum guidelines and the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program Act (RA 12028). It synthesizes how these laws and reforms can be operationalized within teacher education programs and offers a structured framework for policy alignment and implementation.

For teacher education institutions (TEIs), the study underscores the importance of transforming curriculum design to integrate digital pedagogy, inclusive education, mental health awareness, cultural competence, and global citizenship—key elements of future-ready teacher preparation. It identifies curricular gaps and proposes design innovations that will strengthen the linkage between theory and real-world teaching practices, ultimately improving graduate readiness and teacher effectiveness in diverse and evolving classroom settings.

The research is particularly significant for teacher educators, who are often overlooked in curriculum development discourse. By placing teacher educators at the center of analysis, the study emphasizes their roles as instructional leaders, curriculum designers, and professional mentors. It proposes strategies to build their capacities in emerging domains such as AI in education, research integration, community-based learning, and cross-cultural pedagogy. Through this lens, the study supports the reprofessionalization of teacher educators and enhances their relevance in shaping pre-service teachers equipped for future educational demands.

Finally, this research contributes to academic scholarship and educational development in Southeast Asia by bridging the research-policy-practice gap. It offers a conceptual framework grounded in Philippine realities but informed by global education discourse. As such, it can serve as a model for other developing countries navigating curriculum reform and teacher education transformation in the context of global educational shifts, technological disruption, and inclusive development goals.



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## Definition of Key Terms

In order to ensure clarity and conceptual precision, the following key terms are defined both conceptually and operationally as they are used in this study:

### Future-Proofing.

Conceptually, future-proofing refers to the strategic process of preparing individuals, systems, or organizations to remain adaptive, relevant, and effective amid changing contexts, particularly in the face of technological, societal, and environmental transformations. In the context of education, it involves cultivating forward-looking skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, adaptability, and global awareness.

Operationally, in this study, future-proofing pertains to the intentional preparation and empowerment of teacher educators to lead curriculum reform that equips pre-service teachers with competencies necessary for 21st-century learning environments, including the ability to integrate AI, embrace inclusion, apply research-based pedagogy, and respond to rapidly evolving classroom realities.

### Pre-Service Teacher Education Curriculum.

Conceptually, the pre-service teacher education curriculum is the structured set of courses, field experiences, and learning activities designed to prepare aspiring teachers before they enter professional practice. It typically includes general education, foundational pedagogy, content knowledge, and practice teaching.

Operationally, this term refers to the specific curriculum offered by Philippine Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) as governed by CHED Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs), particularly in relation to its responsiveness to laws like RA 11713 and RA 10533, and its alignment with standards like the PPST and the MATATAG Curriculum framework.

### Teacher Educators.

Conceptually, teacher educators are professionals who are responsible for the preparation and continuous development of teachers. They function as curriculum designers, mentors, pedagogical leaders, and researchers in colleges of education or normal schools.

In this study, teacher educators are defined operationally as faculty members of TEIs who play a pivotal role in designing and implementing pre-service education programs, and whose competencies and leadership are central to driving curriculum transformation aligned with policy reforms and future-proofing principles.

### Curriculum Reframing.

Curriculum reframing, conceptually, involves rethinking and restructuring curriculum content, delivery, and assessment to better reflect emerging needs, societal shifts, and evolving standards. It often entails a move from traditional, prescriptive models to more flexible, inclusive, and future-oriented frameworks.

Within this research, curriculum reframing is used to describe the strategic realignment of the Philippine pre-service teacher education curriculum in response to new legislative mandates (e.g., RA 11650, RA 12028), post-pandemic demands, digital learning imperatives, and the goal of producing future-ready Filipino teachers.

### Policy Recommendations.

Conceptually, policy recommendations are proposed courses of action based on evidence and analysis aimed at guiding decision-makers in addressing systemic issues or improving outcomes.

In this study, policy recommendations refer to the actionable strategies that will be proposed based on the findings of the conceptual analysis, directed at CHED, TEC, DepEd, and TEIs, to reform the pre-service teacher education curriculum and empower teacher educators as agents of change.

### Inclusive Education.

Conceptually, inclusive education means ensuring that all learners—regardless of ability, socio-economic background, gender, language, or ethnicity—have access to quality, equitable education within mainstream learning environments.

Operationally, this term includes legislative anchors such as RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act) and RA 11106 (Filipino Sign Language Act), and refers to the integration of inclusive strategies, differentiated instruction, and cultural competence in the pre-service curriculum and in the training of teacher educators.



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### CHED PSGs (Policies, Standards, and Guidelines).

The CHED PSGs are formal policy instruments issued by the Commission on Higher Education to govern academic program offerings in the Philippines, ensuring quality assurance and standardization.

In this study, the PSGs serve as a benchmark for assessing whether new policy developments and laws passed from have been effectively integrated into current pre-service curricula.

### Literature Review

#### 1. Legal and Policy Foundations of Teacher Education Reform

In the Philippine education system, policy and legal mandates have laid the foundation for substantial curriculum reforms in pre-service teacher education. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533) serves as a cornerstone, requiring that teacher education programs align with the competencies prescribed in the K to 12 curriculum. This alignment is not merely instructional but strategic, ensuring coherence between basic and higher education to produce competent and globally competitive educators (Amihan, et al, 2023). The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), institutionalized through DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, further emphasizes the need for a performance-based, standards-driven curriculum that systematically builds professional teacher competencies. The challenge, however, lies in the full operationalization of these mandates at the level of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), many of which still rely on outdated pedagogical approaches.

