RESPONSIVE TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS CREATING SKILL-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AMID PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This paper was conceptualized to identify the skill-based learning opportunities for learners appropriate for the pandemic, determine its impact after the implementation and eventually identify the issues and challenges to address them. The researcher used focused group discussion and interview among the teachers, parents, and learners as to the academic performance of the learners to gather reliable, accurate, and relevant information that are crucial to the study. The research was carried out qualitatively. Data were primarily taken from the respondents who were directly involved in the study. It can be deduced that the innovation is effective and was able to meet and address the difficulties being encountered by the learners in learning the necessary skills as TechVoc students. They were able to understand the lesson and perform the required competencies expected of them.

Keywords: Technical-Vocational Program, Competency-Based Curriculum, Skill-Based Learning

Introduction

Education is an important vehicle of acquiring essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve one's quality of life. It is a ray of light in darkness that plays a significant role in the progress of the human race. Education is interconnected with curriculum which is defined as the standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. Curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every student has access to rigorous academic experiences. To make this possible, a responsive curriculum must be provided to address the changing needs of students, bridging the gap between universal knowledge and theories, contextualizing based on the needs and nature of learners, continuously changing realities of everyday life and the world of work thus making them appropriate with the demands of time. This calls for the birth of Technical-Vocational Education in public secondary schools. It is designed to provide utmost development of the individual as a total person equipped with technical-vocational and academic competencies, proper work ethics and desirable values that will make the person economically stable, responsible, law-abiding, productive and competitive in the world of work. The Technical- Vocational School is utilizing a competency- based curriculum that mainly focuses on the skills, integration, and practical application of learned facts, skills, and affective qualities.

Consequently, quality education which is the end goal of responsive curriculum is much more achievable and doable. It is much more focused on developing a balanced set of capabilities for learners to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies, and enhance individual well-being. The application of skill-based learning in the teaching-learning process in TechVoc curriculum helps learners to become independent thinkers, prepares them for the challenges in the future and motivates them to think logically, analyze concepts and apply their insights. These characteristics will be the strong weapons of the Department of Education of producing quality and holistic learners possessing 21st century skills.

Specifically, the program seeks to equip students with certifiable technical, vocational, and industrial and other relevant skills to be productive citizen of the country, improve high school (HS) students' performance in skills and academic competence, achievement tests, accreditation and equivalency for certification programs and upgrade the competency of tech- voc teachers in the delivery of basic and certifiable skills in different courses through skills trainings, seminars and formal studies.

The school is still on its quest of developing graduates who are equipped with technical-vocational skills and academic excellence through performance-based learning and eventually be subjected to national assessment to determine their capability. Our school is a TESDA Accredited Assessment Center for Food Processing NC 2 and Aquaculture NC 2, each qualification having two inhouse Accredited Assessors, with a total of 4 was able to produce NC graduates for so many years. It has competent teachers/assessors that could assess the competency of our learners and State of the Art laboratory that could cater the needs and best working environment of our graduating students. This is a performance-based assessment wherein the students are showcasing and demonstrating their learnings in front of the assessors. But due to the pandemic, it has been two years that our graduates have not been able to undergo this kind of assessment.

Our teachers, students, parents, and the school in general are trying their best to come up with the appropriate intervention taking into consideration the strict observance of IATF protocols for the health and safety of all.

The researcher envisions continuously improving the quality of TSF learners by providing them a responsive Technical- Vocational program that will directly create skill- based learning opportunities amidst these challenging times. It is a timely response for addressing the issues and concerns being faced by the school in the implementation of its Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan that is tailored to the modalities of learning chosen by the learners and parents. The conceptualization of the BE-LCP on the first attempt delivering education in the doorsteps of the learners seemed to be challenging, thus, this research may contribute eventually to the enhancement, modifications, and adaptability of the said document. The intervention that will be created out of this research may become of great help to the teachers in the delivery of their tasks as facilitator of learning.