CHED's role under RA 7722 (Higher Education Act of 1994) has empowered it to periodically issue updated Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs) to improve higher education delivery, including teacher education. However, the 2017 PSGs are now lagging behind newer education laws such as RA 11713 (Excellence in Teacher Education Act of 2022), RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act), and RA 12080 (Mental Health in Basic Education Act of 2024), creating a widening gap between policy intentions and actual curricular content. As Semilla and Jalos (2024) observed, many TEIs have been slow to integrate inclusive education provisions and well-being initiatives into their pre-service curricula. This disconnect indicates that while the legal environment is robust and forward-thinking, curriculum implementation remains slow and inconsistent across institutions.

On the international stage, the Philippines' commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) calls for inclusive, equitable, and quality education and lifelong learning for all. This reinforces the demand for a teacher preparation system that is inclusive, research-driven, and globally benchmarked. Studies by Arek-Bawa and Reddy (2024) and Morales et al. (2024) confirm that without intentional alignment to these global frameworks, teacher education programs risk producing graduates ill-prepared for both national and international teaching contexts. Therefore, there is a strong rationale for examining how TEIs in the Philippines are interpreting and applying these legal and global mandates in their curriculum design and delivery—one of the central concerns of this research.

#### 2. Challenges in Current Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

The ongoing disconnect between theory and classroom realities is one of the most persistent challenges in Philippine pre-service teacher education. Many graduates report being ill-equipped to manage inclusive classrooms, differentiate instruction, or design assessments for diverse learners (Laguitao, Cubalit, & Teppang, 2021). This gap is exacerbated by the rigid structure of some teacher education curricula, which overly emphasize foundational theories without adequate contextualization or exposure to actual teaching scenarios. Emia, Lamosao, and Cabello (2022) documented narratives of pre-service teachers navigating the "new normal," revealing feelings of unpreparedness, anxiety, and pedagogical insecurity—particularly in remote or resource-limited environments. These experiences point to systemic weaknesses in how teacher training is structured and delivered.

Technological unpreparedness is another key concern. Despite CHED and DepEd's push for flexible and blended learning, many TEIs were unable to pivot effectively during the pandemic due to lack of infrastructure, faculty capacity, and digital pedagogical tools. Morales et al. (2022) highlighted these gaps in their study on STEM teachers' experiences, noting poor integration of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) in pre-service programs. These gaps not only affected instructional continuity but also undermined confidence among teacher candidates. Picardal (2025), in a study of preservice science teachers in Central Visayas, also found limited

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engagement with science inquiry-based digital tools and insufficient preparation for remote, multimodal teaching—skills now essential in post-pandemic classrooms.

Further, inclusion remains inconsistently addressed. Despite laws like RA 11650 and RA 11106 (Filipino Sign Language Act), inclusive pedagogies—covering SPED, gender responsiveness, indigenous learning, and multicultural education—are often covered superficially in course syllabi (Semilla & Jalos, 2024). Field experiences in inclusive or alternative learning systems are rare and not always systematically assessed during practicum. These conditions reveal not just curriculum gaps but also deeper institutional and philosophical disconnects in how teacher education conceptualizes inclusion, equity, and learner diversity. Addressing these challenges demands a comprehensive curriculum recalibration, not only for pre-service teachers, but also for the teacher educators guiding them.

### 3. Future-Proofing Through Transformation and Innovation

Future-proofing education involves preparing teachers for the complexities of modern and future classrooms through adaptive skills, digital literacy, and global competencies. Arek-Bawa and Reddy (2024) emphasized that teacher education must now embed strategic foresight—anticipating changes in pedagogy, learner needs, and technological landscapes. The integration of AI in education, data analytics for personalized learning, and cross-border recognition of teacher qualifications all require transformative curriculum approaches. Amihan, et al (2023) similarly stress that without embedding digital ethics, tech-literacy, and system-thinking, Philippine TEIs will fail to keep pace with ASEAN regional standards and the Education 2030 Framework.

In the Philippines, legislation has already paved the way for these innovations, particularly with RA 11713 (Excellence in Teacher Education Act) and DepEd's MATATAG Curriculum reforms. However, implementation at the TEI level has been inconsistent. Morales, Avilla, and Reyes (2024) noted the absence of structured support for teacher educators to integrate research-based, tech-driven, and inclusive strategies in their instruction. Meanwhile, Govender et al. (2025), in a South African context, proposed STEAME-focused future-proofing models emphasizing teacher creativity, innovation, and sustainability—all applicable to developing countries like the Philippines seeking to modernize education systems through capacity-building.

Moreover, the concept of local-global synergy in education has become more urgent. As Regala (2024) argues, future-proofing also requires responsiveness to community and cultural contexts. Models of "bridging leadership" that foster innovation through collaboration between schools, TEIs, and communities help situate curriculum reform in lived realities. These approaches underscore the need for teacher education not only to adopt international trends but to root them in local pedagogies. This study seeks to highlight these opportunities and explore how policy, practice, and innovation can converge to produce resilient, responsive, and globally competent Filipino educators.

### 4. The Pivotal Role of Teacher Educators in Curriculum Reframing

While curriculum reforms often target student outcomes, teacher educators—those responsible for preparing future teachers—are central to these reforms. Their role as curriculum designers, mentors, and instructional leaders places them at the forefront of change. Yet, Dimayuga (2023) found that many TEIs lack structured mechanisms to support the ongoing professional development of faculty members, particularly in integrating digital tools and inclusive pedagogies. In practice, teacher educators are often tasked with implementing top-down reforms with limited guidance, training, or institutional support. This limits their agency and effectiveness in curriculum transformation.

The readiness and capacity of teacher educators are crucial in aligning curriculum with legal mandates and 21st-century competencies. Morales et al. (2024) reported that institutions that invested in mentoring programs and CPD on research-based teaching methods produced better instructional outcomes among pre-service teachers. However, many Philippine TEIs still approach faculty development as a compliance measure, not a sustained, reflective, and strategic process. Banderlipe (2022), in a study of Metro Manila educators, emphasized the need for "cultural pedagogical anchoring"—training faculty not just in generic strategies but in context-sensitive and community-linked education models.



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Additionally, the leadership potential of teacher educators remains underutilized. Obmerga and de Guzman (2024) explored the mindset of academic leaders and found that institutional cultures often hinder innovation, particularly among millennial and Gen Z faculty members who may be more open to digital and inclusive reforms. Without clear leadership pipelines, collaboration platforms, or recognition mechanisms, teacher educators are unlikely to drive curricular change at scale. Therefore, this study places a strong emphasis on faculty empowerment as a pillar for future-proofing Philippine teacher education.

## 5. Policy Recommendations and Curriculum Innovation Frameworks

A wide range of studies point to actionable strategies for curriculum reform. Semilla and Jalos (2024) proposed developing an SDG-aligned curriculum that incorporates cultural competence, environmental education, and localized learning strategies. These recommendations are supported by CHED's policy direction to adopt Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and student-centered learning, though actual implementation remains varied across TEIs. Picardal (2025) emphasized the importance of experiential learning, suggesting deeper practicum immersion in rural, SPED, and ALS contexts to prepare pre-service teachers for diversity in the field. Such experiential approaches are essential for building empathy, adaptability, and real-world teaching resilience.

Amihan et al. (2023) recommended the institutionalization of digital pedagogy courses within teacher education programs. These should include not only content delivery but ethical and reflective use of technology in learning. The introduction of core courses in AI for education, data literacy, and blended learning design could help TEIs comply with both national reforms and international teaching standards. In addition, Morales et al. (2024) suggested integrating modules on global citizenship and climate-responsive education as cross-cutting themes within professional education courses. These proposals align with the broader goals of RA 11713 and global benchmarks like UNESCO's Teacher Education 2030.

Lastly, frameworks for policy coherence and monitoring are vital. Many scholars advocate for quality assurance mechanisms that link curriculum reform to Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) outcomes, faculty CPD tracking, and institutional performance metrics (Dimayuga, 2023; Banderlipe, 2022). Strengthening school-university-community partnerships and promoting co-developed field experiences can bridge the gap between policy and practice. This study builds on these models by synthesizing legal mandates, empirical evidence, and conceptual insights to produce a practical and future-ready policy framework for the TEC, CHED, and other stakeholders.

## Synthesis

The literature reviewed presents a rich but fragmented picture of the ongoing transformation in Philippine teacher education, particularly the efforts to future-proof educators through curriculum reform. Common across studies is a recognition of the urgent need to align pre-service teacher education programs with evolving policy mandates, technological advancements, and inclusive teaching principles. Scholars such as Amihan, et al (2023) and Semilla and Jalos (2024) agree that the current curriculum offered by Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) lacks full integration of new legal mandates like RA 11713, SDG 4, and PPST. However, while Amihan et al. focus on macro-policy alignment and ASEAN integration, Semilla and Jalos emphasize grassroots contextualization through cultural responsiveness and localized instruction. This divergence highlights the need for a framework that bridges global competitiveness with local relevance—a gap this study aims to address.

Several authors also converge on the issue of institutional unpreparedness, especially in digital pedagogy and inclusive education. Morales et al. (2022, 2024) and Picardal (2025) provide evidence that both faculty and pre-service teachers struggle to transition to tech-integrated, multimodal teaching environments. Their studies confirm the lack of infrastructure, training, and pedagogical design aligned with post-pandemic realities. In contrast, Regala (2024) and Govender et al. (2025) offer innovative models such as "bridging leadership" and STEAME-based future-proofing, which emphasize collaboration, creativity, and systems thinking. While the former authors reveal gaps, the latter propose frameworks—yet no study fully situates these solutions within the Philippine policy and institutional ecosystem. This underscores the need for an integrated conceptual and policy-based model rooted in the Philippine context.



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A crucial insight drawn from the literature is the often overlooked role of teacher educators as agents of change. Dimayuga (2023), Obmerga and de Guzman (2024), and Banderlippe (2022) all point to institutional cultures that treat faculty development as peripheral. Their findings suggest that teacher educators are frequently left out of reform conversations, even though they are the ones delivering and shaping pre-service curricula. This study builds on their work by proposing a future-proofing lens focused not just on what is taught but on who teaches it—positioning teacher educators as pivotal in translating reforms into practice. Unlike previous studies, which treat curriculum reform and teacher professional development as separate domains, this research merges them into one coherent framework.

The research gap, therefore, lies in the lack of a unified, policy-informed conceptual framework that aligns national reforms, global competencies, and institutional realities with the roles and readiness of teacher educators. While individual studies explore aspects of inclusion, digital pedagogy, curriculum content, and policy alignment, none offer a comprehensive model that synthesizes these dimensions to guide curriculum reframing and faculty empowerment. Moreover, existing literature has yet to fully integrate the post-2017 legal reforms (e.g., RA 11650, RA 12028, and the 2024 MATATAG Curriculum guidelines) into the academic discourse on teacher education.

This study justifies its purpose by addressing this multidimensional gap. By examining legal foundations, identifying challenges, exploring opportunities, analyzing teacher educator roles, and developing policy-based recommendations, it aims to offer a future-ready conceptual framework tailored to the Philippine education system. The research is not only timely but essential, as it will serve both as a diagnostic tool and a strategic blueprint for TEC, CHED, DepEd, and TEIs in recalibrating the pre-service teacher education curriculum toward a more inclusive, adaptive, and globally competitive teaching force.