Action Research Objectives

1. Identify the skill-based learning opportunities appropriate for this pandemic.
2. Prepare a project proposal about a responsive   technical-vocational program of the school.
3. Determine the impact of the developed skill-based learning opportunities amid pandemic.
4. Identify the issues and challenges encountered by the teachers and learners in the implementation of the program and the strategies of addressing them.

Proposed Intervention, Innovation, and Strategy

In pursuance to DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020, also known as the "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in Light of the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency" Tanauan School of Fisheries (TSF) wants to stand with the Department of Education in ensuring learning continuity through K-12 curriculum adjustments, alignment of learning materials, deployment of multiple learning delivery modalities, provision of corresponding training for teachers and school leaders, and proper orientation of parents or guardians of learners.

TSF is currently implementing a pure Modular Distance Learning (MDL) as its Learning Delivery Modality (LDM). TSF as a specialized high school under the Department of Education's Special Program for Technical Vocational Education (SPTVE) believes that it is not enough for our learners who are used to learning things through actual demonstration to shift by purely reading the text written in their self-learning modules (SLMs).

As the school seeks to provide quality education to its learners, the school is not stopping to think innovative ways how it will increase and strengthen learning quality amidst this pandemic. Based on the survey conducted by the Office of the Assistant School Principal (OASP), identified challenges in MDL were noted and call and demand for immediate solution. Most of the parents and students say: "Some Modules are Hard to Understand", "Mahirap ang Self Study", "Nahihirapan Kasi May Trabaho ang Magulang". It is also alarming that there is a drastic increase of No Longer Participating in Learning Sessions (Dropped Out) from two (2) to nine (9) comparing the 1st semester's record between SY 2019-2020 and SY 2020-2021 with an equivalent increase of 35%. This dropped out rate can be associated with uninterest to continue studying due to the challenges brought by the pandemic. Lack of support and guidance from the working parents and/or guardians are also a factor to look into.

This innovation wherein the teachers will be On Cam but in an Offline Delivery. shall be a product of asynchronous learning without the use of the internet. Learners can access recorded lessons made by the teachers. It will also bring

connection to learners as they see their teachers' faces in the video while delivering the lesson. This will also increase the chance of learners' attainment of most essential learning competencies (MELCs) as supported by the study of Ljubojevic M, et. Al (2014), integrating the use of multimedia lectures or presentations may increase students' perception of information and

motivation for learning. In addition, this

innovation will also provide relief to parents as teachers now will be helping them to teach their learners to understand critical aspects of competencies and enable them to provide actual discussion and explanation for deeper understanding on the part of the learners.

Action Research Method and Procedures

The researcher conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and interview among the teachers, parents, and learners to know the current situation when it comes to Modular Distance Learning. The data gathered on the number of learners who found difficulties in meeting the competencies required was used as the basis in the conceptualization of the innovation that is responsive to their needs.

Furthermore, the researcher made a proposal for the said innovation citing all the salient details to make it doable and feasible. Work breakdown and project deliverables were presented to ensure its continuous progress.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Number of Teachers Producing Video Materials

Classification	Junior High School		Senior High School		Total
	M	F	M	F	
Proficient Teachers	0	0	3	8	11
Highly Proficient Teachers	0	0	3	5	8
TOTAL	0	0	6	13	19

Based on the presented data, the number of proficient teachers who are able produce video materials for students are 11 and the highly proficient ones are 8. On this premise, it is reasonable to assert that the innovation is feasible, and that the program's continuity may be sustained as well as improved by offering training to teaching personnel, so that the total numbers presented may also increase.