## Research Objectives

This study aims to examine how the pre-service teacher education curriculum in the Philippines can be future-proofed through a comprehensive reframing aligned with national policy mandates and global education trends. Specifically, it analyzes the legal foundations shaping curriculum reform—including Republic Acts 10533 and 7722, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)—while identifying current implementation challenges, exploring innovation opportunities, assessing the role of teacher educators, and developing evidence-based policy recommendations.

The study aimed to accomplish the following:

1. To examine the legal and policy foundations that shape and influence the direction of curriculum reform in pre-service teacher education in the Philippines.
2. To identify key challenges that hinder effective implementation of the pre-service teacher education curriculum, particularly in areas such as digital readiness, inclusive education, theory-practice integration, and alignment with global teacher mobility standards.
3. To explore transformative opportunities for curriculum innovation that are responsive to post-pandemic realities, emerging digital tools and AI technologies, localization needs, and ASEAN integration goals.
4. To analyze the role, readiness, and capacity of teacher educators as curriculum leaders and agents of instructional change, particularly in integrating policy reforms, educational technologies, and inclusive pedagogies in teacher preparation programs.
5. To develop evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at curriculum redesign, professional development, and institutional reform that align with national mandates and international benchmarks.
6. To synthesize findings into a conceptual framework that supports future-proofing in teacher education to equip both pre-service teachers and teacher educators for the demands of 21st-century classrooms.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research design utilizing conceptual analysis to examine how teacher educators in the Philippines can be future-proofed through the reframing of the pre-service teacher education curriculum. Conceptual analysis is well-suited for this inquiry as it facilitates the critical unpacking of complex educational concepts such as “future-proofing,” “curriculum reform,” “teacher educator readiness,” and “global



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competencies." Rather than relying on empirical hypothesis testing, the study seeks to generate an integrative conceptual framework and policy-informed recommendations that address existing gaps in Philippine teacher education.

The research draws upon a broad range of data sources to ensure a comprehensive and contextually relevant analysis. These include primary government documents such as Republic Acts 10533, 11713, and 11650; DepEd policy issuances including Order No. 42, s. 2017 and the 2024 update of the MATATAG Curriculum; and the CHED Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs) for Teacher Education. Complementing these are peer-reviewed academic studies and policy reports published from 2020 to 2025 in reputable journals, and databases. The study also incorporates global benchmarks and regional policy frameworks including UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda, OECD's Global Teaching Insights, and SEAMEO's education policy documents. These sources provide both local and international perspectives essential to the synthesis of policy, curriculum, and practice in teacher education.

The analytical process follows a four-phase strategy. First, key content is extracted from the selected documents and literature, focusing on core themes such as policy alignment, digital pedagogies, inclusive education, and teacher agency. These textual data are coded to reflect curricular priorities, implementation challenges, and conceptual relevance. Second, the coded data are categorized into conceptual clusters, allowing the researcher to examine relationships and patterns among policy mandates, institutional practices, and the professional capacities of teacher educators. These clusters highlight the recurring tensions and synergies in the field—such as the disconnect between inclusion mandates and actual classroom practice, or between digital literacy policies and on-the-ground implementation.

In the third phase, these clusters are synthesized into a comprehensive conceptual framework that visualizes the interaction between national policy contexts, global education shifts, teacher educator development, and curriculum transformation. This framework not only maps existing gaps but also identifies leverage points for reform and innovation. Finally, in the fourth phase, the study develops a series of evidence-based recommendations, strategically designed to support the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Teacher Education Council (TEC), and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in recalibrating pre-service education toward future-readiness and policy coherence.

To deepen the analytical rigor of the study, three interrelated theoretical lenses are employed. Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1997) frames the capacity of teacher educators and institutions to critically reflect and adapt to new pedagogical realities. This theory supports the cultivation of reflective practitioners who can challenge existing assumptions and embrace new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. Critical Pedagogy, as articulated by Freire (2000), reinforces the importance of empowering educators and learners to engage in socially responsive and justice-oriented educational practices. It serves as a lens for evaluating how curriculum design can promote inclusion, equity, and participatory learning. Finally, Strategic Foresight and Futures Thinking (Slaughter, 2004) provides the forward-oriented foundation for this research, enabling an anticipatory approach to educational policy, technology integration, and long-term systemic resilience. Collectively, these lenses support a multidimensional examination of teacher education reform—bridging legal mandates, pedagogical innovation, faculty capacity, and systemic policy transformation.



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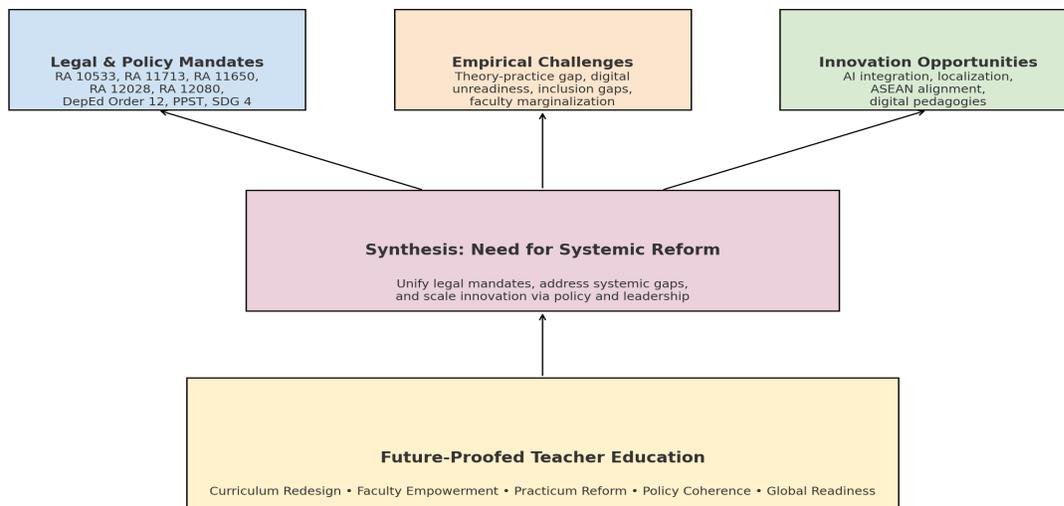


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**DISCUSSION**



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Future-Proofing Pre-Service Teacher Education in the Philippines**

The conceptual framework underpinning this study on future-proofing pre-service teacher education in the Philippines integrates three interrelated domains: legal and policy mandates, empirical challenges, and innovation opportunities. These dimensions serve as the structural foundation for developing a strategic and transformative approach to curriculum reform, institutional leadership, and teacher preparation in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

At the apex of the framework are the legal and policy foundations that shape and compel reform. This includes a suite of national laws and policies—Republic Act 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act), RA 11713 (Excellence in Teacher Education Act), RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act), RA 12028 (Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program Act), and RA 12080 (Mental Health and Well-being Promotion Act)—which collectively mandate the alignment of teacher education curricula with inclusive, competency-based, and context-responsive outcomes. Complementing these are the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2024 (MATATAG Curriculum), and international benchmarks such as SDG 4, UNESCO’s ESD goals, and SEAMEO’s Strategic Plan, all of which advocate for high-quality, inclusive, and globally aligned teacher development systems.

Interacting with these mandates are the empirical challenges revealed through literature and policy analysis. These include the persistent gap between theoretical coursework and practical teaching realities, the underutilization of digital tools in instruction, inconsistent adoption of inclusive pedagogies, and the marginal role often assigned to teacher educators in policy formulation and curriculum innovation. These issues reflect systemic weaknesses in institutional design, quality assurance, and faculty development that hinder the effective implementation of otherwise sound legal directives.

In parallel, the framework highlights a rich array of innovation opportunities that, if scaled properly, can significantly enhance the quality and relevance of teacher education. These include the integration of artificial intelligence and digital pedagogies into pre-service training, the localization of content to reflect indigenous knowledge systems and community needs, and regional alignment with ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements to facilitate teacher mobility and internationalization. These opportunities are not standalone solutions but require policy coherence, institutional support, and deliberate faculty empowerment to be realized.

At the center of the framework lies the synthesis node, representing the systemic integration of policy, practice, and innovation. It emphasizes the urgent need for a coordinated approach that not only responds to policy



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mandates but also addresses implementation gaps and scales transformative strategies. This node underscores the importance of strategic alignment—where faculty development, curriculum design, and field-based learning are harmonized through collaborative governance involving CHED, TEC, DepEd, and TEIs.

Finally, the outcome of this integrative process is the realization of a future-proofed teacher education system. This system is characterized by curriculum redesign anchored on real-world competencies, empowered teacher educators who serve as curriculum leaders and instructional change agents, enhanced practicum models that reflect contextual diversity, and a robust monitoring mechanism that links pre-service preparation to teacher performance and student outcomes. Such a system is not only compliant with current legal mandates but anticipates future educational needs—preparing teachers who are globally competent, socially responsive, and professionally agile.

### 1. Legal and Policy Foundations That Shape and Influence the Direction of Curriculum Reform in Pre-Service Teacher Education in the Philippines

An analysis of national policy issuances and international education frameworks affirms that the Philippine legal infrastructure provides a comprehensive and evolving foundation for curriculum reform in pre-service teacher education. At its core, Republic Act No. 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, mandates that all teacher education programs be aligned with the K to 12 curriculum, requiring future educators to develop competencies responsive to 21st-century learner needs. This is reinforced by Republic Act No. 7722, the Higher Education Act of 1994, which authorizes the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to periodically recalibrate its Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs), such as CHED Memorandum Orders 74 and 75 (s. 2017), to remain responsive to educational trends and global demands. Despite these mandates, empirical evidence and literature (Amihan, et al, 2023) reveal persistent gaps in translating these policies into coherent curricular practices within Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

The Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), institutionalized under DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, adds further clarity by defining the expected competencies of beginning teachers. However, integration of these standards into instructional design, assessment practices, and field experiences remains uneven (Semilla & Jalos, 2024). Complementing these legal foundations is Republic Act No. 11713 (2022), also known as the Excellence in Teacher Education Act, which institutionalizes reforms for teacher education delivery and governance, placing quality assurance at the center of program development.

In the post-pandemic context, a new wave of legislation has further redefined teacher education imperatives. Republic Act No. 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022) mandates the creation of inclusive and equitable education systems for learners with disabilities, requiring TEIs to adapt inclusive pedagogies and support systems. Likewise, RA 12080 (2024) underscores the importance of integrating mental health and well-being in basic education, which has implications for teacher readiness and curriculum support. Meanwhile, RA 12028 (Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program Act of 2024)\* emphasizes the need for remedial and flexible learning programs, requiring teacher education programs to equip candidates for responsive and differentiated instruction.

On the global stage, the Philippines' commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) reinforces the national obligation to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education. However, as noted by Arek-Bawa and Reddy (2024) and Morales et al. (2024), many TEIs continue to lack the institutional capacity and curricular mechanisms to translate these international commitments into practice. The policy agenda is further shaped by UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development Goals (2017), OECD's Global Teaching Insights (2020), and the SEAMEO Strategic Plan 2021–2030, all of which emphasize digital competence, inclusive pedagogy, and teacher mobility within the ASEAN region.

Taken together, these legal and policy directives reflect a forward-looking and globally aligned education agenda. Yet, the absence of a unified implementation strategy—particularly around policy monitoring, curriculum alignment, and TEI accountability—continues to hinder systemic reform. A stronger policy-practice integration mechanism is essential to translate legal mandates into transformative teacher education that is locally responsive and globally competitive.