Graph 1
Efficacy of Video Materials Based on Students' Evaluation
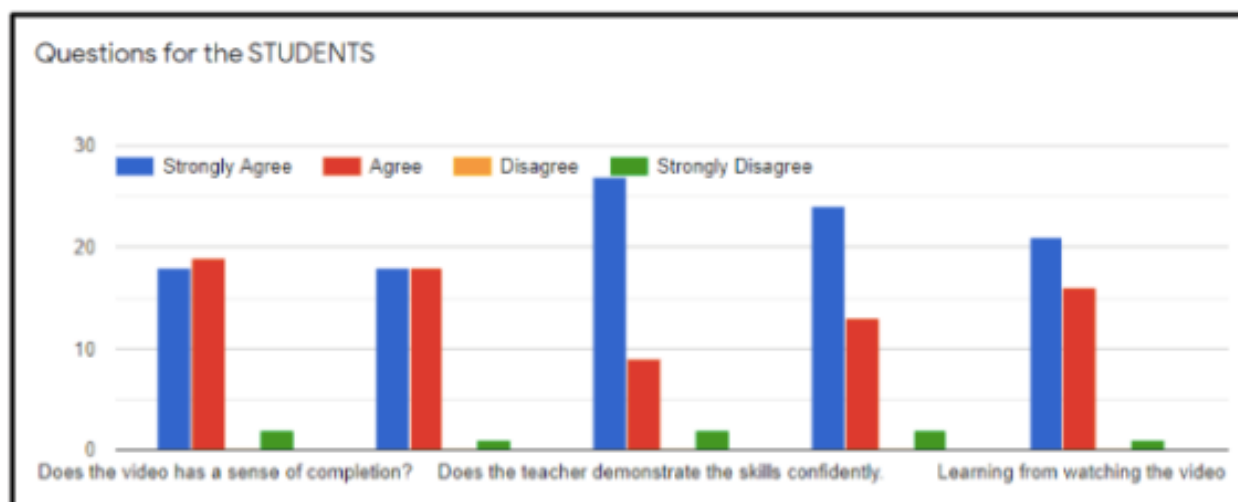
The following were the items included in the evaluation:

1. Does the video have a sense of completion?
2. Does the verbal content match the visual data?
3. Does the teacher demonstrate the skills confidently?
4. The video helped me understand my lesson.
5. The video gave me more confidence in my ability to demonstrate the skills I learned in the lesson.
6. Learning from watching the video fits well to my personality and preferred learning style
7. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the video.

Interpretation:

As shown in the provided data, question number one had an average score of 3.38, which corresponds to the verbal interpretation of Agree. The respondents Agree on Question 2 with an average score of 3.25, and Strongly Agree on Question 3 with a score of 3.51. This means that the teacher has a mastery of their subject matter. In question 4, students were asked how useful the video was in helping them understand the lesson. The average response was Strongly Agree. Additionally, question number 5 had an average of 3.23 and a verbal interpretation of Agree, while question number 6 had an average of 3.48 with a verbal interpretation of Agree. Finally, Question 7 assessed how satisfied learners were with the video presentation, and the respondents answered with a score of 3.43, which conforms to the verbal interpretation of "Agree." The result indicates that the overall average of ONCAM Delivery is 3.39, with the verbal interpretation of Agree. With these findings, it can be concluded that ONCAM Delivery benefited the learners in comprehending the lectures. Moreover, from the given results and discussion, the following can be concluded from this study:

▪ Significant innovations can be done by the teachers to create skill-based learning opportunities for learners amidst Pandemic that are responsive, relevant, and appropriate.
▪ This study became an instrument to address problems on internet connectivity, low submission of outputs, and poor skill performance of learners.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Based on the data presented, it is possible to conclude that the program is effective and capable of meeting and addressing its objectives of assisting learners in understanding the lesson and performing the competencies intended for them via on-cam delivery (lesson videos) in an off-line mode. As a result, this program should be continued. However, even in the midst of a pandemic, improvements in the development and delivery of lesson materials can still be addressed in order to develop among learners the necessary competencies and skills that they must develop and eventually pass the National Competency Assessment.

Reference

Department of Education.(2020). DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2020 "Adoption of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan for School Year 2020-2021 in the Light of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency." https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp- content/uploads/2020/06/DO_s2020_0 12.pdf