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## 2. Key challenges that hinder effective implementation of the pre-service teacher education curriculum

Findings reveal a range of persistent challenges that hinder the effective implementation of the pre-service teacher education curriculum in the Philippines. One of the most pressing issues is the enduring gap between theoretical preparation and practical classroom realities. Studies by Laguitao, Cubalit, and Teppang (2021) and Emia et al. (2022) consistently show that many graduates feel ill-equipped to handle differentiated instruction, diverse learning needs, or dynamic classroom environments. The limited exposure to inclusive pedagogies, especially for learners with disabilities or from marginalized communities, highlights a disconnect between national mandates like RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act) and actual curricular and practicum design. The literature also confirms that field experiences are often insufficiently scaffolded, and inclusive teaching competencies remain peripheral rather than integral to pre-service training (Semilla & Jalos, 2024). These gaps underscore the need for more deeply embedded, outcomes-based integration of inclusive education in both coursework and practicum.

Another critical challenge is digital readiness, both among pre-service teachers and the teacher educators who train them. Morales et al. (2022) and Picardal (2025) highlight that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the lack of preparedness among TEIs in delivering digital and blended learning modalities. Most pre-service teachers had minimal training in designing and facilitating technology-enhanced instruction, revealing shortcomings in both faculty development and institutional infrastructure. While the Philippine education system recognizes the importance of digital transformation, implementation remains patchy, particularly in provincial TEIs. Moreover, the lack of alignment with global teacher mobility standards, such as those promoted under ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs), further limits the competitiveness of Filipino teachers in the international labor market (Amihan et al., 2023). These challenges reflect not only gaps in technical capacity but also a deeper structural issue: the absence of a future-oriented, globally benchmarked, and equity-driven approach in many teacher education institutions. The study affirms that curriculum reform must go beyond surface revisions and instead require systemic recalibration that links legal compliance with pedagogical transformation and international standards.

## 3. Transformative opportunities for curriculum innovation

The findings underscore significant transformative opportunities emerging within Philippine pre-service teacher education, particularly as the system responds to post-pandemic realities and embraces rapid digital transformation. The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a shift in teaching modalities and expectations, opening up the discourse on technology integration, flexible learning, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in instruction. Morales, Avilla, and Reyes (2024) emphasized that innovations such as AI-assisted learning platforms and blended teaching models are reshaping how educators engage with learners, necessitating a corresponding transformation in teacher training programs. Likewise, Govender et al. (2025) advocate for STEAME-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math, and Entrepreneurship) models that equip future teachers with interdisciplinary, adaptive, and creativity-driven competencies. The literature reveals that while some TEIs have begun introducing digital pedagogy courses, most still lack structured modules on AI ethics, learning analytics, and blended instructional design. These gaps offer a crucial opportunity for curriculum designers to embed digital fluency not as an elective but as a core requirement across education programs.

Another transformative opportunity lies in balancing global and local imperatives. ASEAN integration frameworks such as the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) present opportunities for Filipino teachers to gain regional mobility and recognition, but this requires curriculum benchmarking against international standards. Amihan, et al (2023) stress the importance of aligning Philippine teacher education with ASEAN teacher quality frameworks to promote cross-border teaching qualifications. At the same time, scholars like Semilla and Jalos (2024) argue for the inclusion of community-responsive and culturally grounded content, such as Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), mother tongue-based instruction, and environmental education. These findings suggest that future-proofing efforts must be dual in nature—embedding global competencies while rooting practice in the local context. Regala's (2024) model of "bridging leadership" also points to the power of co-created innovation between communities and institutions. Thus, the post-pandemic period, coupled with technological and regional developments, presents a window of opportunity for curriculum leaders to reimagine

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teacher education as a platform not just for compliance but for transformation. This calls for curricular innovations that are inclusive, data-informed, globally aware, and locally grounded—redefining both the content and purpose of teacher preparation in the 21st century.

#### 4. Role, readiness, and capacity of teacher educators as curriculum leaders and agents of instructional change

The analysis of both literature and policy frameworks reveals that teacher educators play a pivotal yet often underrecognized role in advancing curricular reform in Philippine teacher education. As faculty members in TEIs, they are uniquely positioned to design, deliver, and evaluate courses that align with national policy mandates such as the PPST, RA 11713, and the MATATAG Curriculum. However, as observed in studies by Dimayuga (2023) and Banderipe (2022), many teacher educators lack sustained professional development opportunities that build their capacities in emerging areas such as digital pedagogy, inclusive education, and research-based instruction. These scholars point to a systemic issue where faculty development is treated as an administrative requirement rather than a transformative process. The literature further shows that, despite the introduction of AI and blended learning in the broader education sector, few TEIs have institutionalized these innovations through structured CPD (Continuing Professional Development) programs tailored to teacher educators. As a result, there is a growing competency gap between the aspirations of national education policy and the day-to-day practices of those entrusted to train future teachers.

Additionally, institutional culture and leadership structures significantly affect teacher educators' ability to act as curriculum leaders. Obmerga and de Guzman (2024) found that academic leadership in many TEIs often operates within rigid hierarchical systems that discourage innovation, especially among younger or more digitally competent faculty. Without clear institutional pathways for collaboration, experimentation, and recognition, teacher educators are less likely to initiate or sustain reform-oriented practices. This limits their capacity to fully integrate inclusive pedagogies, localized content, and tech-enhanced instruction into their teaching. In contrast, Morales et al. (2024) noted that institutions with mentorship models and community-based research initiatives produced more adaptive and engaged faculty members, which in turn positively influenced the preparation of pre-service teachers. These findings reinforce the synthesis conclusion that empowering teacher educators is not ancillary—it is central to curriculum reform. Therefore, future-proofing efforts must begin with strategic investments in teacher educators' competencies, leadership development, and institutional support systems that recognize and enable their role as agents of instructional and curricular transformation.

#### 5. Policy Recommendations Aimed at Curriculum Redesign, Professional Development, and Institutional Reform

Building upon the intersecting findings from legal mandates, curricular implementation gaps, and transformative opportunities, this study proposes a set of policy recommendations designed to future-proof teacher education in the Philippines. A central imperative is the institutionalization of curriculum recalibration across Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), grounded in the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), Republic Act No. 11713 (Excellence in Teacher Education Act), and RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act). In addition, the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program Act (RA 12028) and the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-being Promotion Act (RA 12080) signal the need for curricula to integrate remedial learning design, psychosocial preparedness, and learner support. These emerging policy directives, alongside SDG 4 and frameworks like the SEAMEO Strategic Plan (2021–2030), collectively emphasize inclusivity, resilience, and innovation in teacher training.

To operationalize this vision, CHED and the Teacher Education Council (TEC) must mandate a core curriculum structure that embeds digital pedagogies, AI in education, inclusive and culturally responsive teaching, indigenous knowledge systems, and differentiated instruction as standard—not optional—components of pre-service training. This alignment must also reflect DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2024, which updates the MATATAG Curriculum and calls for stronger linkages between basic education reforms and teacher preparation. Global benchmarks, such as the OECD's Global Teaching InSights and ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs), further necessitate the internationalization of Philippine teacher education without compromising its contextual relevance.



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Equally important is the reframing of professional development for teacher educators as a strategic investment. As Morales et al. (2024) and Dimayuga (2023) stress, building faculty capacity in blended instruction, community-engaged learning, research integration, and policy alignment is critical. This study proposes the creation of regional and national centers of excellence for faculty development, supported by CHED, DepEd, and TEC, to deliver sustained mentoring, cross-institutional collaboration, and instructional innovation training. Additionally, RA 11713 mandates a shared governance model, which can be leveraged to embed faculty empowerment as a core strategy in teacher education reform.

The strengthening of practicum design and clinical experiences must also be prioritized. TEIs should be required to implement extended, mentored field placements in diverse and inclusive learning environments—such as SPED centers, rural schools, indigenous communities, and alternative learning systems (ALS). These experiences must be purposefully aligned with PPST indicators and LET performance criteria. Finally, an evidence-based national monitoring and evaluation system must be developed to track the impact of pre-service curriculum changes on teacher performance, learner outcomes, and licensure examination results. These policy recommendations are not only responsive to existing mandates but also anticipate future disruptions and opportunities—thereby offering a comprehensive pathway toward a resilient, globally benchmarked, and socially responsive teacher education system.

## Conclusions

This study set out to explore how Philippine pre-service teacher education can be future-proofed through a strategic reframing of its curriculum, grounded in updated legal mandates, responsive to post-pandemic realities, and aligned with both local priorities and global benchmarks. Using a qualitative conceptual analysis approach, the study examined national laws, education standards, institutional practices, and international frameworks, yielding six interrelated conclusions that reflect the evolving landscape of teacher preparation in the country.

First, the research affirms that the Philippine legal and policy architecture—anchored in Republic Acts 10533, 7722, 11713, 11650, and recent measures like RA 12028 and RA 12080—together with the PPST and SDG 4—forms a strong legislative and normative foundation for curriculum reform in teacher education. However, despite the proliferation of progressive policies, there exists a persistent implementation gap in many Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), where these mandates are not yet systematically embedded in curriculum content, pedagogical practice, or institutional quality assurance systems.

Second, the study identifies a set of recurring structural challenges that continue to hinder pre-service teacher education in the Philippines. These include underdeveloped digital integration, a disjoint between theory and classroom realities, uneven adoption of inclusive education practices, and weak alignment with global teacher mobility standards such as those outlined in ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs). These deficiencies are particularly evident in rural and under-resourced TEIs, where infrastructure, faculty development, and policy compliance mechanisms remain limited.

Third, the study reveals a range of transformative opportunities arising from the integration of AI and educational technologies, localization of curriculum, inclusive pedagogies, and post-pandemic learning recovery. Recent policy issuances like the MATATAG Curriculum (DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2024) and the Academic Recovery Act (RA 12028) further strengthen the imperative to reframe curriculum toward resilience, flexibility, and contextual responsiveness. These opportunities can empower TEIs to bridge global competencies with culturally rooted and community-aligned approaches.

Fourth, the research underscores the critical leadership role of teacher educators in curriculum implementation and instructional innovation. Yet many remain marginalized in policy discourse and under-supported in terms of continuous professional development (CPD), digital competence, and pedagogical leadership. Without targeted investments in their professional growth—through structured mentoring, policy literacy, and innovation ecosystems—the momentum for reform will remain fragile.

Fifth, the study generated a set of evidence-informed policy recommendations for CHED, TEC, DepEd, and TEIs. These include mandatory curriculum recalibration, integration of digital and inclusive education, creation of

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regional centers of excellence for faculty development, expansion of contextualized practicum experiences, and the institutionalization of a national monitoring system aligned with PPST indicators and LET performance data.

Finally, the research culminates in the formulation of a forward-looking conceptual framework for future-proofing teacher education in the Philippines. This framework brings together policy mandates, educational innovations, institutional capacity-building, and learner-centered practices into a unified, scalable model for reform. It also serves as a basis for future empirical validation, pilot implementation, and policy dialogue across the country's teacher education ecosystem.

In conclusion, future-proofing teacher education is not a matter of curricular revision alone—it is a strategic, systemic, and moral imperative. The educators we prepare today must be equipped not only for today's challenges but for tomorrow's uncertainties. A reimagined teacher education system—resilient, inclusive, innovative, and grounded in both local wisdom and global aspirations—is key to transforming learning in the 21st century and beyond.

## Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered to guide the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Teacher Education Council (TEC), the Department of Education (DepEd), and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in future-proofing pre-service teacher education in the Philippines through curriculum redesign, faculty development, and institutional reform:

### 1. Mandate Curriculum Recalibration Anchored on National and Global Frameworks

CHED, in collaboration with TEC, must implement a system-wide recalibration of teacher education curricula, ensuring alignment with RA 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act), RA 11713 (Excellence in Teacher Education Act), RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act), the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), and global mandates such as SDG 4. The recalibration should not be limited to compliance; rather, it must embed these policy frameworks into learning outcomes, course content, assessment designs, and practicum programs to ensure coherence and accountability.

### 2. Institutionalize Faculty Capacity Building and TEI Strengthening

To address persistent gaps in policy implementation, CHED and TEC should mandate the establishment of regional centers of excellence for teacher educator development, focusing on blended instruction, inclusive pedagogy, AI-enhanced learning, and 21st-century skills integration. Informed by RA 11713 and aligned with the SEAMEO and UNESCO frameworks, faculty development should be systemic, competency-based, and embedded in institutional quality assurance structures.

### 3. Integrate Digital Pedagogy, AI, and Inclusive Education Across Core Courses

CHED must require the inclusion of core courses on Digital Pedagogies and AI in Education across all teacher education programs. Additionally, modules on inclusive education, covering teaching strategies for learners with disabilities, indigenous groups, and linguistically diverse communities, must be infused across both general education and professional education subjects—reflecting the intent of RA 11650, RA 12028 (Academic Recovery Act), and RA 12080 (Mental Health and Well-being Act).

### 4. Empower Teacher Educators as Curriculum Leaders and Change Agents

Recognizing teacher educators as the fulcrum of reform, CHED and DepEd must establish policy incentives that promote their leadership in curriculum innovation, action research, and localized pedagogy. TEIs should provide protected time, funding support, and peer networks to enable faculty to engage in cross-sectoral collaboration, research-based teaching, and community-engaged learning—aligned with the shared governance model under RA 11713.

### 5. Redesign Practicum and Field-Based Learning for Contextual Responsiveness

The pre-service practicum model must be enhanced to include longer, mentored immersions in diverse educational contexts such as SPED centers, indigenous schools, remote areas, and alternative learning systems.

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These placements must be structured around PPST indicators and DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2024, which emphasizes curriculum contextualization and learner diversity. A national practicum framework should guide TEIs in ensuring equity, quality, and relevance in field experiences.

## 6. Establish a National Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System Linked to Key Outcomes

CHED and TEC must design and implement a national M&E system that connects teacher education inputs to outputs such as Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) performance, employability, and teaching effectiveness. This system should integrate metrics for digital fluency, instructional adaptability, and inclusive teaching competence, and feed directly into curriculum review cycles and policy feedback loops.

## 7. Promote School-University-Community Partnerships for Relevance and Innovation

To bridge academic preparation with field realities, TEIs should institutionalize partnerships with public schools, LGUs, NGOs, and industry partners. These collaborations must co-create curriculum content, co-design field learning models, and support community-based action research. Such engagements can ensure teacher education remains responsive to local contexts, while advancing national and regional development goals.

## Basis for Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations advanced in this study are grounded on an integrated analysis of legal mandates, empirical challenges, and emerging opportunities identified throughout the conceptual investigation. These interrelated bases collectively establish a compelling rationale for urgent and strategic reform in Philippine pre-service teacher education.

At the core of these recommendations are binding legal and policy frameworks, including Republic Act 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013), Republic Act 7722 (Higher Education Act of 1994), Republic Act 11713 (Excellence in Teacher Education Act of 2022), and Republic Act 11650 (Inclusive Education Act of 2022). Together with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the global commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), these policies mandate the recalibration of teacher education programs to ensure they are inclusive, competency-based, future-ready, and aligned with both national priorities and international teaching standards. As highlighted in the literature and content analysis, while these mandates are robust in intent, their curricular integration within Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) remains partial, fragmented, or uneven (Amihan et al., 2023; Semilla & Jalos, 2024).

Empirical findings also reveal persistent structural and pedagogical challenges that reinforce the need for policy-driven interventions. Among these are the misalignment between theoretical instruction and classroom realities (Laguitao et al., 2021), the limited digital readiness of both faculty and students (Morales et al., 2022), and the inconsistent adoption of inclusive pedagogical practices despite enabling legislation. Furthermore, the marginalization of teacher educators from reform leadership roles and the lack of professional development support systems signal institutional barriers that hinder innovation (Dimayuga, 2023; Obmerga & de Guzman, 2024).

In contrast to these challenges, the study also identifies transformative opportunities that can be unlocked through deliberate policy action. These include the integration of digital and AI-based instruction, the contextualization of curriculum through indigenous knowledge and community partnerships, and the internationalization of teacher preparation through ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements. Drawing from studies by Govender et al. (2025), Morales et al. (2024), and Regala (2024), the findings affirm that these innovations can only be scaled and sustained if anchored on clear, coherent, and forward-thinking policy guidelines.

Taken together, these three dimensions—policy imperatives, system-level challenges, and innovation potential—form a strong and multi-faceted basis for the policy recommendations offered. They point to a singular conclusion: future-proofing Philippine teacher education requires not only compliance with existing laws but a proactive, evidence-informed, and systems-level reform agenda that empowers teacher educators, modernizes curriculum design, and realigns institutional goals with both national and global education priorities.



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